



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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The Reward Will Be In the End

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Eikev. "V'ha'yah aikev tishm'une ais hamishpatim... {And it will be 'eikev' you will accept the judgments...}.[7:12]" The word 'eikev' has many different meanings which the different commentators incorporate into their explanation of the passuk {verse}.

The Targum explains 'eikev' to mean 'in exchange.' In exchange for your accepting the laws, the passuk continues and says that Hashem will maintain the covenant and kindness of which He swore to the Patriarchs.

Rashi explains the word 'eikev' to mean 'heel.' If you will accept those 'light' mitzvos which a person (often) tramples on with his heel...

Eikev can also mean the end, as the heel is the 'end' of the body. The Baal HaTurim often explains the connection between the last words of one parsha and the first words of the following parsha. Here he points out that the previous parsha, after commanding us to keep the commandments, concluded with the words: "Today to do them [7:11]." Our parsha begins: "V'hayah eikev—And it will be in the end." Today, this world, is the place to fulfill the commandments but the reward will only be in the end, in the world to come.

Last night my wife and I visited an old neighbor of ours who had lost her husband while we were away in the States. I had mentioned them in parsha-insights a while ago but I feel it deserves to be repeated.

They were both survivors of the Holocaust. He had been married with children when the atrocities began. By the end of the war he was alone in a way that I don't think any of us could even imagine. She was single when she was sent to Auschwitz.

My wife and I learned to be sensitive to her sensitivities. My wife once 'snapped' the gum she was chewing while our neighbor was visiting. She jumped and suddenly had a look of terror on her face. She, blushing, explained that the sound reminded her of the whips she had been subjected to. Another young couple in the building once brought home a dog. She took refuge in our apartment which was the closest door available. She explained that 'Dr.' Mengele Y"SH had wanted to know what happens when a human is bit by a dog and nothing is done to treat the wound. She was chosen as the 'patient' and since then had a tremendous fear of dogs.

They met after the war and married. Wanting to start a more hopeful life than Europe could offer, they were part of the 'illegal immigration' to Palestine. When the State was declared, life didn't become all that much easier for them. She would often laugh, hearing about the aliyah {immigration to Israel} rights that the government granted immigrants and comparing it to what they had been faced with on their 'aliyah' about thirty five years earlier. We received rent subsidies on our apartment—they lived in tents. We had three years during which we could buy a car and all major appliances tax-free—they were draining swamps. The list went on and on.

Two children were born to them, a son and a daughter. The son

fought in the Six Day War but died as a very young man. I never got clear if he died in the war or from an illness afterwards.

When my wife and I moved to Israel they were already older people. He worked hard in the kitchen of one of the local institutions. She would deliver the mail. Until they became too old and feeble, they were there daily, earning their honest living.

They were people who had borne so much pain and suffering and yet carried on with their lives with happiness and a sincere devotion to Hashem. I often thought that any one of the things which they had endured probably would have knocked me right out of the batter's box. But they endured.

As we were sitting and talking last night, reminiscing about her husband, a"h, my gaze fell onto the numbers still etched on her arm. I thought to myself that we really don't have too many people like this left. People who suffered so much only because they were Jews—and yet didn't budge.

We are accustomed to such comforts and luxuries. One of my Rabbeim once said that when we want to describe to our children how hard it was when we were kids, we'll have to tell them that when we wanted to change the channel of the television, we had to actually get out of our chair, walk to the television and turn the dial...

I also thought about the Rashi that I quoted above. Rashi spoke about the commandments which get trampled on—I was thinking about the people who get trampled on.

She said to us a number of times that this world doesn't seem to have any room for her. Money, money, money. That's all that seems to matter. That is the idolatry of today. That's all people want—that's all people respect. Everyone wants it but don't want to work for it. (And that was her assessment without her ever having heard about IPO's and internet stocks...)

Her husband of blessed memory worked hard and simply in order to earn his living. He never expected anything from anyone else and never wanted anything from anyone else. Amongst the Sages of the Talmud we find Rabi Yochanan the sandal-maker. That is how he is referred to throughout the Talmud. Productive, honest, proud. My neighbor was a potato peeler—those were the only 'chips' he worked with. Productive, honest, proud. Very often, those are the people who get trampled on.

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Candle Lighting	7.29pm-7.35pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.19am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 9.02pm
Motzei Shabbos	10.07pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

Our parsha warns: "Be careful not to forget Hashem your G-d... You'll build beautiful houses, have much livestock, amass large amounts of silver and gold... and forget Hashem.[8:11-14]"

Every person is created in the 'form' of Hashem. Last night I was thinking that perhaps forgetting the poor, 'insignificant' people is included in this warning not to forget Hashem. The truth is that we are the ones who stand to lose the most by not getting to know and learn from such incredibly stalwart people. As I was looking at the numbers on her arm I was thinking that the window of opportunity is slowly closing. May Hashem grant us the wisdom to open our eyes and our hearts.

On Cue

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Not often does G-d Almighty tell anybody to leave him alone. But then again, Moshe isn't everybody.

This week, Moshe recounts the sad tale of the Golden Calf. Moshe had promised to return from Mount Sinai after receiving the Torah in forty days, but the Jews miscalculated. According to their calculations, he was late. Fearing that Moshe would never return from his celestial mission, the Jews made themselves a golden calf and worshipped it while proclaiming, "this is our god that took us out of Egypt." Obviously, the calculations and miscalculations of the Jewish People are not as simple as they appear on the surface. That, however is an entirely different issue.

