

EKEV 1981
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

In the Torah portion Ekev we have recounted again the story of how Moshe went up to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. The people worshipped the Golden Calf when they thought he was delayed. When he returned he took the Golden Calf, ground it into fine dust, and told the people to drink it. He then prayed for the people and G-d told him to ascend the mountain and receive a second Ten Commandments. This time Moshe was told to hew out the rock himself and to make a wooden ark to put them in. The first time Moshe Rabbeinu received the Ten Commandments there was thunder and lightning. The people were all assembled and he had to do nothing. The elders and Joshua ascended the mountain partway with him, and he was given the tablets all inscribed. This time he had to hew out the tablets himself. G-d inscribed them but he had to lug them up the mountain alone. There was no thunder and lightning, no expectant crowd. Moshe alone received the second Ten Commandments. He had to work hard for them but when he came down his face was glowing. He was radiant. The first time when he descended this was not true, but because of his hard work and the effort he put in he became a person whose very personality radiated Torah. In the Haphtorah this week we have the famous line from Isaiah "thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go out from you". Literally, of course, this means that Israel will no longer have enemies in their midst but the Rabbis have interpreted this to mean that sometimes the worst destroyers of the Jewish people come from the people themselves. Sometimes because they are filled with self-hate or because they use their talents wrongly Jews have turned out to be the worst persecutors of their own people. Even the last Ambassador to Saudi Arabia who was sacked by Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was born a Jew. Those Jews who get involved with the Mafia or get involved with illegal activities bring destruction on the Jewish people, too. How do we assure that we will raise up a child who will reflect the values of the Torah and, so to speak, will shine? Too many people have wrong values. They want to

be a millionaire rather than wanting to be a mentch. I can become a millionaire in five minutes. I can go to the Mercantile Bank, take out a gun, and demand money. This, of course, is not what we want. How do we assure that our children will have the correct values? The Rabbis say that Moshe's face shone because of either three reasons. One, because when he prayed to G-d to see G-d, G-d passed over him and he was only able to see His back. We interpret this to mean that you can only tell G-d by looking back in history. We can see G-d's footsteps in time even though we cannot see G-d. G-d influences the world. He cares and is concerned about each of us. We must teach our children that they are important and that G-d needs them and that it does not make any difference whether or not you are caught that determines whether something is right or wrong. You have to do the right thing because that is what G-d wants and that's the way you become a mentch. You cannot steal, rob, deal in heroin even if you would not get caught. Some Rabbis also say that the reason Moshe's face shone was because when he took hold of the Ten Commandments which were approximately 18" wide he held the first 6". G-d's presence held the last 6", and the middle 6" shone on Moshe. In other words, we are not just to obey the letter of the law. Some people never do anything themselves but they may buy stolen property, encourage others to do wrong, etc. We must go beyond the letter of the law. We must help others, be merciful and compassionate. Other Rabbis say that Moshe's face shone because when he was writing the Torah he put his hand over his brow to pause and some of the ink went on his face. We have to learn how to make time for our family and friends. Even Moshe paused and made time for others. If we teach our children these things then their personality will shine, too. Also in this Torah portion we learn that we are to fear and to love G-d. The word fear is not a correct translation. The word fear really means respect. We must teach our children respect and

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how do we do that? By example. If a child does not learn respect from his parents then he will not grow up to be a mentch. I am reminded of a true story once how I saw a woman get on a bus with a little girl. The little girl ran past the driver without paying on the mother's instructions. The bus driver grabbed her and said, "How old are you?" She said, "Four and a half". The bus driver asked her, "When will you be 5?" She answered, "When I get off the bus". Parents who act like this destroy the child's respect for them and for important values. We all must teach our children that they are important and that they should not do wrong because it is wrong. We must also teach them to give of their time and to continue learning. If we do that then I know that they will all shine. They will not be our destroyers. They will be our builders.

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In the Torah portion Ekev we have the second paragraph of the Shma. Last week we had the first paragraph of the Shma, "And you shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." We also have enunciated how we should teach our children and speak about these words "when we are sitting in our home and when we are going on the road, when we get up and when we lay down, and how we should bind them for a sign on our hands and in front between our eyes, and how we should write them on the doorposts of our home." In both the first and second paragraphs of the Shma we are instructed to have a mezuzah on our doorpost and also to put on Tephillin. The mezuzah teaches us that what shows on the surface is not what really counts. It is what is hidden, when cannot be seen that really counts. You can have the fanciest mezuzah cover worth thousands of dollars, but if the parchment is defective it is not kosher. On the other hand, you can have a cheap cover, or no cover at all, and the mezuzah would be kosher. The most important things are the things which cannot be seen. Unfortunately, in our day many people stress those things which are flashy and can be seen by everyone. The important things they neglect. People feel that the medium is the message. They fail to realize that you must have something besides outside show in order to lead the happy and the good life. The Tephillin, too, teaches us this lesson. We put the Tephillin on our left hand opposite our heart, with one Tephillin on our head between our eyes. We must always remember that our hand and our heart and head must go together. There are too many people today who worship just skill, whatever their hand can do and they totally neglect developing their character and personality. We, in this country, worship skill. We have just finished watching the Olympics. It is wonderful to watch the skill of these athletes. However, listening to many of them when they are interviewed show that many of them have not developed their personalities or their characters. Besides the skill that they have perfected, they are almost zeros in personality and character. Of course, some are not. Some have wonderful personalities and characters, but, unfortunately, others are only animated skills. In our day and age all we seem to care about is skill. A person, though, is more than a machine.

A person has to know how to relate to others. A person has to know how to develop his total personality. We always put the Tephillin on the weaker hand. If a person is left-handed, he wears it on his right hand. If a person is right-handed he wears it on his left hand. We Jews are not supposed to have the killer instinct. We do not believe in success at any cost. Our success must always be tempered by the mind and heart. There are certain things we cannot do in order to have our hands successful. Unfortunately, in our day and age only material success is stressed, and many people are willing to sacrifice their family, friends, and even integrity in order to achieve it. This is one of the reasons why many marriages today are failing. Each partner wants to do their own thing. A marriage does not have "our" goals but "my" goals. When this happens the marriage will fall apart. It is all right for each party to have a career, but each must forego some things in order to have a good marriage. This Torah portion starts with the words "Vahaya Ekev". The rabbis say that anytime the expression "Vahaya" is used it signifies happiness. The next word "Ekev" is translated here as "because" "and it shall be because you will listen to these laws and G-d will love you and bless you." The word "Ekev" here is a very unusual word. The rabbis say that it stands for the little things that you normally would crush underfoot. It is the little things that are going to make you happy and cause you to be loved and blessed. Many times in a marriage the people are interested in the big things, like how much money they are going to make, how big a house they will have, how many cars they will have, and they forget about the little things, like kindness and consideration which really cause a person to be loved and blessed. In our terrible rush to acquire things (homes and cars, etc) we have forgotten about the little things, like being there when you are needed, little acts of kindness and consideration. It is not the showy outward things that make a marriage successful. It is the little things. That is what the mezuzah teaches and that is why it should be on everyone's door to remind us that the little things are important, and they will cause you to be loved and blessed. I am reminded of the story they tell about the woman who went up to the first tee at the

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golf course and took a swing. The man after her had to wait because she was out on the fairway searching. After ten minutes he couldn't stand it any longer. He said, "Can I help you find your ball?" The woman said, "I have my ball. It's the club I can't find." Many times we confuse the important things. We do not realize that it is the little things that make us happy. The big things are nice but not necessary. It is the little things that cause love and blessing to flower in a person's home.

