

## Jumping into Muddy Waters

Deuteronomy 11:13-21  
(Middle paragraph of the Sh'ma)

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ אֶת-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-  
לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם:

If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the LORD your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul,

וְנָתַתִּי מְטֶר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעִתּוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפֹּת דְגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁנּוּ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ:

I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—

וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבִהֵמֶתְךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:

I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill.

הִשְׁמַרְוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them.

וְסָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא-יְהִי מֶטֶר וְהִיאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִהָרָה מֵעַל-  
הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:

For the LORD's anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the LORD is assigning to you.

וּשְׁמַתֶּם אֶת-דְּבָרַי אֵלֶּה עַל-לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרְתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יְדְּכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם:

Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead,

וְלַמְדַתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִקְחֶךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶיךָ:

and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up;

וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—

למען ירבו ימיהם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים על הארץ:

to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

- How do you understand this paragraph?
- Can you read this t'filah and accept its message?
- What underlying fear can you sense from the writer about his/her world?