

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EIKEV - 5762

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From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2002 8:23 PM
To: weekly1@torahweb.org
http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rsch_eikev.html
RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER
ARE WE STILL THE AM HANIVCHAR?

After so many centuries of persecution we understand very well the question of the Jewish people (in the haftarah of parshas Eikev), "Has Hashem forsaken us? Has He forgotten about us?" The prophet Yeshaya responds that although all people were created "betzelem Elokim", only the Jewish people are considered "bonim la-Makom". Can a mother ever forget about her own baby? Furthermore, even if once in a long while one would come across an instance where a mother would forget about her own child, I (says Hakadosh Baruch Hu) will never forget about you (the Jewish people).

The Medrash sees an additional level of meaning in this pasuk. G-d will forget "Eileh", but He'll never forget about "anochi". At the time of the "chet haeigel" the Jewish people used the expression "Eileh elohecha Yisroel" which will be forgotten by G-d; the zechus of the occasion when G-d declared "Anochi Hashem Elohecha" on maamad Har Sinai and Klal Yisroel accepted the Torah, will never be forgotten. Why does Hashem have such a selective memory? Is this an evenhanded approach?

The answer obviously is that we all have a selective memory, otherwise we would not be able to exist. We all have friends, family members, and business associates who have at some time or another wronged us. Do we walk around all the time with a strained love – hate relationship towards everyone? Of course not! We decide based on the basic nature of the other person, place, or institution, whether he (or it) is basically good, someone (or something) to be liked, and then we learn to ignore the instances where that person has wronged us, deeming them as exceptions to the rule. When we decide that we like our neighborhood, or our shul, this does not mean that we can not find any "chesronos". We learn to overlook the few chesronos, because the overall picture is so good.

So too, Hakadosh Baruch Hu has determined based on that track record of our forefathers that Klal Yisroel is an unusually marvelous group. The fact that upon occasion we do things to anger Him deserves to be ignored, they are atypical activities.

The Talmud (Chagigah 5b) records the debate between one of the early Christians and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Channanya. The Christian presented the standard position of his religion that G-d had rejected the Jewish people, and that they are no longer the chosen nation, that G-d has walked away from the Jews, and that they are in a state of "hester ponim", without any divine providence or protection. To this Rabbi Yehoshua responded that "Yodo netuya aleinu". The fact that only the Jews are singled out for persecution all over the world, and in all of the generations, is clearly an indication that we are certainly still the "am hanivchar". Hashem is clearly looking after us. Although we do not see Him, He can see us, as the pasuk says in Shir Hashirim, He is "Meitziz min hacharakim" (peeking in through the cracks in the door in such a way that although He can not be seen, He is still able to see all). The Ribono Shel Olam has His plan in history, and we believe that everything that He does is for the good. We can not understand how it

can be, but we still believe that all the suffering and the persecutions we have experienced were and still are letov.

Historically, the Catholic Church has still maintained its age-old position, that the Jewish people, by rejecting otto haish, have forfeited their status as am hanivchar. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church was opposed to the Zionist movement. Eretz Yisroel is the chosen land, assigned only to the chosen nation. Therefore, according to the Church, until the Jews will accept otto haish, they are not entitled to control Eretz Yisroel. It is for this reason that the Vatican did not officially recognize Medinat Yisroel for many years. But the mere existence of the Jewish State stood in contradiction to this basic principle of their religion. After a while a position to defend their faith was developed, and they argued that although the Jewish people controlled modern Israel, this was not really Eretz Yisroel of old, which really consists of the city of Jerusalem, Chevron, Shchem, etc. After the Six Day War, this "teiritz" collapsed. It is for this reason that the Vatican has been insisting ever since 1967 that the holy city of Jerusalem be declared an international city. Anything but under Jewish control! The Vatican, in recent years, has also stepped up their missionary activities both in Eretz Yisroel and all over the world. They believe that when the Jews will convert to Christianity, then they will once again join the true chosen nation, and be entitled to the chosen land.

But the Torah repeatedly tells us, and the Neviem all reiterate the principle, that G-d's covenant with our forefathers was never broken. The Jewish people has always remained the Am Hanivchar. The horrendous persecution that only our people has experienced for so many years and throughout the world is simply proof of this chosenness. G-d will overlook "Eileh", and remember only "Onochi", and ultimately reveal Himself to mankind, and redeem His beloved children.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Eikev

"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Eikev

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Manna From Heaven

The One Who feeds you manna in the desert...in order to test you. (Devarim 8:16)

Everyone knows that life is a test. We struggle to make a living, to raise our children, to build up our communities. Nothing comes easy, and our test is to deal with the hardships and frustrations in the best way possible.

But what if our livelihood were served up to us on a silver platter? How wonderful that would be! No more worries about how to pay for the children's tuition or the new roof. What if everything we needed came to us like manna from heaven? Would we consider this a test? Hardly. We would consider it a blessing. The Torah, however, seems to say otherwise.

No sooner had the Jewish people come forth from Egypt that they complained (Shemos 16:3), "If only we had died by the hand of G-d in the land of Egypt when we were sitting beside the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread; now you have brought us out into the desert to let the entire congregation starve to death."