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One of the hardest questions against religions is the problem of suffering. How could G-d create a world in which there is such pain and suffering? Why did G-d have to create death? There was a book published recently called Why Bad Things Happen to Good People, by Rabbi Kushner. To me, this is a very unsatisfactory book. It lets G-d completely off the hook. He could have created a world without death. After all, G-d created death and is the biggest killer of all. That's what we say in the prayers three times a day: "Maimis Mechaya - G-d Who causes death and G-d who causes life."

In this Haphtorah it speaks about the suffering of the servants of G-d. "If the Lord will help me, therefore, I have not been confounded, therefore, I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." We do not understand G-d's ways, and we do not understand why He has to cause this pain and suffering, but we have confidence that in the end of days we will understand. The prophet continues, "Who is among that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant though he walk in darkness and have no light, let him walk in trust of the Lord and stay upon his G-d." In the sentence we see that the servant of the Lord walks in darkness and has no light, yet he trusts in the Lord, his G-d. We cannot understand why G-d causes all this suffering and pain in the world. We have confidence that it serves some purpose, that G-d knows why we must all suffer the pain of losing loved ones, the pain of disease, the frustrations of life, but we do not understand now why we should.

The rabbis deal with this problem in the Mishne where it says the rabbis taught the schools of Shamai and Hillel argued for $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. The school of Shamai said it would have been better had man never been created, while the school of Hillel said it was better that man had been created. After $2\frac{1}{2}$ years they took a vote and decided that it would have been better had man not been created, but now that he has been created, let him look to his ways. Let him examine his deeds. The rabbis decided that it is true that at the end of days we will understand why we had all this pain. Maybe it would have been better if G-d had not created us in the first place to go through all this pain and suffering.

In the Torah portion we have this problem dealt with also. We read, "And He afflicted you and He suffered you to hunger and fed you the manna which you did not know and your forefathers did not know in order to make known to you that not on bread alone does a man live, but on all which goes out from the mouth of G-d does man live." In this sentence we have many contradictions. How can it say that G-d suffered us to hunger and then fed us the manna? If G-d caused us to hunger, then He did not give us the manna. If he gave us the manna then he did not suffer us to hunger. Also, why does it say, "In order to make known to you that not on bread alone does man live but on all that goes out of the mouth of G-d does man live?" How, by feeding us the manna, does G-d teach us that not on bread alone does man live, and also, why does He use the expression "by all that comes out does man live?" Why doesn't it just say by the laws of the Torah G-d causes man to live.

It seems to me that here we are dealing with the problem of suffering again. People tend to think that if they make lots of money they will not suffer. If they have a big income, two Cadillacs, a swimming pool, things are going to be perfect. In this sentence G-d tells us that this is not so, that you can have all your material wants satisfied and still suffer. There are many problems that have nothing to do with money and that are more severe, like death, pain, ravages of terrible diseases like cancer, frustrations, mental illness, tyranny, unrequited love, etc. G-d was telling the people here that in life they would suffer even if all their material wants were supplied. G-d here also is not answering the question of why we suffer, but He is giving us a prescription for how to handle our suffering, how to overcome it. He is telling us that if we will share, if we will give of ourselves to others we will be able to overcome our suffering and still lead decent and good lives.

Many people today still think that if you make a lot of money you will solve all your problems. This is especially true of poor people and those who came to this country as immigrants. They feel that all their problems will be solved when they get the house

in the suburbs. Many of their problems will be solved, but not all of them, especially those that have to do with great suffering. Marx thought that all the problems could be solved through economics and, paradoxically, many right wing Republicans think the same thing, that everything depends on economics. Many things do but not everything. Many people have problems, even those who have lots of money. Sometimes people are not willing to extend themselves to recognize that people can have problems that are financially secure, but they, too, suffer from problems over which money has no control. Nobody knows what is in the hearts and minds of other people. In fact, poor people, and even the Jews in Egypt, thought if they would have money they could solve all their problems. Rich people know this is not so. They do not even have that hope.

When people have problems the only way they can overcome them is by reaching out and helping others, helping anybody who has problems. Nobody knows the heart and the mind of their neighbor. When they need help we should all offer it. That's why the expression here used is "all that comes out of the mouth of g-d." Food is different than breathing. For 30 days you can probably go without food, maybe longer. Bread is different than breath. Bread you only ingest, you only take in. You do not have to pause to give out. Breathing, on the other hand, is completely different. In order to breathe in you first must breathe out. You cannot hoard breath. You must breathe out before you can breathe in. All of us, in order to overcome our problems, must learn how to give as well as take. It is only in this way that we will be able to overcome our suffering. It is by reaching out and helping all those that need our help that we can overcome our own suffering, and it makes no difference what economic strata they are in. If they need help we should offer it.

There is a story they tell about a man who went swimming on a beach in Tel Aviv in December. He asked the lifeguard before he plunged into the water, "How is the water?" The lifeguard replied, "Lukewarm." He plunged in. It was freezing, like waters of the North Pole. He came out and screamed at the lifeguard, "Are you a smart aleck? The water is freezing."

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The lifeguard looked at him and said, "Well, it looked warm to me." We can never tell what goes on in someone's heart and mind, and whether or not they are suffering. All we should know is if they ask for our help we should give it. This will not only aid them but allow us to overcome our own suffering, too.

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Success And The Fear of G-d

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One of the most frightening aspects of modern life is that people are willing to do almost anything for success. A survey was made recently of some young corporate executives and a little over half of them said they would be willing to do anything to further their careers, even illegal acts. Success, to them, has become a god, an idol. They do not feel that their lives are worthwhile or that they are worthwhile if they are not a success.

In the Torah portion, Ekev, we have this problem highlighted. The Jewish people were told explicitly that they were not being given the land of Israel because of their righteousness but because of the wickedness of the nations they were about to dispossess. The Jewish people were not to think that they were being given the land of Israel because they were talented or innately superior to the Canaanites. They were being given the land because the Canaanites had failed morally. The Canaanites had failed because they did not fear G-d. Fear of G-d in Judaism means that a person or a people will not do evil, will not harm others even if they can get away with it and even if it looks like cheating is the only way they can become a success.

This point is emphasized in this Torah portion when we read, "Now Israel, what does the Lord your G-d require of you? To fear the Lord your G-d and to go in all His ways and to love Him." The rabbis ask, why is it that the fear of G-d is put before the love of G-d? The answer they give is because a person cannot truly love G-d unless he first fears Him. The word "Yera" in Hebrew does not have exactly the same meaning as "fear" in English. It has the connotation of

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"respect, admire." Fear of G-d means that we will not do evil things that we can get away with because we admire G-d, we respect what He has commanded us. We know that we are accountable to Him. Even if we think we can become a big success by being immoral, we will not become immoral because we fear G-d. That's what a G-d fearing person means in Judaism. A G-d fearing person does not mean just a person who observes rituals. A G-d fearing person means a person who does not use his power immorally or take advantage of the ignorance of others to achieve success because he knows there is a G-d in the world. In order to achieve success a G-d fearing man will never violate moral norms.

The Jewish people were allowed to conquer the land of Canaan only because the people there were no longer G-d fearing. They put their own success above everything else. That's what idol worship means. In our day and age we seem to be doing the same thing. We seem to forget that it is G-d Who has given us the power and the strength to accomplish, and it is only because of His help that we can accomplish great things. We seem to be living in the same type of era described in our Torah portion. "And you will say in your heart 'My power and the might of my hand made me all this success.'" In America today we take too much upon ourselves. We feel that our success is only dependent on us. We feel that we are complete masters of our own fate, that all we have to do is want to do something and we can do it even if it is immoral. If people are not successful it is because they are lazy or stupid or have too many scruples. Let them get a job, do what I am doing, and they will be just as successful as I am.