I'd like to focus in on the aftermath of the calamity of the Golden Calf. Hashem actually wanted to destroy the Jewish Nation and rebuild a new folk with Moshe, as its patriarchal leader. "Release me," said G-d, "and I will destroy them and build a new nation from you" (Deuteronomy 9:14)). Immediately after the words, "release me" Moshe sprung into action. In the Book of Exodus, it details how Moshe pleaded, cajoled, and reasoned with Hashem with a multitude of persuasive arguments that calmed His wrath. The Jews were spared.

What is troubling is Moshe's chutzpah. Didn't Hashem specifically tell him, "leave me alone"? What prompted him with the audacity to defy a direct command of Hashem?

Herbert Tenzer served as a distinguished congressman from New York in the 1960s. More importantly, he was an observant Jew who was a proud activist and was instrumental in providing relief for many Holocaust survivors. A few months before his passing, some years ago, he related to me the following story:

The energetic and often outspoken Rabbi Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati, Ohio was a prominent force in the Vaad Hatzallah Rescue Committee. He worked tirelessly throughout the terrible war years and their aftermath to save and place the victims of Nazi depravity. In addition to his prominence in the Jewish world, Rabbi Silver enjoyed a personal relationship with the very powerful Senator Robert Taft of Ohio.

Rabbi Silver had a very difficult request that needed much political pressure and persuasion to accomplish. He asked Mr. Tenzer to accompany him to the Senator.

"Senator Taft!" he exclaimed, mixing his distinct accent in which the s would sound as sh, with a high pitched intoning of emotions. I have a very important and difficult request!"

Rabbi Silver went on to plead his case of obtaining a certain number of visas for some refugees who may not have met all the criteria. Senator Taft looked nonchalant and non-committal. The Senator thought for a while then grimaced. He slowly and carefully stretched his response. "It would be arduous and burdensome," he began. "but technically," he continued, implying all the while that he was not the least bit anxious to get his hands dirty, "it can be done."

But Rabbi Silver did not hear anything except the last three words. "IT CAN BE DONE?" He shouted with joy. "SHO DO IT!" Needless to say the stunned Senator got to work immediately and obtained

the visas for the beleaguered Jews.

Moshe heard one line from Hashem, "leave me alone, and I will destroy them." That was his cue. The Talmud in Berachos explains that hearing those words, Moshe knew that now it all depended on him. The only way Hashem would destroy His people was if Moshe left him alone. And he didn't. Moshe badgered, cajoled, and pleaded with the Almighty and we were spared.

My Rebbe once quoted legendary slugger Ted Williams, the last player to achieve a batting average of over .400. "Every player gets one pitch that he definitely can hit. To hit .400, don't miss that pitch." Instead of recoiling at the words "release me" or "leave me be," Moshe saw his pitch. And he hit it awfully hard.

In life there are many cues. This week Moshe teaches his nation that when you get your cue, don't miss it. Even if it takes a little chutzpah.

Trivial Matters

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"This shall be the reward when you listen..." (7:12)

The simple interpretation of the verse is that if we observe the ordinances of Hashem, we will be rewarded and He will love us. However, Rashi interprets the verse midrashically. The word "eikev" means "heel". The verse is referring specifically to those mitzvos which we trample underfoot, for we perceive them to be less important.¹ The Mizrahi questions the need for Rashi's interpretation, especially since the Midrash apparently contradicts the simple interpretation. The simple interpretation implies that the verse refers to all ordinances. Rashi limits the verse to only those which we perceive as less important.²

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos warns us to be as meticulous in our observance of the less important mitzvos as we are in the more important mitzvos, for we do not know on what basis we are being rewarded.³ If it is possible to distinguish between less important and more important mitzvos, why, in fact, are we not rewarded more for those which are more important?

The stronger the relationship you have with a person, the more at ease you are with asking him to do something which is relatively trivial. However, in a relationship which is not so strong, you tend to limit requests to matters of significance. For example, a person would not think twice about waking up a mere acquaintance at two o'clock in the morning for medical assistance, but the same person would find it inconceivable to wake up the acquaintance asking for a pint of ice cream. On the other extreme, a woman will have no problem with asking her husband to buy her a pint of ice cream at two o'clock in the morning.

We are naturally more meticulous with those precepts which we perceive to be more fundamental, for example belief in Hashem and honoring one's parents. Moreover, for those precepts which Hashem commands us to observe, in which we do not perceive any major fundamental principles, it is possible to approach them with less enthusiasm. However, it is with these very mitzvos that we show our commitment and express our love for Hashem. The stronger the relationship, the more apt one is to acquiesce to a seemingly trivial request. Therefore, our observance of "themitzvos kalos", the less serious mitzvos, is the yardstick for our relationship with Hashem.

With this, we can understand what the Mishna in Pirkei Avos is teaching us. We do not know on what basis we are rewarded for observance of the precepts, whether it is the gravity of the precept or the reflection of commitment and love in adherence of the precept. The Midrash understands that these are the precepts which the verse is alluding to, for the verse is referring to those mitzvos for which we are rewarded with Hashem's love. This must be because those mitzvos express our love for Hashem. This, the Midrash explains, must be the mitzvos which are perceived to be less important, for our observance of them truly expresses our love for Hashem.