"Behold, I will rain down bread from the heavens on you," Hashem replied (ibid. 16:4). "The people shall go out to collect their daily portion every day, in order to test whether or not they will follow My Torah." The commentators wonder what kind of test this is. What could be better than having everything you need delivered to your doorstep every day? This is a test? This is a blessing!

Rashi explains that Hashem was referring to the laws that govern the manna. One could not store away any manna for the next day. One had to collect a double portion on Friday. And so forth. This was the

test. Would the Jewish people observe the laws of the manna scrupulously?

This test is also mentioned in Parashas Eikev, "The One Who feeds you manna in the desert...in order to test you." Sforno explains that the test is to see if the Jews would still follow the Torah when they do not have to worry about their livelihood.

Yes, there is a great test in "bread raining down from heaven." Affluence without effort is a dangerous thing. It comes with a great amount of leisure time and freedom of action. What do we do with that leisure time and that freedom of action? Do we use our leisure time and freedom of action to taste the forbidden? This is the great test of the manna.

We are all aware of the test of poverty. We are all aware of the trials and tribulations of being poor. However, says Sforno, affluence also comes with great temptations. It puts a tremendous responsibility on a person. This is the test of the manna, and it is the test for many Jews in these affluent times.

The Chovos Halevavos writes in Shaar Habitachon that one of the reasons people, unlike birds and animals, must make a great effort to earn their livelihood is to control the yetzer hara. If we had too much time on our hands, we would be unable to resist the temptations he puts before us. As it is, we are either too busy or too tired most of the time. And even then it is a struggle to resist temptation.

The Maggid of Mezritch once said that when people face troubles, sickness or mortal danger, Heaven forbid, they all become religious. They all come to shul. They pray fervently. They say Tehillim with tears streaming down their cheeks. They give charity generously. But when things are going well, when they are going wonderfully, do they give much thought to the Almighty? This is the test of the manna.

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MessageFrom: chrysler [rachrysl@netvision.net.il] Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2002 9:47 AM To: Midei Parsha Subject: MIDEI SHABBOS BY RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER

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Eikev The Two Parshiyos of the Sh'ma Four questions will help us to gain a better understanding of the first two Parshiyos of the Sh'ma:

1. Why does the second Parshah not contain "be'chol me'odechem" (corresponding to "be'chol me'odecho" in the first)? 2. In light of Rabbi Ya'akov in Kidushin (39b), who holds that G-d does not reward us for our good deeds in this world, why, in the second Parshah, does the Torah then describe the reward for Mitzvos in this world? 3. Now that it does, why does it omit the main reward, which is in the World to Come? 4. Why then, is there no mention of reward in the first Parshah?

The K'li Yakar in Bechukosai, cites many answers to the third question. Here are three of them.

1. The Ramban and Seifer ha'Ikrim explain that the concept of Olam ha'Bo is confined to individuals. There is no such thing as a communal Olam ha'Ba.

2. According to the I'bn Ezra, the Torah was given to K'lal Yisrael.

Consequently, it cannot refer to the Reward in Olam ha'Bo, since most people do not get there (though the Mishnah in Sanhedrin 'All Yisrael have a portion in the World to Come' has connotations to the contrary).

3. The Ramban quoting the Chovas ha'Levovos explains that the Torah does speak about Olam ha'Bo because it is obvious. Based on the premise that everything reverts to its source, it is obvious that having performed its duty in this world, a Neshamah goes back to the world of total goodness from which it came, to reap the benefits of the good that it performed whilst it was here. What is not so obvious is that we receive reward for our good deeds here in this world. As a matter of fact, the Ramban explains, it is nothing short of a miracle that the sun shines and the rain falls as a result of our good deeds, as if the two were directly linked. That explains why the Torah needs to state it.

In answer to the first question, the Rudziner Rebbe points out that the first Parshah comprises 'Ol Malchus Shamayim' (the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven), and the second, 'Ol Mitzvos' (the yoke of the Mitzvos). The former, which incorporates the various branches of belief in G-d, has no financial limits, whilst the latter, in connection with which Chazal have prohibited spending more than one fifth of one's resources, clearly has. Consequently, it is perfectly appropriate to insert "be'chol me'odecho" in the first paragraph, but not in the second. The Ha'amek Davar, basing his answer on the distinction cited by the Gemara in B'rachos, explains that the first Parshah inserts "be'chol me'odecha" (which he interprets as 'with all your might' as most people tend to translate it), because one is supposed to study Torah in this way. Whilst the second Parshah, which speaks about Mitzvos, does not need to use this expression, since Mitzvos do not require the intensity that Torah-learning does. Interestingly, these two explanations basically follow the two interpretations of "be'chol me'odecha" as presented by the Mishnah in B'rachos.

To answer the second question, the Or ha'Chayim observes that the second Parshah begins with the word "ve'Hoyoh". "ve'Hoyoh", is an expression of joy (because it contains the letters of G-d's Name 'Havayah'), he says, and hints that, in spite of Rabbi Ya'akov's opinion in Kidushin, if Yisrael will serve G-d with joy, they will earn themselves reward in this world (as the Rambam writes in Hilchos Teshuvah). And this serves to answer the fourth question too. Since the concept of joy does not appear in the first Parshah, we will apply Rabbi Ya'akov's principle (there is no reward for mitzvos in this world).

