

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Re'eh	15 Aug. 2020	25 Av 5780	Deut. 11:26-16:17	Isa. 54:11-55:5	John 6:35-51

It is written (Deut. 11:28), וְהִקְלַלְהָ, אִם-לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (ve-hak-ke-la-lah, im-lo tish-me'u el-mitz-vt hash-shem e-lo-hei-chem; And the curse: If you do not listen to the commandments of YHWH your Elohim.) The verse's main point is that the curse will befall those who stray from the path to follow "other gods." Thus, there is no reason to say, "If you do not listen to the commandments of YHWH." Or HaChaim explains that someone who refrains from listening to the words of the Torah and studying them is inherently cursed.

Using above analogy, we can break down the verse as follows: "If you do not listen to the *mitzvos*" by neglecting to study the Torah is "the curse." And once a person neglects Torah study another thing will happen to him, for that failing will cause him to stray from the path of Eternal Life in general, as the verse continues "as you stray from the path which I command you today." As his attachment to Torah study diminishes, so will his observance of all the *mitzvos*. This is the reverse of the blessing from verse 27.

Not only that, but we will then fall further and dig for ourselves broken wells, i.e., he will seek out the worship of idols, as the verse says, "to follow gods of others, that you did not know." "Digging broken wells" is used as metaphor for idolatry in Jeremiah 2:13 as it says, "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Meaning, just as he who relies on a "broken well" as his water source will ultimately be let down when all the water leaks out, so too, someone who relies on idol worship to secure blessing and success for himself will ultimately be let down when the false deity turns out to be powerless. This downward spiral is described in greater detail in Leviticus 26:14-43.

It is written (Deut. 11:32), "You shall safeguard, to perform all the decrees and the ordinances that I present before you today." Since the *mizvos* that Moshe is about to command them are tied to the Land, which they have not yet entered, much less conquered, he therefore says that they should bear in mind the upcoming opportunity to perform these *mitzvos*, using the word שמר along the same lines of its usage in B'reshet 37:11, "and his father kept the matter in mind." Thus, וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת (u-she-mar-tem la-'a-sot) means: "You shall bear in mind to perform" the decrees and ordinances when they become applicable.

The idea is that the people should "look forward" to performing these *mitzvos*, the intention being that even though at the time Moshe was speaking with the people, they had not yet entered the Land and were not able to perform these *mitzvos*, they should still bear the matters in mind, with a view toward performing them when the time would come. This also explains why Moshe specifies, "...the decrees and ordinances that I present before you today." Although these *mitzvos* did not apply at the moment, the people should bear them in mind for the time when they would be applicable.

With this approach, Or HaChaim proceeds to explain the beginning of the next verse (12:1), which reads, "These are the decrees and the ordinances that you shall safeguard, to perform in the Land." Having told the people to bear in mind the *mitzvos* that they would need to observe after they entered the Land and conquered it, Moshe goes on to say, "These are the decrees and the ordinances that you shall safeguard, to perform;" meaning, These are those decrees and ordinances I mentioned, which I am commanding you to bear in mind in order to perform them when they become applicable.

And the verse specifies: “to perform them in the Land;” meaning, the reason these *mitzvos* could not be performed at that time is because they are dependent on the people’s entry into the Land, for it is there that Hashem commanded them to destroy all the places of idol worship, as stated in the coming verses, but as long as they did not arrive there, they could not carry out these obligations.