People forget that not everybody has been blessed by G-d with the same talents they have. Not everybody is blessed with good health to achieve great things. It is true that America has had to deal with a passive attitude in the world which says, "Why try? Nothing is going to change anyway." The world is cyclical: spring, fall, summer, winter, birth, teen age, middle age, and death. Why try? Nothing is going to change. We, in Judaism, believe, as America does, that it is important that we try to change things, that we try to achieve things. In America we always talk about the world's greatest this and the world's greatest that. We laud achievement. We, though, have to realize that we also need G-d's help to achieve anything, and there are certain things we can never do in order to achieve success.

This idea is stressed in this Torah portion when Moshe reviews the history of the giving of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were given to him twice. The first set of Ten Commandments Moshe smashed into smithereens after the people worshipped the golden calf. The people had made the work of their hands an idol. They did not deserve to receive the first set of Ten Commandments. Moshe had to go up the mount again to get the second set of tablets. There was a big difference between the giving of the second set of Ten Commandments and the giving of the first set. Moshe had to hew out the rocks upon which the second set of commandments were given himself. When Moshe was told to hew out the rocks for the second set of commandments the expression "Pesol Lecha - hew out for yourself" is used. The rabbis are struck by the use of this word "Pesol." This word also means "idol." The expression "Lo Sa-aseh Lecha Pesol - You should

not make for yourself an idol" is part of the Ten Commandments.

What is the difference between Moshe hewing out the stones for the second set of Ten Commandments and making an idol? The same word is used.

The difference, the rabbis say, is in the placement of the word "Lecha." When it says "You should not make an idol" the "you" is said first. After all, what are idols but just extensions of our own fantasies and desires? They are things to manipulate, objects to use. When the "you" comes first then you end up with an idol. On the other hand, when the "you" comes afterwards, when we realize that there are just certain things we cannot do to achieve success then we do not have an idol. We have a true religious perspective. The first Ten Commandments were given with thunder and lightning. Mount Sinai was engulfed in smoke and even nature was affected. A hush fell over all nature. A great quiet descended over earth. All creatures recognized the fact that the Ten Commandments were being given. When the second Ten Commandments were given nature did not recognize it. It was not silent. There was no thunder and there was no lightning, but the second tablets made a great impression. There was no pageantry yet they had a great effect. They had a great effect because they were the product of great effort. Success, achievement is not bad. It just has to be attained morally.

When Moshe came down from Mount Sinai his face glowed. He was able to pass on this illumination to the Jewish people. Moshe's face glowed, the rabbis tell us, because he had to work for the second

set of the commandments while the first set was just given to him. A person always appreciates more something he has had to work for. Achievement is worthwhile. Success, though, must always be based on the Ten Commandments. That's why the rabbis also give three other explanations for why Moshe's face glowed. They say that when Moshe asked to see G-d's presence, G-d told him that no man could see His face, but that Moshe could see His back, so Moshe was placed in a cleft of a rock, and G-d's presence passed over him and the aura of G-d's presence illuminated his face. The second explanation they give is that when Moshe came down with the Ten Commandments, which were eighteen inches long, or six Tefochim, Moshe grabbed hold of the first two Tefochim, or six inches, and G-d grabbed hold of the last two Tefochim. The middle two Tefochim were saturated with G-d's presence and this illuminated Moshe's face. The third explanation is that a drop of ink was left over when Moshe finished writing the Torah, and he passed it over his brow and it illuminated his face.

These three other explanations are meant to teach us that success is not just a personal matter. The Torah is meant to teach us how to stop concentrating on the "you" and how to begin concentrating on the "we." Our success must never be bought by harming others. What does it mean when it said that we can only know G-d's back and not His face? This, the rabbis interpret to mean that when we look back in history we can see G-d's guiding hand, and that He is counting on us to help Him perfect history. In fact, when Frederic the Great asked Voltaire, an anti-Semite, to give him a proof of G-d's existence, he gave him two words: "The Jews, my lord, the Jews." The very

fact that we have survived shows that G-d works in history, and that He wants us to look not just at our own selfish desires but help Him perfect history by living moral lives. The greatest success is not material achievement but living a moral and compassionate life.

The second part of the Midrash, which talks about G-d and Moshe holding the Ten Commandments, teaches us about relationships. We are not to sacrifice relationships for success. Each of us has a piece of G-d in each of us. When we enter into a relationship with another person we are, so to speak, holding the Ten Commandments with the other person, like Moshe and G-d did. No one of us can ever know another human being fully and completely and totally, so we cannot know all their needs and desires. We just cannot manipulate and take people over. We must always remember that each person has unique qualities which are his own. We should never destroy another person to achieve our goals. We must always have mutual respect for each other. We cannot turn other people into objects of our fantasies. We cannot use people in order to achieve success. The relationship of G-d and Israel, which the Ten Commandments signify, was and is meant to be a vehicle to better the world. All our relationships must be based on the Ten Commandments if they are to be successful. Real success demands we stop thinking just of the "you" but of the "we."

Thirdly, Moshe took a drop of ink and put it on his brow. Even though G-d had told him to write down the whole Torah, he left out a letter in the word "Anov," which described him as a humble man. Therefore,

he had a drop of ink left. In any relationship you have to sacrifice some of your own glory. You cannot just be concerned about me, me. You cannot go around all the time just trumpeting your own horn. Unfortunately, all people are interested in today is doing their own thing, in fulfilling their "you." They are putting the "you" before Pesol. They are creating idols. Their achievements are all that they care about. This is wrong.

Achievement must never become an idol. We cannot sacrifice morality and goodness in order to satisfy our urge for success. We should never put our "you" before everything else. We need G-d's help ultimately to succeed, and that requires, in the long run, that we do not make success an idol, that we realize that there are some things more important than material or professional success. We must always realize that to be G-d fearing is more important than success. It is what allows us to have real relationships. To be a G-d fearing person we must learn never to put ourselves and our success before morality, kindness, and compassion. The "you" should always come last, not first. Where do you put "you?" Before Pesol or after it?

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In the Torah portion Ekev we have
the famous sentence, "And now Israel, what does G-d your G-d ask of you but to fear the Lord your G-d to go in all His ways to love Him and to serve the Lord your G-d with all heart and with all your soul." Rav Meir reads this posek a different way. He says, "Atoye Yisroel Mah Adoshem Eloche Yosheel Meemmach", which means "And now what does G-d your G-d ask from you", and he translates it "And now Israel one hundred the Lord your G-d asks from you. He translates the word "Mah" as "Meah - one hundred" and he says that a Jew is required to say one hundred blessings every, that that is what G-d requires of us: to say one hundred blessings every day. This seems very strange. How can he compare the awe of G-d and the love of G-d to saying one hundred blessings? Why should he have chosen to interpret this sentence this way? This seems very strange. What's more, in the beginning of the Torah portion Ekev we have the word "Vahaya - and it shall come to be because you listened to these laws and you did them and observed them and the Lord your G-d will keep his treaty and His kindness which He swore to your fathers and He will love you and bless you and increase you." The word "Vahaya" means "and it will be". In Hebrew there is something special that we can do that we cannot do in English. We can take the past tense and by adding a "Va" to it we can make the past tense future. We can also take the future tense, for example the word "Yehee", and add the