Earlier, we cited the opinion of the Ramban and the Seifer ha'Ikrim, who maintain that the community are not subject to Olam ha'Bo. If that is so, then it stands to reason that Rabbi Ya'akov's principle (that there is no reward for Mitzvos in this world) does not apply to them either. After all, Rabbi Ya'akov surely bases his statement on the fact that the main reward is only due in the World to Come. Consequently, a Tzibur, who do not receive their reward there, will inevitably receive it here! In other words, the answer to question three automatically provides the answer to question two, as well.

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MessageFrom: Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalists@shemayisrael.com] To: Peninim Parsha Subject: PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM PARSHAS EIKEV This shall be your reward when you listen to these ordinances. (7:12) Rashi explains that the word "eikav," which also mean "heel," alludes to the type of mitzvah that people consider to be relatively insignificant. Literally, they step on the mitzvah with their heel. The Torah here assures the nation that if they hold all mitzvos in their proper esteem, they will receive their due reward. The Lachmei Todah supplements this, citing a pasuk in the beginning of Sefer Bereishis, (3:15), where Hashem is admonishing the serpent for its part in causing Adam HaRishon to eat of the Eitz Hadas, Tree of Knowledge. "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will pound your head, and you will bite

his heel." Hashem is telling the snake, "If you incite the Jew to sin with his 'head', which is a reference to the entire body, he will triumph over you. He will not sin with his body to perform a sin wholeheartedly, maliciously. You will, however, succeed in instigating him to sin with his 'heel', which alludes to the fences that Chazal have erected around the mitzvos Lo Saase, negative commandments, that are to protect and discourage us from going all the way, to transgress the entire sin." This is how the serpent misled Chavah. He began by enjoining her to distance herself from sin, to stay far away from the tree. Heaven-forbid she should touch it. Then, he pushed her against the tree, and nothing happened - no bolt of lightning, no punishment from Heaven. Next, he countered, since apparently there had been no punishment for touching, probably there would also be no punishment for eating. She ate and quickly noticed that the fruit was sweet and delicious. She fell in. She broke through the fence, and the rest became history. The snake accomplished his goal first because he encouraged Chavah to break through the barrier that separated her from sin. This catalyzed the bechiah l'doros, eternal weeping and grieving, that accompanies the onset of death. The snake was very crafty. Knowing fully well that Chavah would never knowingly transgress Hashem's command, it incited her to break the barriers that ward off sin. Throughout the millennia, the serpent's followers have done much the same. They focus on the "heel," the fence that protects us from sin. Whether it is the Rabbinic decree or a custom going back generations, they seek to pervert and degrade our Jewish way of life and our adherence to Hashem's Torah, by destroying the protective fences. Some are "insignificant;" others are "archaic," while still others have very little value. Their true goal is to encourage us to throw off the yoke of Torah. As the serpent's success was short-lived, so is theirs. Perhaps ("ki") you will say in your heart, "These nations are more numerous than I; how will I be drive them out?" (7:17) In a number of places throughout his commentary on Chumash, Rashi explains that the word "ki" has four different connotations: "perhaps", "rather", "because" "if/when". He submits that in this instance we are compelled to define ki as "perhaps", since the other definitions do not apply. In other words, we do not accept that Klal Yisrael would ever descend to total yishuv, lack of hope, complete despondency, from which they believe that there is no escape. According to Rashi, machsheves yishuv, an attitude of despair, are antithetical to Jewish perspective. A Jew does not give up hope! Hashem is always there: we need not worry - or fear - or give up hope. He will save us. Sforno does not take this approach. He interprets the pasuk in the following manner: There can be two reasons for posing such questions. One is that you fear these nations. Such fear implies lack of faith in the Almighty. The second reason is that you recognize that without Hashem's intervention, you have no way of triumphing over your enemy. This is a commendable attitude, since it indicates a recognition of one's inadequacy accompanied by trust and faith in the Almighty.

Therefore, the Sforno indicates, the pesukim can be understood as follows: Let not your fears and anxieties be due to your fear of the enemy. Rather, they should be the result of a profound recognition and acknowledgement that, without the help of Hashem, we simply cannot succeed. When a Jew achieves such a penetrating recognition of his weakness and Hashem's greatness, he has nothing to fear. What a powerful statement! Only when a Jew reaches the point of recognizing his own "afsiat," inconsequence, only then can he aspire to Hashem's salvation. As long as man thinks that it is his own prowess that catalyzes his success, he is doomed to rely solely on his own ability.

