

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Vo'eschanan

15 Menachem Av, 5785 – August 9, 2025

Compiled from the works of

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THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi Parshas Vo'eschanan

Likkutei Sichos Volume 29, Pages 41 – 48

Rashi in His Own Words

בראשית ז', י"א: וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת הַמִּצְוָה וְאֶת הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אֶנֶכִּי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:
רש"י ד"ה היום לעשותם: ולמחר לעולם הבא ליטול שכרם:

Devorim 7:11: You shall, therefore, observe the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command to you today to do them.

Rashi Heading - today to do them: But in the future (literally tomorrow), in the World to Come, you will take their reward.

Synopsis

At the end of this week's Torah portion, Vo'eschanan, the Torah tells us to keep the Mitzvos that Hashem commands us to do today. Rashi explains that the Torah means that we must keep the commandments today, but we will receive their reward "*tomorrow*" in the World to Come.

What is Rashi telling us? In the previous verse, Hashem said to us that he rewards those who hate Him (meaning the wicked) to their face. He rewards them in this world; He does not wish to reward them in the World to Come. However, for the righteous, there is no reward in this world. This explanation seems difficult to understand. The Torah taught the beginning student numerous times that there *is* a reward for Mitzvos in this world. Shortly after this, the Torah tells us that¹ *because* you will obey the Mitzvos which Hashem will give you, He will love you, bless you, cause you to multiply, and give you the many blessings that the verse enumerates! We see here and elsewhere that there *are* rewards in this world! How can Rashi say that there is no reward in this world?

Rashi takes his wording from a similar phrase written twice in the Talmud. In Tractate Eiruvim, the Talmud says, "Today is to do them, and tomorrow is to *receive* their reward." Rashi, however, chooses the version from Tractate Avodah Zarah, which says that "today is to do them and tomorrow is to *take* their reward." We need to understand why.

1. Our Parshah, Devorim 7:13-16.

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The reason is the difference between "receive" and "take." If I receive something, I am passive. Everything rests in the hands of the one who gives it to me. However, if I take the reward, it is mine. I earned it, and I deserve it. That is why Rashi, who is extremely precise with his language, chooses the version that one *takes* the reward. According to Rashi, there is indeed a reward in this world. Hence, there is no question.

Rashi's Explanation

At the end of this week's Torah portion, Vo'eschanan, the Torah tells us² to "... observe the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command to you today to do them." Rashi cites the words "today to do them" and comments that "but in the future (literally tomorrow), in the World to Come, you will take their reward."

What is Rashi teaching us here? Various commentaries explain that earlier, the Torah said³, "He repays those who hate Him to their face to cause them to perish; He will not delay the one who hates Him, but he will repay him to his face." Rashi explains that Hashem rewards an evil person for the good he does "during his lifetime. He pays him his good reward to cause him to be lost from the World to Come."

In other words, Rashi tells us that Hashem immediately rewards an evil person for the good he does in this world. In this manner, Hashem avoids rewarding him in the world to come. This is the opposite of "the one who observes the commandments, etc." The righteous person receives his reward in the "World to Come"⁴. This is in keeping with what the Sages say: there is no actual reward for what one does in this world. All real reward is reserved for the world to come⁵.

Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

There is an apparent difficulty here in understanding Rashi's words. How can we say that, according to Peshat, there is no reward in this world? The beginning student has often learned that physical

2. Our Parshah, Devorim 7:11.

3. Our Parshah, Devorim 7:10.

4. See Rashi's comments to Parshas Vayeishev, Bereishis 37:2. "When Yaakov wished to dwell in tranquility, the troubles of Yosef sprang upon him. The righteous seek to dwell in tranquility. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, 'What is prepared for the righteous in the world to come is not sufficient for them, but they seek to dwell in tranquility in this world as well?'"