letter "Va" and change the future to past. In this particular instance we have taken the past and made it the future. We have said "Vahaya - and it shall be". Really it means "it was" but we have took the "Va" in front of it and we made it the future. The rabbis say any time we take the past and make it into the future we have joy, but any time we take the future and make it into the past we have calamity, we have sorrow. It is also interesting to note in this posek that it says "And it shall be when you listen to the Mishpoteem, to these laws", and the rabbis ask, why do we use the word "Mishpoteem" here? Mishpoteem refers to the rational laws, the laws we would probably know even if G-d didn't give us the Torah, for example, do not steal, do not kill. There are two other types of laws that are referred to in the Torah. One are the "Ados" which are the laws which have to do with keeping Shabbos and the holidays which at first glance are not obvious, but after you keep Shabbos and the holidays you realize their importance. You know how much they mean to you. Before the fact you cannot appreciate these holidays, but after the fact you can, and this applies to other laws as well. Finally, there is a third category called "Chukim". These laws are extra-rational, for example like the laws of the red heifer. Why should being sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer and water and a few other things cause you to become ritually pure? These are called "Chukim". Here in this sentence it does not say, "And it shall be because you will follow the laws, rational laws, the

laws that you learn about after you have completed or observed them" or the extra-rational laws. It doesn't talk about the "Chukim" and "Ados". It only talks about the "Mishpoteem". Why should this be so? Finally, if we look here we will see that in Hebrew it says, "And it shall be because you will listen and you will hear" is plural. You will listen. All Jewish people listen. And then as a reward for this it says, "And G-d will love you and bless you and will increase you" and there it is singular. G-d will bless you "singular", not "plural". Why did the Torah switch here from the plural to the singular? It seems to me that all these questions are related. The reason Rabbi Meir says, "And now Israel, what does G-d your G-d demand of you", and he says that, "Now Israel one hundred the Lord your G-d demands of you" is teaching us something very important. It teaches that in life we must learn to appreciate. We must learn to appreciate what we have. In order to have a relationships with G-d, in order to respect Him and love Him we first must appreciate what He is doing for us. Of course, G-d has done a lot for us. He has created us and put us on this world, but not everything in this world is good. We could concentrate on the evil things, the evil aspects that are found in this world, the aspects of this world we do not understand: death, suffering, pain. Why does G-d take away young people in the prime of their life? We do not understand that, but in order to have a relationship with G-d we must concentrate on the positive, not on the negative. We must bless G-d for all the beautiful things He has given us in

this world. It is so easy to forget the good things and concentrate just on the bad things. This is true not only in the relationship between G-d and man but also in the relationship between man and man. How many marriages falter for really no reason, but just for one or two small defects. It is very easy to break a marriage. I could do it in twenty minutes. All I have to do is harp on the defects, harp on those things that are annoying, and eventually you can inflame a person so much that they are ready to do anything. They cannot stand it anymore. In life we have to learn how to bless. We must learn how to appreciate. Unfortunately, in our day and age people do not want to put up with anything. They want everything to be perfect. Unfortunately, in life this cannot be so. That's why I believe this Torah portion starts with the word "Vahaya - and it shall be", and we change the past to the future. That's a sign of joy, not when we change the future to the past. There are so many cases today where people are getting divorced for no reason. They are acting like Zsa Zsa Gabor. They think they have found someone better, that their relationship is going nowhere, and they want to have something much better. Instead of building on the past, instead of making the past future, improving what you have, they jump to something new. What they must do in order to do that, in order to have a future, they feel, they must destroy the past. They must make nothing out of the past. They must distort the past, and even say that the person or the

institution or the people that they had wonderful relationships with in the past are really no good, and they have done this and that. This is really true, of course, in many, many areas. Many people look not at what is good but what is bad. When it comes to the shul, they don't like what the president did at that meeting and what the treasurer did at the meeting before. Instead of looking at all the good things they look at only the bad things, the things that they think have disappointed them. In life we must learn how to be positive. We must learn how to make our relationships endure. The only way to make our relationships endure is to learn how to bless, to learn how to appreciate the good things we have. We can build on them. We can make the past into a glorious future, but if all we want to is smear the past because we are mad at somebody (his wife is no good, his children are no good, his dog is no good, either). We cannot look at like that way. What we must do is look at the good things and build on them. That's why it mentions here the word "Mishpoteem". In our day and age relationship are being attacked. People do not know how to keep relationships. G-d said that society must foster relationships. If you want have the good things in life, then the most important thing is to have stable families, to have stable relationships. If you will do these things and society "plural" will support relationships instead of seeking to destroy them, instead of encouraging people to dissolve marriages and to cut their relationships with their families and destroy institutions, but instead if society will try to keep people together, will

try to teach them to build on the past and make it into a glorious future, then G-d says He will bless you, bless you individually. Everyone will have a blessing because they will have fruitful and good and wonderful and happy relationships. There are no insurance policies a person can take out in order to keep a relationship new and fresh and exciting and good, but the Torah gives us a formula to do it. What is that formula? Learn to appreciate. Say a hundred blessings every day. If you look at the good points, at the things that are good with the relationship, you will be able to deepen and further that relationship and overcome its defects as well. That is the only insurance policy we have for a good relationship. I am reminded of the story they tell about a ship about to sink. The captain wanted the passengers to jump overboard with their lifejackets, but they did not want to do it. He sent his first mate to convince them. The first mate came back and said, "I did it." The captain said, "How did you do it?" The first mate answered, "I told the French that it was a chic thing to do. I told the English that it was a sporting thing to do. I told the Russians that it was a revolutionary thing to do. I told the Italians that it was forbidden, and I told the Germans that it was commandd." The captain said, "But, how did you convince the Americans to do it?" The first mate said, "I told them that they were insured." In life there is no insurance to keep a relationship going, but the Torah did give us a formula for making relationships strong: learn to

appreciate what you have, praise, count your blessings, build on the past. Make your relationships even better. Don't discard them for no reason, but build on them and you will have a wonderful life, and G-d will bless you and love you and appreciate you.

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I am very happy to be with you all today at the installation of my son-in-law, Rabbi Mark Urkowitz, as the rabbi of Congregation Bnai Sholom. I am very happy to be in the Chicago area. My mother actually graduated from Roosevelt High School in Chicago. My grandmother was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, not far away, and my daughter was raised during her formative years in Lafayette, Indiana, also a city not far from Chicago. This is a wonderful part of the country, and I know that my children and grandchildren will do well here.

I know that you are all aware that this Shabbos we will read the Torah portion Ekev. In this Torah portion Moshe Rabbeinu reviews the events of Jewish history. He especially reviews the building of the golden calf, the time when he was on Mount Sinai about ready to receive the Ten Commandments while the Jewish people below were chafing at the bit because he had not returned and decided to worship the golden calf. Moshe descends the mountain and when he sees the people worshipping the golden calf he casts the Ten Commandments from his hands and they are smashed into smithereens. The rabbis explain that what happened was that when Moshe saw the people worshipping the golden calf the letters of the Ten Commandments flew off, and Moshe was left with the heavy rocks and he could not hold them, and they fell from his hands and broke into smithereens. This, of course, means that when the spirit of the Jewish people then it is very hard for the Jewish people to keep the Jewish religion. In fact, to my way of thinking, one of the worst phrases ever used, especially in American Jewry and almost killed American Jewry, was "It's hard to be a Jew". Because the many Jewish people believed that Judaism was a religion that was very hard to keep and was a religion which kept them from live, kept them from enjoying life, they threw

the religion away. By so doing, they ended up worshipping the golden calf, thinking that all that was important in life was money and the making of money. Unfortunately, this did not give them any happiness. It did not give them any meaning in life. We all know that one of the most important things we all need in life is meaning. What are we doing this for? Why should we work so hard? What satisfaction are we getting from getting more and more money and not spending time with our family and not having a spiritual experience and not really finding meaning in life? In fact, there was a whole new school of psychiatry founded by a man named Victor Frankel, a Jew and survivor of the concentration camps, who claims the main thing the human being needs in life is meaning, not sex as Freud said or power as Jung said or other schools of philosophy that have their own version of what man needs. According to Frankel, what we mainly need is meaning.