The Mezritcher Maggid, zl, makes a similar statement in regard to the famous Rabbinic dictum, "It is as hard/difficult to match a husband and wife as to split the Red Sea." Many commentators have rendered various expositions on this Chazal. What really is the relationship between finding one's mate and the splitting of the Red Sea? The Maggid explains that at the Red Sea, Klal Yisrael had exhausted all of the natural resources for her salvation. They were locked between a "rock and a hard place," between the Red Sea and the Egyptians. They had nowhere to go. They were finished. What eventually occurred was

unimaginable; the sea split. Unimaginable occurrences often happen in the world of shidduchim, matchmaking, as well. How often does a young woman marry a young man who was the farthest individual from her mind? Certainly, we can all cite instances when a young couple come together under "miraculous" circumstances. Evidently, Hashem played a major role in the sea splitting, as well as in every shidduch. Klal Yisrael was acutely aware that she had no recourse - she had come to the end of her rope. They turned to Hashem and He responded. They finally realized that they had only one source of salvation. This might be an appropriate lesson for many of us.

Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth. (8:18)

A person must always realize and remember that whatever he does, whatever endeavor he takes upon himself to perform, the ability to do so, the power to succeed, is derived from Hashem. This should be a source of encouragement for us. Let us explain with the following analogy. A king asked his trusted servant to prepare a lavish dinner in his house, which would be attended by the king with his entire retinue. Naturally, the servant was quite nervous. It was an awesome responsibility, and a compelling obligation to perform successfully. So many things could have gone wrong. If, however, the king told him to take whatever he needed from the royal kitchen, then he was much less concerned, because the food was from the king. The food was prepared exactly as the king liked it, since it was cooked in the royal kitchen in the same manner as usual.

The Mezritcher Maggid, zl, applies this analogy to explain the tefillah, Nishmas. We say, "Were our mouth as full of song as the sea, and our tongue as full of joyous song as its multitude of waves, and our lips as full of praise as the breadth of the Heavens...we could still not thank You sufficiently." In other words, we express our incapacity to describe Hashem's greatness, regardless of the powers and abilities with which we have been blessed. Yet, soon after, we continue the tefillah and say, "Therefore, the organs that You set within us, and the spirit and soul that You breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue that You placed in our mouths - all of them thank and bless, praise and glorify, exact and revere, sanctify and declare the sovereignty of Your Name, Our King..." There seems to be an apparent contradiction within the text of this tefillah. First, we declare our inadequacy to praise Hashem. We follow this statement with a declaration of praise. Are we able to praise Hashem or not?

The answer, explains the Mezritcher Maggid, is dependent upon with "whose" organs are we praising Hashem? If they are ours, and we think that "we" are able to praise Him, then it is fruitless. Man alone is unable to praise Hashem. If, however, we realize that what is ours is really from Hashem, and that whatever ability/strength/power we possess all is derived from Hashem, then "Hashem-given organs" are able to exalt Him. Like the servant who takes the food from the king's home to serve him, so, too, can we offer praise to Hashem, if we realize that whatever we are is only through His will. Likewise, the mere knowledge that whatever we achieve only occurs as a result of Hashem's Will, gives us much more confidence in our success.

It shall be ("v'hayah") that if you forget Hashem, your G-d. (8:19) Chazal teach us that the word v'hayah, "it shall be," denotes simchah, joy. We wonder what joy there can be found in forgetting Hashem? Horav Baruch zl, m'Meziboz, one of the earliest Chassidic leaders, explains that there are two types of sinner: One sinner falls prey to the blandishments of his yetzer hora, evil inclination. He has lost control; he is, instead, controlled. This sinner's punishment will not be as serious, because he did not sin with malice. He is a lost soul - lost to his base desires. There is another kind of sinner: one who sins with contempt, with disdain and spite, in order to degrade and humiliate Torah and its Author. His intention is to rebel and repudiate. Indeed, he is filled with joy when he sins. His intended goal is the breakdown of Torah Judaism. His transgression engenders within him a feeling of satisfaction.

The pasuk addresses the fate of the malicious sinner, who is filled with glee at his act of rebellion. V'hayah, if you are filled with joy as a result

of your forgetting Hashem your G-d, then I testify to you that, surely, you will be destroyed. One only has to peruse Jewish history to note that those whose sins were acts of sedition ended up destroying not only themselves, but also their families and descendants. Indeed, their names are lost to history. Whatever positive activity they generated was lost with them. Their misdirected joy catalyzed eternal grief. Hashem is the Avi Yesomim, Father of orphans, and the Dayan Almanos, Judge of widows. Essentially, this means that Hashem is there for those who are in need. When a child loses his father, he should remember that Hashem is his father, Who watches over him and cares for him, just as his own father concerns himself with his welfare. The widow is not alone. Hashem is her advocate. He will see to it that those who oppress her will pay. Indeed, every individual Jew should understand that to intimidate the widow is equivalent to intimidating Hashem. One does not oppress the downtrodden unless he is prepared to incur the wrath of Hashem.

It happened in a small community in Egypt, where two Jewish businessmen, Raphael and Asael, succeeded in developing a successful import-export business. They were partners who had the greatest respect, love and admiration for one another. No one believed that anything could ever happen to tarnish this unique relationship. At least, so people believed. Raphael had to go on a business trip to purchase goods for their business. He was going to take a boat to Europe and return with the finest dry goods for their business. On his return to Egypt, a devastating storm struck the ship. The boat's crew fought the storm valiantly until they succumbed to its tremendous force. The boat capsized; everything and everyone on the boat went to the bottom of the sea. Raphael's wife was left a bereaved widow with two young daughters to support and eventually marry off.

