

Heaven and Earth; Rain and Dew

Thought for the Week:

Rab Yehudah said, "The day when rain falls is as great as the day when the Torah was given, as it is said [in Deuteronomy 32:2], 'Let my teaching drop as the rain.' [When Moses said] "teaching", he meant Torah, as it is said of the Torah [in Proverbs 4:2] "For I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my Torah." (b.*Ta'anit* 7a)

Commentary:

Moses begins his song by calling upon the heavens and the earth as witnesses to his teaching. He says, "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth." (Deuteronomy 32:1) He follows this progression, from heaven to earth, when he says, "Let my teaching drop as the rain." (Deuteronomy 32:2) Rain is that which falls from heaven to earth, in a sense, connecting heaven and earth. In rabbinic literature, Torah is often compared to rain falling from heaven to earth.

The sages compared Torah to water, for just as water descends from a higher to a lower level, so too the Torah descended from its place of glory to the realm of men:

Rabbi Chanina ben Ida said, "Why are the words of the Torah likened unto water [in Isaiah 55:1], 'Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters.'? This is to teach you that just as water flows from a higher place to a low place, so too the words of the Torah ..." (b.*Ta'anit* 7a)

When water is in the heavens, though it is vapor in the form of the clouds, it is still, in its basic essence, water. As it descends in the form of rain, it is still water. When it arrives on the earth as falling rain, it is still water. It is the same in heaven and on earth, though its form might be different. Whether in the form of clouds in heaven or pooling up in streams and rivers on earth, at every stage water is water. So too with Torah in its descent from the heavens. In the heavens it is Torah, and here on earth it is Torah. Its essence remains Torah.

The Torah of Moses has descended to us in a form we can understand and comprehend. The ineffable word of God has taken on the garments of human language so that we might hear and understand. It has come in the form of laws and commandments so that we might speak it and do the Word of God. When we do it, we are allowing God's word to clothe itself in the garments of our human flesh. We are actually incarnating the word of God on earth.

That which began in the heaven as the unsearchable and unknowable word of God has descended like rain, like water, to the level of the earth where it waters the grass and plants that soak it up and incorporate it into their being. Through this connection, heaven and earth are united.

We read in the gospel of John that the Word (*Logos*) is God. It is not another God or something different than Him, but it is Him. And yet, through some inexplicable miracle, the Word descends to the earth and takes on the garments of human flesh—a real human being—Yeshua of Nazareth, forming a connection between heaven and earth. Yeshua spoke the words of His Father and kept His commandments. He clothed them in the garments of His body. He is the Word made flesh, the Living Torah. He is the living Word of God united with the substance of earth, but His essence remained the same on earth as it was in heaven.