This, of course, is exemplified in this Torah portion. We know that when the first Ten Commandments were given they were given with thunder and lightning. Nature, itself, knew the Ten Commandments were being given. There was a hush and still throughout the whole world. When the second Ten Commandments were given, however, there was a difference. Nature did not even know they were being given. There was not hush in nature, no thunder, no lightning, no smoke coming out of Mount Sinai. It was different. Moshe had to hew out the rocks himself. The first time he received the Ten Commandments G-d had hewed out the rocks, but the second time Moshe had to hew out the rocks. When Moshe came down with the second set of Ten Commandments his face glowed. The rabbis, though, in the Torah portion we use the word "Pesolocho - Hew out for you these rocks". If this is the same word "Pesol" that is used in the Ten Commandments and means "idol", the rabbis question why this word was used. After all, there are other words

for hewing out besides the word "Pesol". They answer that an idol is something which you put yourself first. "Losasa V'Chod Pesol - You should not make you". All you are interested in is you, you, you, and all your money. When Moshe was commanded to hew out the rocks, it says "Pesolocho - Hew out for you" where your first interest is in hewing out and creating not just for yourself. Yourself is secondary. This, of course, is important. There are so many people in the world today who do not have any meaning in their life.

This is exemplified by the story they tell about a man who prayed to get the Midas touch. We all know that in ancient Greece there was a man who wanted to be able to create gold, that everything he touched would turn into gold. This wish was granted by his gods. Unfortunately, he touched one of his children and this gift turned out to be a great source of tragedy. But this man said, "Listen, I'll put on gloves. I won't touch my children. Give me the Midas touch." The angel of G-d came down and gave him the Midas touch and from then on everything he touched turned into a muffler. Unfortunately, this is true with many people today, that their successes have not made them happy or satisfied or fulfilled.

When Moshe came down with the second tablets his face glowed. He was Moshe Rabbeinu, Moshe our teacher, Moshe our rabbi, and he had a task to perform. He was one of the three leaders of the Jewish people, and each of these leaders exemplified traits which the modern rabbi today must have to lead his congregation. A rabbi today has to stand for Moshe Rabbeinu's task, which was to give meaning to the people. That's why the rabbis say the manna came down for the sake of Moshe, the manna where the coriander seeds, the white seeds that tasted like anything the people wanted them to taste

like, came down in the morning. Moshe Rabbeinu's mission was symbolized by this manna because when the people looked at it they said, "Man Hu - What is it?" They wanted to know what life was about, where they were going, how they were to accomplish things in life. They wanted meaning in life. Moshe's task was to give the people meaning. That is what a modern rabbi has to do, too: try to give the people meaning. Aaron, his brother's, task was to give the world morality. He was a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace. A rabbi, too, has to be a symbol of morality in our day. If a rabbi gets involved in questionable activities it is very bad. If he gets involved with the IRS or gets involved with sordid affairs he loses his power as a rabbi because he must stand for morality. Sometimes a rabbi must also speak out and say things the people do not like to hear, because he must stand as a symbol of morality. Finally, a rabbi must also fulfill the function of a Miriam. Aaron was a symbol of morality because morality is what guards civilization and causes it to exist. If we did not have a sense of morality among us we would consume each other. That is why Aaron's symbol was the clouds of glory which protected the Jewish people. Miriam's symbol was the "Mayim - water", the well of water which accompanied the Jewish people. Miriam's responsibility was to give hope to the people. We all know we are confronted with tragedy. Life is never simple. Every family, unfortunately, will eventually be touched by death and by sickness, touched by failure of one sort or another. We cannot all achieve all our dreams. The rabbi must be there to give the people, to give them a sense that all is not lost. He must be there to support them and help them. The modern rabbi has a big job. In Europe these jobs were divided in two. There was a Rav, who gave meaning and morality to the people, and a Rebbe, who gave them hope. In modern America these jobs have been combined. It is sometimes difficult to be a rabbi, because a rabbi, too, is a human being

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and subjected to temptations of violating morality. He, too, has his own problems, and he, too, sometimes needs hope and support, etc. Therefore, it is not easy to be a rabbi, and sometimes a rabbi does question the meaning of life, but a rabbi must persevere and a rabbi can fulfill these roles with the cooperation of his congregation. The congregation must realize that it is difficult to fulfill these roles, and the congregation, too, must give support to the rabbi so he can fulfill these roles. I know that my son-in-law, Rabbi Urkowitz has the training and emotional capacity and the will to allow him to fulfill all these roles. I know that he will do so with all his power, that he will give it his best. I know that he will do and fulfill the job of rabbi for your community to the best of his ability. It is with great pride and great expectancy and with the knowledge that both he and you can grow together that I hereby install him as rabbi of Congregation Bnai Sholom.

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In this week's Torah portion, Ekev, we have the second paragraph of the Shma. "And it shall come to pass that if you will listen diligently to My commandments which I have commanded you this day to love the Lord your G-d, to serve Him with all your heart, with all your soul, and I will send the rain for your land in its due season...And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates and you shall teach them to your children..." The first paragraph of the Shma we found in last week's Torah portion. It says, "And thou shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might and these words which I command you this day shall be upon thy heart and thou shall teach them diligently to thy children speaking to them when they sittest in thy house and walkest by the way..." In fact, the two paragraphs are very, very similar. The rabbis ask the question, why is it that we need two paragraphs, and why are they put in two different Torah portions? It is true that the first paragraph is in the singular and the second paragraph is in the plural, but the content is almost exactly the same about loving the Lord your G-d, about listening to the commandments, about teaching them to your children, about putting them on the doorposts of your homes, etc., so why should we have two of them? Why do we have to repeat the same thing over again in two different Torah portions? What's more, the Torah, which is so laconic, in fact, the rabbis say all the Shabbos laws which fill many volumes are deduced from just a few words in the Torah. It says, "like hanging mountains by threads," but yet the Shma here is repeated twice and almost the same words are used. It is true that in the end of this second paragraph it says "In order that your days and the days of your children should be lengthened on the land which G-d swore to your fathers to give them as the days of the heaven and the earth." That idea is not found in the first paragraph, but that does

not seem enough of a reason not to have just one paragraph. Add this one sentence to the first paragraph. It is also true that in the second paragraph we have rewards and punishments given. "I will give the rain in its time" and so forth while in the first paragraph we do not have. Again, as I mentioned before, the first paragraph is in the singular and the second paragraph is in the plural. The first paragraph mentions serving G-d with all your might and the second does not, but these seem to be inconsequential differences which could easily have been taken care of by adding a few sentences to the first paragraph. Why does the Torah see fit to have two paragraphs?