As soon as the shivah, required seven day mourning period, ended, Asael gave his partner's widow a small sum of money to support her and her daughters for two weeks. He claimed that the business went down with the ship, and everything was lost. What could she do? It was her word against his. With bitter tears -- tears of insult added to injury -- the widow and her two small daughters moved away to a small community, where she supported her family by working as a maid and cleaning woman for the wealthy.

Time does not stand still for anyone. Years went by and the young widow grew old and weak; her daughters became young, attractive women. During this time, for a period of about ten years, Asael's business thrived. He became increasingly wealthy. One would think that his life was blessed with good fortune. Hashem, however, does not forget, especially when one oppresses a widow and orphans.

Suddenly, Asael's only son became ill. The illness spread throughout his body until he was completely paralyzed. The finest physicians were consulted, to no avail. His illness was a mystery. He was beyond medical help. Shortly thereafter, the young man died -- to the excruciating grief of his parents. They could not survive the tragedy. He was their only child. How could their good fortune suddenly have changed?

Asael's wife could not tolerate the pain and agony of having lost her precious child. She succumbed to depression. Eventually, her broken heart gave out, and she also died. It did not take long, and Asael, despite his incredible wealth, left bereft of his two most important possessions, took ill and died as well.

What a terrible end to a story. But it is not over yet. The only ones left to inherit Asael's vast fortune were his two nephews. They were fine young men who themselves had recently entered the world of commerce. With the help of Hashem, their assets grew considerably. They met two wonderful young women, who were orphaned at a young age and raised by their mother. Yes. They were Raphael's daughters, who -- after marrying Asael's nephews -- finally received their overdue inheritance. One's faith in Hashem need never wane, because everything that occurs is part of a Divine master plan. Regrettably, some of us think that we are the directors of the play called "life." Those who think so usually end up missing the show.

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From: ohr@ohr.edu Sent: Monday, July 22, 2002 12:35 PM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Ekev * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Ekev For the week ending 27 July 2002 / 18 Av 5762 Sponsored by Kof-K www.kof-k.org | info@kof-k.org

Fire
"The carved images of their gods you shall burn in the fire... for it is an abomination of Hashem, your G-d." (7:25)
Our sages teach us that extreme anger is like worshipping idols. What is the connection?

Imagine you're a courtier in the palace of the king. While walking past you, one of the other courtiers treads on your toe, and rather than apologize he turns around and pokes his tongue out at you. Do you curse and shout at him? I doubt it. Not, that is, unless you are unconcerned about your head staying in nodding contact with the rest of your body. Your awe of the king, not to mention the fear of his punishment, make it easy for you to swallow your pride and smile a wan and insincere smile at your fellow courtier.

When a person becomes angry it's as though he's saying that he's not in the courtroom of the king. Or worse - there is no courtroom, no king. Everything in this physical world has a spiritual cause. Anger is always compared to fire. Anger "consumes" like a fire the person who feels the anger. Anger turns the face flame-red. Anger "burns you up". Sometimes, we may even get a glimpse of the connection of the spiritual to the physical:

The Hayman fire, the largest fire in the history of Colorado consumed tens of thousands of beautiful forestland. The fire was caused by a 38-year old Forest Service technician who took a letter from her estranged husband and burned it in anger. Apparently, she thought she had extinguished the fire and left, only to find later it was spreading out of control.

When we ignite the flames of wrath, it's very difficult to put them out. If one act of anger can burn half a state, one shudders to think what happens in the spiritual forestlands above when a person's anger flames.

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From: elaine@jewishdestiny.com Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2002 12:37 AM To: cshulman@cahill.com Subject: RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS

Parsha Archive July 26 2002 EKEV Moses records for us in the Torah reading of Ekev that he constructed an ark or box of wood in which to house the tablets of stone that he brought down to Israel from the mountain of Sinai. What is the import of the fact that this ark was made of wood and what lesson can we derive from knowing the material of this ark? Also, what use, if any, was made of this ark after the permanent golden ark for the tablets of the Law was constructed and actually used to house those stone tablets?

Rashi is of the opinion that this wooden ark was later used as the ark of war - the ark and tablets within them that went forth to war with the Jewish army during its battles to conquer the Land of Canaan. The holy golden ark of the Tabernacle/Temple was never to be taken out to war; only this wooden container was to accompany the Jews into battle. When, in the struggle against the Philistines at the time of the High Priest Eli, the golden ark was taken into battle with them, the Jewish people were severely punished for this violation. Other commentators propose another interpretation of the matter. They state that this wooden ark of Moshe was incorporated and became part of the holy golden ark of Bezalel. The ark of Bezalel consisted of three boxes that fit one within the other. The first and third boxes were made of gold, while the middle box was made of wood. This middle wooden box was the very box that Moshe had fashioned to house the tablets of stone that he brought down from Sinai and this box therefore was

