

❖ PARSHAT EIKEV

This week's Torah portion opens with an unusual expression: "Eikev ('if' or 'because') you listen to these laws..." Instead of the more common word "im" to denote "if," the Torah uses the word "eikev," which means "heel." According to the Torah commentator, Rashi, eikev alludes to the "simple mitzvot usually trampled underfoot" -- those mitzvot whose importance is sometimes denigrated. Rashi's explanation is based on a Midrash which states: "These are the simple commandments that people are not always careful to keep; they toss them under their heels."

The Midrash is not referring to a person who considers these mitzvot to be trivial, G-d forbid, or who scorns them intentionally. Rather, the Midrash refers to a Jew who accepts that these mitzvot must be observed and who endeavors to keep them, yet keeps postponing their observance until they are "tossed under the heel." Such a person is likely to divide G-d's commandments into categories, according to what he perceives as importance. To him, the "important" mitzvot are the "head" and must take priority. "Let me first observe the 'important' mitzvot perfectly," he says "then I'll start with the others." The simplest mitzvot are left for last. According to this way of thinking, the Jew does not demand of himself a level of conduct that is "within the letter of the law" until he considers himself to have mastered the "important" mitzvot.

What is the consequence of such an outlook? When this person is asked to love every single Jew -- including those he does not know personally -- he replies, "How can you ask that of me? It's hard for me to love people I do know! How can you expect me to extend it to Jews I've never met?" When pressed to observe mitzvot even more scrupulously than is required he replies, "No! There's got to be a certain sequence in observing mitzvot. Demanding that I do more than the basics is like asking me to walk in the street barefoot while wearing a beautiful tie around my neck! You've got to start at the beginning and work your way up."

While these arguments may sound logical at face value, they are nothing but the counsel of the evil inclination. In truth, the foundation of a Jew's G-dly service is his faith; it is predicated on the acceptance of the yoke of heaven, not on intellectual arguments or rationalizations. The function of the mitzvot is to connect us to G-d. Every mitzva that a Jew observes strengthens his bond with G-d, regardless of whether it is an "important" commandment or a "simple" one, i.e., related to the "head" or to the "heel." If any mitzva allows us to draw nearer to G-d and unite with Him, why not do it immediately? (From: L'Chaim 5757, #482, Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, Vol. 19)

"It shall come to pass because you will listen to these laws." (7:12) QUESTION: Instead of the word "eikev" - "because" - it could have said "keshetishme'un" - "when you will listen" - or "im tishme'un" - "if you will listen"? ANSWER: On Mt. Sinai Hashem gave the Jewish people the ten commandments. In these ten commandments are included the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot of the entire Torah (see Shemot 24:12, Rashi). In the version of the ten commandments as they are recorded (ibid. 20:2-14) there is a total of one hundred and seventy-two words. The word "eikev" has the numerical value of one hundred and seventy-two. Hence, the Torah is saying, "It shall come to pass 'eikev tishme'un' - because you will listen i.e. observe 'eikev' - the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot which are in the one hundred and seventy-two words of the ten commandments. Thus, your G-d will safeguard for you the covenant and kindness that He swore to your forefathers."

Alternatively, the Gemara (Yoma 28b) says that our father Avraham kept the entire Torah, as Scripture states, "eikev asher shama Avraham bekoli" - "because Avraham hearkened My voice [kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws] (Bereishit 26:5). In light of the above, the proof that Avraham kept the Torah may be from the word "eikev," which is a reference to the one hundred and seventy-two words of

the ten commandments, which include the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot of the Torah.

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 9a) says that the world will exist six thousand years. Two thousand of these are astonishingly void of Torah, two thousand years are ones of Torah without Mashiach, and the last two thousand years will start the era of Mashiach. The first two-thousand-year period concluded when Avraham reached the age of fifty-two and was introduced to Torah. The second two-thousand-year period ended one hundred and seventy-two years after the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash, and then the era of Mashiach began (see Rashi).

With the word "eikev," which has the numerical value of one hundred and seventy-two, the Torah is hinting that "eikev" - one hundred and seventy-two years after the destruction - "tishme'un" - "you will hear" - the footsteps of Mashiach.