Perhaps an answer to this question can be found in the two Torah portions in which these two paragraphs are found. The first paragraph of the Shma is found in the Torah portion Vaeschanan, and in the Torah portion Vaeschanan the keynote is seeing. G-d answers Moshe's request by saying, when Moshe asks the question that I want to cross over and I want to see the land, and G-d says, "No, you cannot see the land." He will not be able to see the land. Moshe, of course, is very disappointed by that. He tells him, though, that he can go up to the head of the mountain and he can see the land from there but he cannot enter the land. We see that although Moshe was not allowed to cross into the land and see it he was allowed to see it from afar. So the keynote of the Torah portion Vaeschanan is seeing, while the keynote of the Torah portion Ekev, in which the second paragraph of the Shma is found, is hearing. It says, "And it shall be because you shall listen to these judgements and you will observe and do them...that G-d is going to bless you..." The keynote of the Torah portion Ekev is hearing. This we find even in the second paragraph of the Shma. "And it shall be if you will listen to My commandments which I am commanding you today." The first paragraph does not deal at all with hearing. The

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rabbis say that there is a big difference between Shmeeah and Reeah. Shmeeah means hearing and Reeah means seeing, that Reeah is not like Shmeeah. Seeing is not like hearing, that when you see something it has an altogether different effect on you than when you hear it, that seeing has an immediacy. It affects you more deeply than hearing, and that is why the rabbis also tell us that when a person sees an event that he is much more likely to observe things. He, himself, is caught up in the event rather than if a person just hears about an event. We all know that this is true. When the radios were on the scene we all stayed glued to the radio, but when television came on the scene we dumped the radio for television because the immediacy of the sight, the experience was so much more enthralling and engrossing on television than to hear it on the radio, although on the radio we perhaps have to use our imagination more so since television has entered the scene our radios have been banished, so to speak, to the bedroom and the kitchen, etc. The television takes our prime attention. This we know in life, too, that if you have had an experience where you were part of an experience that it has an effect on you that is altogether different than if you just heard about it from someone else. That is why when you want to portray historical events you don't just give statistics of this many thousands died, etc. You give the story of one individual and recount their suffering and then you can see it in your mind's eye. You can be there with the person. You depict it as an individual happening with real people being involved and then you can sense the tragedy.

This we know, too, when it comes to Jewish experiences. Those people who have experienced the pogroms and the terrible nastiness of Europe, it is seared in their hearts. Although they tell it to their children it is not the same thing. Holocaust survivors cannot understand why many times

their children do not have the same feeling they have. The reason for it is that it has not been engraved on their flesh. They have not had the experience, itself. They have only heard about it. Therefore, the very first paragraph of the Shma speaks about immediacy, and in Jewish life we believe in immediacy. We do believe that G-d talks to each of us, that we can have feelings of G-d appearing to us and talking to us and being with us. People think that this is not a Jewish experience, but, of course, it is a Jewish experience. Who were the prophets? G-d does come to us but He does not come to us very regularly and very often, and it is very difficult to grasp the message when He does, but if you, as an individual, have this experience then, of course, you should try to pass it on to your children. You should try to convey the depth of this experience to others, but it is infrequent. Judaism really exists today because we hear about things. In fact, even in Jewish law a person who loses his sight is treated as an ordinary person, but a person who loses his hearing, especially if he was born without hearing, is in an altogether different category because that person cannot really identify with the Jewish group. He cannot communicate. Communication is the essential element in maintaining a development of the personality and also maintaining group consciousness. Of course, today where we can reestablish communication with people even who are deaf through electrical devices and other types of sensory devices there is no real deaf person in the sense that the Talmud speaks about. If we want to preserve a tradition we have to preserve it by hearing. You hear about things, and this requires a total educational system, a total environment, and the individual here cannot do it himself. You have to have a whole community that works at it, a whole community which establishes a certain type of life which transmits the same values

that were immediately apprehended by the people as they stood at Sinai or the people as they stood on the plains of Moab, that in order for us to transmit these values you have to have an educational system. The whole community has to work at it. You cannot just pick and choose this Jewish observance. You have to have the totality of the experience otherwise it will not be impressed upon the minds of the children.

That is why, of course, reward and punishment are mentioned in this second paragraph and not in the first paragraph, because in the first paragraph if G-d would speak to me, of course, I wouldn't do it. If I have that immediate experience that would be so overwhelming, like some people have at a conversion experience. It is just overwhelming and they cannot do anything else, but with most of us that is not the way it works. We work with small, little insights, and we see how these things fit together and add to our life, the intimations of the Divine about us, the intimations about how great it is to live a moral and a decent life in spite of all the blandishments of modern culture. These things make an impression upon us and they do it slowly and they do it deliberately but they eventually make an impression upon us. We have to do these things collectively. We have to create an environment for our children which allow them to transmit the tradition.

Unfortunately, this is not always being done in our day. There are even some very fine leaders of the Jewish community who give a lot of their time and means to further the cause of the Jewish people, but they do not even give their children a Jewish education. They do not send them to Jewish schools. They do not realize that it is not enough just to spout off a few Jewish ideas. They will not touch the heart and cause these things to mold and shape another generation. That's why we Jews in America

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have never really been able to reproduce ourselves. It is a terrible thing, but if all the Jews in America would all still be Jews we would have over 60 million Jews. The Jews in America are compared to a mule. The mule is a wonderful animal. It produces great works. It has helped conquer the west. The mule, of course, is a combination of a horse and a donkey. Although the mule produces great things it cannot reproduce itself. It is sterile. Unfortunately, much of American Jewry has been sterile, too. It cannot reproduce itself because it cannot reproduce the feelings. You cannot transfer nostalgia. You have to create a whole environment in which people hear about things and it affects them in a way that makes them want to continue on in the tradition. We know that even in current events. Those Jews who were born after the State of Israel was created do not have the same feeling as people who were born before when they knew the condition of the Jew before and condition of the Jew afterwards. They just assume that everything is the same after the State of Israel as before, but we know there is a difference. We all know that there is a difference between the way people reacted to the Yom Kippur War and the Six Day War. We know that there is a difference because of what happened in Europe with the Holocaust, etc. These experiences, though, that you had yourself and you felt yourself you cannot transmit unless you have a whole community backing you with a whole system to make it work, educational system, cultural system, family system. Unfortunately, people do not want to do things now for the group. They only want to do things as an individual.

We know from the Torah portion Ekev, too, that when Moshe received the first Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai there was thunder and lightning and all nature stopped, but these Ten Commandments did not make any impression on anybody. When Moshe came down he found the people were worshipping

the golden calf. The second Ten Commandments were made differently. Moshe had to hew out the rocks himself. G-d just wrote on the stones the commandments. This time when Moshe came down and when Moshe received them on the mountain there was no thunder, no lightning. Nature did not stop. Nobody knew anything that was going on, but Moshe brought them down and taught them individually to everyone and then collectively and then another time, and slowly throughout the generations the message of the Ten Commandments spread throughout all humanity so the very basis now of the human system is the Ten Commandments. All western civilization and subsequently all civilization now is based upon the Ten Commandments. Yes, hearing is different than seeing. Seeing is an immediate experience which can affect you, but how can you transmit that on to your children? You need to have a system, an educational system, a cultural system, a religious system which allows these ideas to be transmitted to the hearts of your children and grandchildren even though they did not have the immediate experience of them. That has always been the secret of Jewish survival. We have been able to transmit our ideals, our values because we had such a system.

