



Jewish Texts on Information and Action

Exodus 24:7	
We will do and we will listen	נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע:

This text is often used to show the obedience of the Jewish people or their willingness to act according to God's will even before knowing what they are committing to do.

- What do you think of this type of obedience?
- Are there any circumstances in which you might commit to doing something before knowing the reasoning behind the request?

Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, "All that Adonai has spoken we will do and we will listen."	וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע: יי כל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר
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This shows the above words in context of the whole verse. In it, Moses reads the words of the covenant to the people showing that they knew the laws and expectations before they committed.

- In your opinion, is it more or less a commitment to make a choice if you are informed vs. uninformed? Why?
- In this case, what is the benefit of being informed?
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Exodus 24:3	
Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of Adonai and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, "All the things that Adonai has commanded we will do!"	וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְסַפֵּר לָעָם אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְיָ וְאֵת כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וַיַּעַן כָּל־הָעָם קוֹל אֶחָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְיָ נַעֲשֶׂה:

Exodus 19:5-8	
Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."	עֲתָה אִם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־ בְּרִיתִי וְהִיִּיתֶם לִי סֻגְלָה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָל־ הָאָרֶץ: וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מְמַלְכֶת כְּהֹנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:



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<p>Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all that Adonai had commanded him.</p> <p>All the people answered as one, saying, "All that Adonai has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the people's words to Adonai.</p>	<p>וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי הָעָם וַיֵּשֶׁם לִפְנֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ יי :</p> <p>וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע מִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָעָם אֵלָיו :</p>
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The above texts show that the people were told what was expected of them at least three times. In the final text, which occurs first chronologically in the Torah, they are also told the benefits they will receive.

- The Israelites don't change their mind after hearing their rights and responsibilities multiple times. Do you think that Moses was wasting his time telling them the same thing over and over again?
- What are the benefits of hearing information multiple times before making a decision?

Talmud, Avodah Zarah 2b	
<p>As it is written: "And they stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exodus 19:17), and Rav Dimi bar Hama says: The verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, overturned the mountain, i.e., Mount Sinai, above the Jews like a basin, and He said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there, under the mountain, will be your burial. The nations of the world will claim that they too could have been coerced to accept the Torah.</p>	<p>דכתיב (שמות יט, יז) וייתיבבו בתחתית ההר ואמר רב דימי בר חמא מלמד שכפה הקב"ה הר כגיגית על ישראל ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלין את התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם</p>

Talmud, Kiddushin 40b	
<p>Rabbi Tarfon and the elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nithza's house, in Lydda, when this question was raised before them: Is study greater, or good deeds? Rabbi Tarfon answered, saying: Deeds are greater. Rabbi Akiba answered, saying: Study is greater, for it leads to doing. Then they all answered and said: Study is greater, for it leads to action.</p>	<p>וכבר היה רבי טרפון וזקנים מסובין בעלית בית נתזה בלוד נשאלה שאילה זו בפניהם תלמוד גדול או מעשה גדול נענה רבי טרפון ואמר מעשה גדול נענה ר"ע ואמר תלמוד גדול נענו כולם ואמרו תלמוד גדול שהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה תניא</p>