"You shall teach them to your children to discuss them, while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise." (11:19) QUESTION: Why does the Torah have to specify all the conditions under which a parent should teach his children, instead of saying simply "teach them at all times"? ANSWER: Often children, out of respect or fear of parents, fulfill their wishes and desires. However, once that motivation no longer exists, the children do as they wish. For instance, many children observe Torah and mitzvot while their parents are alive in order to please them, but not after their parents' passing. True education consists of molding a person's way of life and thinking so that the principles instilled in him remain imbedded forever. The Torah is not only instructing when to teach children, but also specifying the kind of education to give them. The goal should be to permeate the children with Torah and firmly impress on them the importance of its observance. Thus, they will study and observe not only when the father is home with them, but even when he "walks on his way": when he does not have any further physical contact with them, they will still continue to observe Torah and mitzvot on their own. (From: VeDibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky)

❖ LAWS OF SHABBAT - 39 Melachot: Tochain (Grinding)

General restrictions on medicines and therapeutic treatments: In the time of the Talmud, most medicines were derived from herbs and other vegetable sources. These herbs were usually prepared by grinding or pulverizing them, and were effective treatments for the ailments of the Talmudic period.

Because the preparation of these medications involved the Melocho of Tochain, taking any form of medication or therapy was Rabbinically prohibited to safeguard the Melocho. Even exercising and other forms of physical therapy to improve one's fitness are included in this restriction (although they are in no way associated with herbal remedies).

Although modern medications are different, and the original reason behind this Rabbinic ordinance no longer applies, the restriction itself continues to remain in force.

Any form of corrective or health-enhancing therapy is included in this prohibition. This includes: **Ingesting pills or liquid medicines, the use of topical therapies (salves, ointments, lotions, powders etc.), applying herbal or similar alternative health preparations, acupuncture, exercise or any other physical therapies.** Only relatively minor ailments that are not life threatening come under this restriction. Serious illnesses and severely painful conditions were never restricted by this Rabbinic ordinance. (From: The 39 Melochos by Dovid Ribiat)

THE MITTELER REBBE QUOTED THE ALTER REBBE: "AHAVAT YISRAEL MUST POSSESS ONE TO THE VERY CORE OF LIFE ITSELF." (1)

FOOTNOTE: 1. AD MITSUI HANEFESH. THE IDENTICAL PHRASE IS USED BY THE SAGES (SIFRI, DEVARIM 6:5) TO DESCRIBE THE REQUIRED DEGREE OF LOVING G-D, "...WITH ALL YOUR SOUL ETC...", I.E. UP TO, AND INCLUDING, READINESS TO GIVE UP ONE'S LIFE. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM AV 18)

Nothingness is the medium through which all energy moves, from above to below and from below to above. Below, in Man, a sense of nothingness that transcends ego. Above, Nothingness that transcends all boundaries and planes. The nothingness below fuses with the Nothingness above, locking heaven and earth in eternal embrace. That is why G-d is found amongst the truly humble.

-Bringing Heaven Down to Earth

PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY CLASSES

<u>Sunday</u>	8:00 AM	Gemara-Tractate Berachot (men)
<u>Monday</u>	8:00 PM	Chumash (men and women)
<u>Tuesday</u>	8:00 PM	Gemara-Tractate Sukkha (men)
<u>Wednesday</u>	8:30 PM	Halacha and Tanya (women)
<u>Thursday</u>	10:00 AM	Chassidus (women)
	8:00 PM	Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students
<u>Daily</u>	6:45 to 7:15 AM	Chasiddus

K There will be no class on Sunday, August 20.

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri: 6:00 AM & 7:30 AM
 Sunday: 9:00 AM
 Mincha/Maariv: 7:30 PM

SHABBAT PARSHAT EIKEV

August 18, 2000

Candlelighting: 7:17 PM
 Friday Mincha: 7:30 PM
 Early Minyan 6:05 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:36 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- Tanya 8:45 AM
- Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent
- Pirkei Avos 6:20 PM
- Mincha 7:05 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit
- Shabbat ends 8:17 PM

Kiddush this week is being sponsored by Marty Biegel in memory of his wife's yartzheit.

Seuda Shlishit is being sponsored by Ms. M. Novak-Dattels in memory of her son, Leo's yartzheit.

Yartzeits: Leo Novak - Av 19, Riva Freidrich - Av 20, Yitzchak Dafner - Av 20, Marvin Levingston Av 23.

Happy Birthday to Bassie Shusterman.

GOOD SHABBOS!

