

III SIFRE DEUTERONOMY, EKEV

“To walk in all His ways” (Deuteronomy 11:22): These are the ways of the Holy One—“gracious and compassionate, patient, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, assuring love for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon...” (Exodus 34:6). Just as God is gracious and compassionate, you too must be gracious and compassionate. “Adonai is faithful in all His ways and loving in all His deeds” (Psalm 145:17). As the Holy One is faithful, you too must be faithful. As the Holy One is loving, you too must be loving.

IV SOTAH 14a

Rabbi Hama said in the name of Rabbi Hanina: “Follow Adonai your God” (Deuteronomy 13:5): What does this mean? Is it possible for a mortal to follow God’s presence? The verse means to teach us that we should follow the attributes of the Holy One. As God clothes the naked, you should clothe the naked. The Bible teaches that the Holy One visited the sick; you should visit the sick. The Holy One comforted those who mourned; you should comfort those who mourn. The Holy One buried the dead; you should bury the dead.

Rabbi Simlai taught: The Torah begins with deeds of lovingkindness and ends with deeds of lovingkindness. It begins with deeds of lovingkindness, as it is written: “And Adonai, God, made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). It ends with deeds of lovingkindness, as it is written: “And God buried Moses in the valley in the land of Moab” (Deuteronomy 34:6).

COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY

Do not separate yourself from the community.

- *Ethics of the Fathers 2:4*

When the community is in trouble, a person should not say, “I will go to my house and I will eat and drink and be at peace with myself.”

- Babylonian Talmud, *Ta’anit 11a*

The wicked son [at the Passover Seder is so designated because he] excludes himself from the community.

- *Mekhilta* commenting on Exodus 13:8

If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?

- Hillel, *Ethics of the Fathers 1:14*

Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof—“Justice, justice you shall pursue!

- Deuteronomy 16:20

Rabbi Judah used to say:

There are ten strong things in the world –

- Rock, but iron cleaves it;
- Iron, but fire melts it;
- Fire, but water quenches it;
- Water, but clouds bear it;
- Clouds, but winds scatter them;
- Wind, but the body withstands it;
- The Body, but fright crushes it;
- Fright, but wine banishes it;
- Wine, but sleep works it off;
- Death is stronger than all,

But Tzedaka delivers from death.

(*B. Bab Batra 10a*)