



## Torah for Turbulent Times "Everything We Do Matters"

If everything we do matters, how do we make the choice about what to spend our precious time on? It's a big question. For now I'd like to invite you to spend just an hour tonight by [zooming in](#) to our weekly Torah study (Deuteronomy 11:26-12:28). As for the question, perhaps we'll be able to arrive at an answer or at least some more questions below.

In our Shabbat discussion we approached this question by learning about the paragraph following the *v'ahavta* in our prayer book. It's "cut and pasted" word for word from the Torah into our prayers (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) and placed here because it echoes the original words about loving with our heart and soul, teaching our children, etc. It also includes a challenging idea. In a nutshell, if we obey the commandments then G-d will provide rain to water the produce of the field. If not, there will be no rain. From this conditional statement it appears that everything we do certainly matters. For many this raises more questions. Can our actions and thoughts truly have this kind of impact? Is G-d really watching over every little step? Is this a sort of "magical" thinking?

Each of us may answer these questions differently. That said, I'm going to guess that even if we take a step back and add some doubt to our "playing G-d's hand" so to speak, then we'll likely still mostly agree on this point. Not only are there consequences to our words and actions, but they do matter. As we now know all too well these days, the simple action of wearing a mask makes a difference. A phone call with supportive words to friends, family and community members lets them know that we care.

Bringing in the traditional commentator Rashi for a moment may give us a nudge towards at least one answer to the question above regarding how we spend our time. If it's a *mitzvah*/commandment, then we learn that we are to say, "Yes, Dear (with a capital 'D')." Rashi notes that we are to consider these responsibilities or obligations as though we have heard them for the first time on this day. That is, we are each to try to bring a heightened focus to the now, to this very moment. Whatever hurdles got in the way yesterday, they're like a distant memory. Today is a fresh opportunity to follow through and jump.

What we do as a people here on earth matters. From a heavenly realm to an earthly one, we have the collective power to rein in our words and actions to improve the current state and reality of humanity and our world.

-Rabbi Mark