Even in Israel today they have a problem. The Chalutzim who came in were enthused with these ideas, but their children and grandchildren do not have these ideals anymore because they could not transmit them.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a man who went to an art exhibit. There he saw the pictures of a great artist being exhibited. He decided he would sit down and take in all these pictures. He sat down and took in all these pictures and they were glorious. The artist appeared and he talked to the artist and said, "Sir, your paintings are magnificent. I wish I could take all these glorious colors home with me." The artist said, "Sir, your request is going to be granted. You have been sitting

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on my palette." The only way that we can transmit these ideals is if we do it collectively through the family, through the educational system, through the cultural mores of the community, through the efforts of all of us working together. Let us hope we will do this so the Jewish community will continue to thrive and grow and American Jewry will no longer produce mules but will produce human beings who can reproduce themselves not only physically but spiritually. Amen.

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In the Torah portion Ekev we learn about the second paragraph of the Shma. The second paragraph of the Shma seems to almost be a restatement of the first paragraph of the Shma. In the first paragraph of the Shma we learn in last week's Torah portion, Vaeschanan, and we learn we should "love the Lord with all our heart all our soul..." and that we should place these words on our heart and we should teach them to our children and we should bind them as a sign on our hand as well as between our eyes and write them on the doorposts of our house. In the Torah portion Ekev we have the same thing mentioned almost exactly, almost identically. Why do we need two different for the Shma? The third paragraph deals with an entirely different subject, but why would we have to have two paragraphs to the Shma?

Also in the Torah portion Ekev Moshe Rabbeinu tells the Jewish people how they were tested by the manna that fell. He says, "And He afflicted you and suffered you to hunger and fed you with manna which thou knewest not and neither did thy fathers know that He might make thee know that man does not live by bread alone but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live." Of course, there was a wag that said that man does not live by bread alone; he needs cash, but we note here that this is a very important statement, that physical things alone will not satisfy a human being. A human being also needs spiritual things as well, but why does it say here that He afflicted you and He fed you with manna. If G-d fed you with manna, then He did not afflict you because He gave you sustenance every day. Every day the Jewish people would go out and gather the manna, and on Friday they would gather a double portion. That is why we have two challahs on our table for Shabbos for the double portion we got on Friday. The Jewish people were never in danger of starvation because they had manna, so why does it say He afflicted you and suffered you to hunger when He fed you the manna? In fact, the rabbis say that

the manna had miraculous qualities. In fact, the manna would taste like anything the person wanted it to taste like, so why would Moshe say here that the Jewish people were afflicted?

The rabbis answer that the reason why Moshe Rabbeinu said that they were afflicted was because it did not look like food. It had all the nutrients of food but it did not look like food. It did not smell like food. It tasted like anything they wanted it to taste like, but it did not look like food, and, based upon this, the rabbis say that we must have candles Friday night, that one of the very first of all the rabbinic commandments that was enumerated by Moshe Rabbeinu was lighting candles Friday night, because it is not enough to sit around the table and even eat good food Friday night unless you can also see it. You do not have the Oneg Shabbos. You do not have the pleasure of Shabbos, but why should that be so? After all, you are still eating and enjoying the food. The answer they give is because you cannot share the food. You cannot give it to somebody else. It is dark. One of the pleasures of eating is to share the experience with somebody else, and especially, too, with the manna since it did not look like food and if you would give it to somebody else he could have a different idea entirely what it should taste like and it would taste like what he thought it should taste like and not like the way you thought it should taste. There was no ability to share. In order to have spiritual things in this world we have to share, and that, of course, is the importance of a brocha. That is what we learn about in this Torah portion, too, about saying a brocha after you eat, the benching, and also the brocha before you eat, because by sharing what we have and recognizing that the food does not come from our labor alone but also, of course, G-d's help, we transform a basically act of eating to a spiritual act. That, of course,

is what we do with everything. When we give charity we transform the material property that we own into spiritual property because we say that the wealth we acquire we are acquiring in order to help people, not just in order to satisfy our own selfish needs.

This idea is further expounded in the sentence when it says that man does not live by bread alone. Bread is different than breath. It says, "On all which comes out of the mouth of G-d does man live." This is a very anthropomorphic expression. G-d does not have a mouth, but it is explaining here the contrast between bread and breath. When we are talking about bread, bread is something that a person can store. It is something that a person can live without for thirty days. You do not have to share with anybody when you get your bread, that a person when he has bread can just stuff his own mouth and he does not have to interact with anybody else, but breath is altogether different. Breath you cannot store, and breath, if you would deny breath for just a few minutes, you are going to die, but in order to breathe you first have to give out before you can take in. You have to give out before you take in. That is why it is considered a spiritual activity because in order for you to enjoy it you have to give out before you take in. Therefore, when it talking about here that everything comes out from the mouth of G-d will man live, it is obvious that G-d does not breathe, but it means that G-d is sharing with us His greatest treasure, the Torah and all its teachings, and just as we are supposed to share what we have with other people before we can really enjoy what we have, that man, in order to really be a human being, a creature who was created in G-d's image must share just as G-d has shared His Torah with us. That's why it is so important that we all learn to share, and that is why it is so important that there be Shabbos candles so that we can see the food

so that we can share it with others.

The same thing applies for the two paragraphs of the Shma. The paragraph of the Shma that we learned in last week's sedra is only in the singular. It says, "And you shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul..." and in this week's Torah portion it says, "And it shall be if you will listen to My commandments which I am commanding you today to love the Lord your G-d and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul..." The difference here is that the "you" is plural, not singular. The "you" in the paragraph of the Shma in last week's sedra is all in the singular. It is important that we have a personal relationship with G-d, but it is also important that we share what we have gained with others. Here it is very clear that the you is plural. In English there is not this distinction because you is both singular and plural.

What's more, in the paragraph of the Shma in this week's sedra rewards and punishments are stated, but no rewards and punishments are stated in the first paragraph of the Shma in last week's sedra. Of course, we know that one of the reasons for that is because the ways of G-d are mysterious. We do not know how G-d reckons things. We do know many times that pious people suffer and that seemingly evil people prosper. However, on a national level it is true and we can see how evil empires are destroyed. They cannot sustain themselves if they do not follow moral courses. We have seen that in our own lifetimes with Naziism defeated and communism defeated because they were not in any way righteous.

But there is even another explanation about why rewards and punishments are mentioned in this second paragraph of the Shma found in our sedra. We know that we all have two persona. We have a public persona and a private

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persona. We also know, too, that in Jewish law there are two different types of sinners. There is one sinner who is called a Mummata Netaivan. It means a person who sins and does bad things not out of principle but because he is weak. A person has desires and passions and lusts and he just could not contain himself. On principle he knows that he should not do this, but he just cannot help himself. He just was caught in the spirit of the moment and did things he should not do. This, of course, is a very human response and basically it is wrong and it should not be done, but the Halacha is not very strict and not very stern with a person who is caught up in his own desires and passions. However, there is another type of a sinner, and that is a Mummata LaChakais, a person who in principle does things that he should not do, not because he enjoys them and not because he is weak but because he wants to anger G-d. He wants to prove that these things are nonsense and foolish. This type of a person the Halacha rebukes and punishes severely because this type of person says that what he is doing is right and he undermines the whole moral order of the community. Now when we learn about the first paragraph of the Shma we are talking about an individual. We are talking about an individual vis a vis himself and G-d, and, therefore, no rewards and punishments need be stated, but when we are talking about a person who takes a public stance on different types of issues, then, of course, he will mislead people if he continues to say that right is wrong and wrong is right. In fact, the rabbis say that a person who is personally righteous and has not done anything wrong personally but he advocates that his students and other people do things that he has not done but by saying that these things are right, that that person is more guilty than the person who even sins because he has caused other people to sin. So we see here that many times what people do in

their private life is actually irrelevant to what they do and say in their public life. For example, if a person agrees publicly that a certain course of action is wrong and nobody should do and then he, himself, is caught doing it, well, we then ascribe it to the fact that he is weak. He may be even a little bit of a hypocrite, but we know that publicly he takes a certain stand and he really says he believes in it but he, himself, got caught. He, himself, is a little bit weak. In fact, they tell the story about Aristotle that once his students found him on a Saturday night doing things that he had just talked in class about not doing, and when his students approached him and said, "Why are you doing this?" he said, "Well, tonight I am not Aristotle." So many times people are weak. They are overcome, but they do not disavow their positions. These type of people, of course, deserve to be punished somewhat but it is understandable what they do. On the other hand, people who advocate positions that are destructive of public morals, etc. and even if they, themselves, do not do it but cause other people to do it, then they are worthy of punishment. That is why rewards and punishments are mentioned in this second paragraph of the Shma as found in our sedra, because they are talking about the public persona of a human being.