permanently ensconced, as part of the great holy golden ark, in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. Alternatively, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban) is of the opinion that the wooden ark of Moshe was buried and hidden after the construction of Bezalel's golden ark, and that it served no special purpose after its original use for housing the tablets of stone until the Tabernacle was completed. And there is also an opinion expressed in Midrash that the wooden ark was kept during the sojourn of the Jews in the desert of Sinai to house the broken first tablets of Sinai. But what is the importance of telling us that Moshe's ark was made of wood? Neither Rashi nor Ramban, nor any other sources of traditional biblical commentary, comment on this aspect of the verse. I think that the idea of a wooden box, made from a tree, is in itself the symbol of Torah, the true companion of the tablets of stone from Sinai. King Solomon in Proverbs characterizes Torah as being "the tree of life." Gold is beautiful and valuable, glittering and royal. But, it is also unproductive and dead. Gold is for museums and palaces, jewelry and crowns. But as the legend of old King Midas teaches us, gold rarely can succor life. Trees, on the other hand, are the basis of all life on this planet.

I remember once seeing a National Geographic movie about a certain species of trees that are found in the African plains that succor and sustain hundreds upon hundreds of different forms of animals, insects, birds and other forms of vegetation. Trees are life itself. They are renewable, productive, pleasant, of awesome variety, and inspiring in their beauty and practicality. Trees are the stuff of life itself. Is it any wonder therefore that the first home of the tablets of stone, containing the basic values of human civilization and the eternal hope of mankind for a better world, should be housed in the bosom of trees, in a wooden ark? The Torah is greater than gold, it is life itself. The Torah encourages human variety and productivity, inventiveness and beauty. The Torah teaches us that our spirit is eternal and constantly renewable, vital and immortal. We are here to provide shade and life and fruit and benefit for others. The Torah teaches us that "mankind is as the trees of the fields." Moshe's wooden box that became the Torah's first ark remains as its symbol of holy life.
Shabat Shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

From: KEREM B'YAVNEH Online [feedback@kby.org] To: Parsha English Subject: Parshat Eikev
"It will be on the Heel of your Listening"
RAV BENZION ALGAZI

Our parsha opens with a phrase that all the commentators address – "It will be on the heel of your listening to the laws." What is the Torah adding and alluding to with this phrase?

Rashi integrates this question with its answer and explains: "It will be on the heel – If you will listen to the mitzvot that a person treads on with his heels." Following his lead, we will forge a way in understanding this pasuk and in the service leading upwards to Hashem.

The Gemara in Masechet Megillah 10b explains the difference in connotation between the words 'vehaya' (it will be) and 'vayehi' (it was). 'Vayehi' connotes sorrow, whereas 'vehaya' connotes joy. It is clear that opening our parsha with the word 'vehaya' (it will be) indicates that joy comes from this way of life, but what exactly causes this joy to burst forth?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh teaches us about two possible reasons for the bursting of joy. One, similar to Rashi's explanation, is by the sheleimut (perfection, fulfillment) achieved through doing the mitzvot and through the service of Hashem, as he writes:

The master of prophets (Moshe) comes with his pleasant words to point out with a pleasant rebuke that a person should be happy only when he observes to do all that G-d commands him to do; then his heart should be glad and his honor rejoice. However, so long as he feels that one of G-d's mitzvot is lacking, whether a prohibition or a positive command, about him Shlomo says, "Of joy, what does it accomplish?" (Kohelet 2:2)

This is the Ohr Hachaim's first explanation as to the connection between happiness and the performance of mitzvot, something that is

proven. When a person is aware that he lacks a mitzvah or has violated a prohibition he does not have the inner fulfillment that generates happiness, so that a lack in mitzvot is a lack in sheleimut and in inner happiness. Thus, happiness serves as an expression of a person's level of sheleimut.

In addition to the happiness emanating from the sheleimut in performing mitzvot, learning Torah and understanding what it says can bring great joy, as the Zohar states, "There is no greater happiness before G-d than when Israel delve in Torah." The Ohr Hachaim explains:

"Vehaya," a general joy filling the world, and when He is happy the whole world is happy -- "on the heels of listening."

His intention is that in the very fulfillment of a mitzvah there is joy. These two aspects of joy in doing mitzvot in a complete manner, and especially in learning Torah, form an inner and outwards joy, which flows completely from a person's sheleimut in serving Hashem, and there is no greater feeling of elevation than this. To subscribe to additional mailings, please visit <http://www.kby.org/torah/subscriptions.cfm>.

From: Shlomo Katz [skatz@torah.org] To: hamaayan@torah.org
Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Eikev
Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz
Eikev: Don't Tread on Me! 18 Av 5762

Our parashah opens: "Ve'hayah eikev / It shall follow when you hearken to these ordinances, and you observe and perform them: Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers." Literally, the word "eikev" means "heel," leading our Sages to comment that we must observe even the seemingly small mitzvot that many people "walk all over" with their heels.

