



Va'etchanan

The Jewish Dual Responsibility

Why all the repetition?

Time and again the Torah presents to us the same commandments and if not for this repetition, the Torah would be far shorter!

A fine example of this is what we read in the first paragraph of the Shema which we will be reading for Parshat Va'etchanan and then the second paragraph which will be in Parshat Eikev.

However, what you will notice is that these same mitzvot of teaching Torah, mezuzah and tefillin in the first paragraph, are addressed to us in the singular. They are addressed to me personally.

But in the second paragraph they are in the plural, they are addressed to the entire nation.

Hashem's message to us is that each one of us lives with a dual capacity.

I'm responsible to myself and Hashem will judge me according to my own personal actions.

Yet, at the same time, I have a responsibility to contribute to the welfare and wellbeing of my people.

So, in the same way as I must teach Torah in my house. So too, I should contribute towards the building and the maintaining of schools and places for Jewish education.

I should guarantee that other people are educated and motivated to perform all the mitzvot of the Torah, not just for me myself but for the sake of our people.

I believe that this is a very strong and relevant message for us right now, because of course we are responsible for ourselves but at this time the people of Israel need the support and the loyalty of every single Jewish person, bearing in mind what's happening in Israel and right around the world.

So, from what appears at the outset to be unnecessary repetition, we actually learn one of the most crucially important messages of our tradition and that is - I don't only live for myself, I need to contribute to the future of my people and through my people, to the future of our world.

Shabbat Shalom