5. See Talmud Kiddushin 39, b. See also the conclusion of Tractate Chullin.

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rewards will come from fulfilling Mitzvos! One small example (of many) is⁶, "If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them, I will give your rains in their time, the Land will yield its produce, and the tree of the field will give forth its fruit ..." Furthermore, *immediately* following this verse the Torah says⁷ "And it will be *because* you will heed these ordinances and keep them and perform, that Hashem your God will keep for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your soil, your grain, your wine, and your oil, the offspring of your cattle and the choice of your flocks, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you, etc.." This is just the beginning of a long list of blessings Jews will receive for observing the Torah. Hashem has promised us countless rewards so far. They are all Peshat – the level at which Rashi explains. How can we explain that Rashi tells us that the beginning student understands that there is no reward in this world?

Several commentaries explain the reason for reward in this world based on the famous teaching of the Rambam⁸. The Rambam explains that there is no reward in this world for its own sake. The entire reason for receiving a benefit in exchange for fulfilling G-d's will is to make it possible to continue carrying out what Hashem wants. If one is, G-d forbid, not well, it will make it difficult for him to do what Hashem wants. If he demonstrates that he wants to perform Hashem's will, Hashem will keep sickness away from him. However, this is not a reward but how Hashem allows one to serve Him. The actual reward does not come until the World to Come. According to the Rambam, the ultimate reward does not come until later.

However, we cannot explain Rashi's meaning according to Peshat in this manner. Rashi's comments make it impossible to say so. The Torah says,⁹ "I will turn towards you, and I will make you fruitful and increase you, and I will set up My covenant with you." Rashi cites the words "I will turn towards you" and explains as follows. "'I will turn away from all My affairs to pay your reward.'" We may compare this to a king who hired some workers. Only one worked for him for a long time, while all the others did not. When they presented themselves to receive payment, the king quickly paid the others a small amount. To the one who had worked for a long time, he said, 'They worked merely a little for me,

6. Parshas Bechukosai, Vayikroh, beginning with 26:3-4.

7. Our Parshah, Devorim 7:12-13.

8. See Rambam Laws of Teshuvah Chapter 9, Paragraph 1.

9. Parshas Bechukosai, Vayikroh 26:9.

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but with you, I must now turn my attention to calculate the substantial amount that I owe you.' Likewise, G-d will quickly pay the nations the small amount He owes them for their few good deeds. He will then turn His attention, as it were, to the Jewish people, to calculate their great reward."

From Rashi's explanation, it is clear that there is a reward in this world. The benefits of following the Torah are not merely an intermediary "perk" to allow him to continue serving Hashem. Instead, He turns away from all of His affairs (so to speak) to reward us.

The Explanation

There is a similar phrase mentioned twice in the Talmud. Rashi quotes these words as his comments here. In Tractate Eiruvim¹⁰, the Talmud says that "today is to do them, and tomorrow is to *receive* their reward." Rashi, however, chooses the version from Tractate Avodah Zarah¹¹: "today is to do them, and tomorrow is to *take* their reward."

What is the difference between "receiving" and "taking?" One who receives something is being passive. Everything rests in the hands of the one who gives it to him. He receives neither more nor less than what the one who gave it decided. However, if one *takes* the reward, it is his. He earned it and deserved it. That is why Rashi, who is extremely precise with his language, chooses the version that involves taking the reward. According to Rashi, there is indeed a reward in this world, according to Peshat.

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

The difference between "receiving" and "taking" can be explained as follows. There is a difference of opinion on whether reward and punishment are cause and effect or miraculous¹². One view is that Hashem neither punishes nor rewards someone because they did something intrinsically good or bad. Instead, the reward or punishment that the person receives is a miracle. The other opinion is that they are a part of nature that Hashem built into the creation. If one performs a particular action, he is punished or rewarded to suit the activity.

10. Tractate Eiruvim, 22, a.

11. Tractate Avodah Zara, 3, a.

12. See Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab Volume 1, beginning with Page 395. See also Likkutei Sichos Volume 5 Page 135, ff. 23.

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This also explains the difference between "receiving" and "taking." If we say that the reward for performing a Mitzvah is natural, Hashem built it into the action. The performance of the Mitzvah automatically generates the reward. Otherwise, the generation of the reward requires a separate step.

(Adapted from a talk given on Shabbos Parshas Vo'eschanan 5725)

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

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May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community

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May she go from strength to strength
In health, happiness, Torah, and mitzvot

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כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו מליובאוויטש

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מאריס

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נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וחי' מושקא שיחיו
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