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l (1765-1833; rabbi of Plock, Poland and prolific author) observes that this idea may explain the connection between the first verse of our parashah and the final verse of last week's reading. That pasuk states: "You shall observe the commandment, and the decrees and the ordinances that I command you today, to perform them." Say our Sages: "Today - in this World - to perform them, and tomorrow - in the World-to-Come - to receive their reward." Generally speaking, man is not rewarded during his lifetime for his good deeds. But more than that: the Torah does not even tell us what the rewards for the various mitzvot will be. Why? Because if we knew the rewards for the mitzvot we would ignore the "small" ones and do only the "big" ones. "Today to perform them - even the ones upon which other people tread."

There is another reason that the reward for the mitzvot is not - indeed, cannot be - spelled out in the Torah. The Midrash states that Hashem rewards for each mitzvah "on the heel" of the one who does it. R' Zunz explains: The reward for a mitzvah depends on many factors including, for example, the love and enthusiasm with which one does it. The reward for a particular mitzvah may be different for different people; it follows in the footsteps of the person doing the good deed. (Kometz Haminchah)

"Not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of G-d does man live." (8:3) "You shall teach them to your children to discuss them . . ." (11:19)

R' Aharon Berachiah of Modena z"l (Italy; died 1639) writes: Hashem has given us three specific mitzvot corresponding to three specific favors that He does for us. Those three favors are that He gives us children, life, and sustenance.

Corresponding to the gift of life, Hashem gave us the mitzvah of Machatzit Ha'shekel / giving half a shekel to the Temple to buy communal sacrifices. The Gemara (Niddah 31a) teaches that there are three partners in creating a life: a mother, a father and G-d. Our Sages teach further that a person's mother and father each contributes five major characteristics to their child, while G-d supplies ten attributes. This is alluded to by the mitzvah of Machatzit Ha'shekel, for

one shekel equals twenty gera (smaller coins); thus, half a shekel equals ten gera.

Today, in the absence of the Bet Hamikdash, the Machatzit Ha'shekel is replaced by other forms of charity. Charity, too, is related to life. In fact, we are taught in Mishlei (10:2), "Charity saves from death." [Ed. note: R' Aharon Berachiah discusses many other connections between the Machatzit Ha'shekel, charity, and life.]

Corresponding to the gift of children, G-d gave us the mitzvah of Torah study. This is alluded to by the verse (Hoshea 4:6): "As you have forgotten the Torah of your G-d, I, too, will forget your children." Also, there is a clear connection between Torah study and having children, for one must study Torah in order to fulfill the commandment quoted above, "You shall teach them to your children . . ."

Finally, corresponding to the gift of sustenance, we were given the mitzvah of building the Temple. Today, we have the mitzvah of building shuls in which to pray. This reminds us that it is not our food that sustains us. As the verse says, "Not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of G-d does man live." Sometimes, eating makes a person ill or even poisons him.

However, we pray to Hashem for the fulfillment of the verse (Shmot 23:25), "He shall bless your bread and your water, and shall remove illness from your midst [or `your insides']." (Derashot Ma'avar Yabok: Parashat Ki Tissa)

"And you will eat, and you will be satiated, and you shall bless Hashem your G-d . . ." (8:10)

In his work on Torah-derived table manners, Rabbenu Bachya ben Asher z"l (Spain; 14th century) writes:

When one finishes eating he should remain at the table for some time. Chazal teach (Berachot 54b), "If one extends his meal, his life will be extended." Why? Because the longer a person sits at the table, the greater the likelihood that a poor person will chance by and will be fed. The prophet (Yechezkel 41:22) teaches this same idea by using the words "altar" and "table" interchangeably. Chazal explain that just as one's sins are atoned for upon the altar, so they are forgiven when one feeds the poor at his table. (So great is this mitzvah, writes R' Bachya, that some people had their coffins built from the wood of their table so that the boards could "testify" on their behalf before the Heavenly court.)

One is obligated to speak divrei Torah while sitting at the table. Our Sages teach (Avot, ch.3) that if one eats at a table where divrei Torah are said, it is as if he has eaten at G-d's table. However, if he eats at a table where no divrei Torah are spoken, it is as if he ate from sacrifices brought before idols. Why such harsh words? To teach man that he was not created in order to eat and to drink, but in order to study Torah. (Shulchan Shel Arbah)

"And He will restrain the heavens, and there will be no rain, and the earth will not yield its produce." (11:17)

There is a Midrash called Perek Shirah that lists the songs "sung" by various animals and even inanimate creations. In his commentary to that Midrash, R' Moshe of Trani z"l ("Mabit"; 16th century; Tzefat) writes that there are two ways to understand the idea that non-speaking creatures and inanimate objects praise G-d.

First, Chazal say that every blade of grass has an angel in heaven that tells it to grow. Presumably, this is true of other creations as well. Perhaps the Midrash does not mean that plants and animals literally praise G-d. Rather, it is that angel which sings praise to Hashem on behalf of the plant or animal which it represents.

Alternatively, the above verse from our parashah can help us understand that plants, animals, and even inanimate objects literally praise G-d. The Gemara (Ketubot 112a) relates: R' Yehoshua ben Levi went to Gavla (a place), where bunches of grapes grew to the size of calves. R' Yehoshua asked, "Why are there calves among the vines?"