That is also why in this Torah portion we learn about doing the commandments and about practical observances of the Torah, like putting on Tephillin, putting a mezuzah on your door, and afterwards we learn about teaching the children because it is very important that publicly we all take a great stand about the importance of Jewish practice so we can impress upon our children the importance of study, while in the other case of an individual case, it mentions there that a person should first study himself. He should have these words on his heart, and then he should teach them to his children,

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and then we are worrying about practical things, because this is vis a vis an individual, one person talking just to his children or to a few children in a public way, but in our paragraph of the Shma it is important that observances and the public observances of the religion be seen by our children so that they can emulate them and practice them, and that it is important that even if a person, himself, does not learn very much but that that person should make sure that other people learn, that other children learn, even if the person is not a very learned man, but that if that person can only do practical things and can only observe a few customs of Judaism, he should still support Jewish education, while in the previous paragraph of the Shma, we are learning how if a person is enthused himself with the Jewish learning he can transfer that learning to others on a one to one basis without having to worry about taking public stances and without even having to worry about practical observances at this particular time, but when it comes to a public statement, that that person must be careful when he makes a public statement that he conforms to all the outward appearances of what it means to be a Jew, but he conforms to the idea of giving tzedakah and giving charity to Jewish institutions even though he, himself, personally will not benefit from them. Maybe he does not have children or grandchildren or his grandchildren or children are far from Judaism, and, therefore, he does not have a one to one impact on them. Nevertheless, he should still make sure that he supports Jewish education.

I just received a copy of a study done by the American Jewish Committee which states emphatically, and this is suprising because this group is mainly composed of reform Jews, that if a Jew intermarries without conversion that the chances for his children being Jewish are almost nil. If two born Jews marry or if one of the spouses converts there is a great chance that the

Jewish identity will be maintained but in mixed marriages there is almost no chance at all. It shows the importance of Jewish education because it shows that the more Jewish education a person has the less chance that they will be involved in a mixed marriage.

It is important that in public ways even though on a one to one relationship we do not have that type of relationship with the children of the community, but, yet, that we present a picture of support for Jewish observance and of support for Jewish education.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a rabbi who was playing golf. The rabbi was there with his caddy and he took a club and swung the club and missed everything. He was really angry but the caddy was there and he was a rabbi so he looked at the caddy and said, "Oops." Then he took out another club and made some adjustments. This time he swung again and 10 inches before the ball the club drove into the ground and bent. He was really furious but he was a rabbi and the caddy was there, so he said, "Oh, my goodness." Then he took another club and this time he hit the ball. It hit a tree and bounced back and hit him on the head. Redfaced he yelled, "I quit." The caddy said, "You mean you are quitting golf?" The rabbi said, "No, I'm not quitting golf, I'm quitting the rabbinate." It is important that we always maintain our public persona. It is important that we realize that we have a private persona and a public persona, and many times what we do privately does not impinge upon what we do publicly. If what we do privately we do, recognizing that we are weak, that we should not really have done it, that would not necessarily impinge upon our public persona, but publicly we should always proclaim those values which we hold dear, and publicly we should always live according to these values as much as possible, because if we do not then we undermine the community. If we,

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in private, do things we should not do we only undermine ourselves but not the community, and undermining the community is a far greater sin than just undermining ourselves. That's why we have two paragraphs of the Shma to teach us that, to teach us that privately we should try all our best to live according to the values of Judaism, but if, for some reason, we slip sometimes we should at least publicly uphold them. That is very, very important. That's why I always tell people, even if you do not keep 100% kosher in your home, if you have a public affair it should be kosher. You should uphold the standards of our people. On the other hand, if for some reason you cannot give your children or grandchildren a Jewish education for different reasons, you should still make it possible that Jewish education is available to others by supporting liberally Jewish education. Let us all hope that we will do so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.

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In the Torah portion, Ekev, we learn about the sin of the golden calf. It seems very strange that just 40 days after the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, and everyone agrees that they heard at least the first two from G-d, that they would worship the golden calf.

Perhaps we can understand this when we read in the Torah portion, Yisro, how it says that the Jewish people asked Moshe to receive the rest of the Torah for them, and they stood at a distance. Only Moshe entered into the darkness. Moshe told them that they should not be worried, that G-d had only talked to them so He would cast His awe upon them. They still stood at a distance, and asked Moshe to enter the darkness. The Jewish people had prepared for three days to receive the Torah, and then when the moment came, they flinched. They did not want to risk having a relationship with G-d which was ambiguous, murky, and dark. They did not want to have any kind of relationship which they could not control.

Unfortunately, this is the attitude many people have today toward relationships. Unless they can control the relationship, they do not want the relationship. They are afraid of rejection and being run roughshod over. They, therefore,

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reject any relationship which has any degree of risk.

After Moshe failed to come down from the mount at the appointed time, the people reverted to the type of relationship they were used to, vis a vis their gods. Magic and paganism were devices used to control the gods. If you did certain things in a certain order, certain things had to happen. You could control the gods by saying certain words or trapping them in certain objects or idols. That, of course, is the basis of the genie legend.

Judaism has always railed against that attitude. We cannot control G-d. G-d has told us that we will have better lives if we follow His commandments, but this does not mean necessarily we will have lives filled with more material goods, or that our lives will be trouble-free. G-d asks that we hold Him in awe and love Him even if we cannot control Him and cannot understand all His ways. Because we Jews have always proclaimed that we cannot control G-d, the nations of the world have always accused us of stealing their gods. From the time of Laban on, we proclaimed that any idea that we have that you can control G-d is wrong. Because of this, the ancient people considered us

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atheists, and many today consider us agents of the devil. We believe G-d is good and does only what is good for us, even though sometimes it is very painful. We cannot control Him, though. We are asked to love Him and serve Him in spite of the fact that we cannot control Him.

I am reminded of the story they tell about two ten year olds who acted like juvenile delinquents. They were always in trouble. One day their parents, in desperation, decided to take them to the rabbi. Maybe he could help them. One of the boys refused to go, but the other went. The rabbi looked at the boy and said, "Where is G-d?" The boy started to quake. The rabbi wagged his finger at him and in a loud voice said, "Where is G-d?" The boy shook and turned white. Finally, the rabbi, in a shouting voice, said, "Where is G-d?" The boy bolted from his chair and ran home. When he came home, he went into a closet. His brother found him and said, "What happened?" The boy replied, "We're in terrible trouble because G-d is missing, and they think we stole Him." G-d is not missing, but we cannot control Him. He rules the universe according to the way He sees fit. Let us all hope and pray that we will all fulfill the mitzvahs of the Torah and try to be good people so G-d will

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send the Mashiach quickly in our day. Amen.