"Those are not calves, they are grapes," he was told.

Addressing himself to the fruit, R' Yehoshua ben Levi said, "For whom are you growing - for the Arabs who surround us? Hold back your fruit!"

The following year, the sage R' Chiya visited Gavla and saw bunches of grapes the size of small goats (smaller than calves). "Why are there kids among the vines?" he asked.

"Be silent," he was told, "lest you do to our grapes what your friend did."

Mabit comments: As both our verse and the foregoing story demonstrate, plants and the heavens are capable of obeying commands from Hashem and from tzaddikim, and they are capable of altering their behavior accordingly. We also know that every plant and animal possesses basic "knowledge" about itself [its genetic code] that enables it to grow and even to respond to various stimuli. While plants, animals and the heavens obviously do not sing in any language that we can understand, is it far-fetched to believe that they possess "knowledge" of their Creator, and that they "praise" Him for His deeds? (Be'ur Ha'Mabit Le'Perek Shirah)

[Ed. note: Yet a third possible way to understand the "songs" of the plants and animals is that these creations inspire us to reflect upon the ideas expressed in each song or verse listed in Perek Shirah.]

In this parasha, the Torah refers to Eretz Yisrael as "the land in which you will not lack anything." The Gemara in Berachot (36b) states that this is because the Land itself lacks nothing.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l writes: The ultimate level that one should attain in Eretz Yisrael is that not only will material wealth and luxuries not injure his spiritual standing, they (i.e., wealth and luxuries) will strengthen one's service of G-d. Therefore, the Land contains a sample of everything, even that which, by nature, should only grow at the end of the earth.

Similarly, R' Kook continues, all of the world's wisdoms also must be present in Eretz Yisrael, even those which should belong to the nations of the world. This is why the Midrash (Eichah Rabati) calls Eretz Yisrael, "The land which is many in wisdoms." (Ein Ayah)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehadgil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives are available starting with Rosh HaShanah 5758 (1997) at <http://www.torah.org/learning/hamaayan/>. Text archives from 1990 through the present are available at <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.

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From: jgross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2002 8:55 PM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha - Eikev WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5762

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav. HOW DO YOU PREPARE "EGGS AND ONIONS" ON SHABBOS? Preparation of this dish, or similar ones, can involve many Shabbos Labors, among them: washing and peeling the eggs and the onions (choosing); mashing the eggs (grinding); dicing the onions (grinding); mixing the eggs and onions together (kneading); salting the onions(1); adding oil as a binding ingredient (kneading); removing egg shells from the mixture (choosing). In view of all these potential Shabbos violations, it is strongly recommended that the eggs and onions be prepared before Shabbos(2). When it is not possible or practical to do so, however, this is the permissible way to prepare it on Shabbos: Both the eggs(3) and onions should be peeled immediately before the meal(4). This means that if the meal(5) is to start at 12:00 o'clock, for example, and it takes about 30 minutes to prepare for the meal, then the eggs and onions may be peeled at about 11:30, but not earlier(6). Even if

the housewife would like to prepare her meal before going to shul or taking a walk, it is forbidden to do so(7).

The eggs and onions may be peeled by hand or with the aid of a knife only(8).

The eggs may be mashed with a fork(9) or sliced with an egg slicer(10). A grinder [or a masher(11)] may not be used(12). [If the eggs were peeled before Shabbos(13), they may be mashed earlier, and not necessarily immediately before the meal(14).]

It is strictly forbidden to cut up the onions into very small pieces (diced)(15). But in the event that it is difficult to eat bigger pieces of onion [or if the food is being prepared for a child], most poskim permit dicing the onions into small pieces, provided that they are diced immediately before the meal(16). [Another option is to cut the onions into little pieces in an unusual manner - with a spoon or with the handle of a knife or fork(17), but this is not practical.]

The eggs and onions may be mixed together(18).

The eggs and onions together may be salted, especially if the mixture is going to contain oil or mayonnaise(19). But the onions alone should not be left salted [or immersed in vinegar(20)] for any length of time(21).

The proper method for the next step in making eggs and onions - adding oil to the mixture - was hotly debated among the poskim of the past generations, since adding oil may be a violation of the forbidden Shabbos Labor of "kneading." Apparently, it was a widely-held custom to add oil to the mixture in the normal manner, and many leading poskim approved of it(22). Indeed, several contemporary authorities agree that the custom is firmly grounded in Halachah and may be followed(23). The oil should be added immediately before the meal, and in small quantities only.

Nonetheless, the poskim are of the opinion that it is halachically preferable to add and mix the oil in a way that is altogether different from the way it is done ordinarily: a) the oil must be poured into the bowl first, and then the eggs and onions added(24); b) the mixture may not be stirred vigorously; it may only be mixed in one of the following ways, - in order of halachic preference: with one's finger(25); by shaking the bowl(26); with a knife, fork, or spoon but only in a criss-cross pattern(27) (up and down and left to right), not around and around in the normal mixing motion(28); with a utensil not normally used for mixing(29); with the handle of a knife or a spoon(30). When mayonnaise is being used instead of oil, the same procedure outlined in numbers 7-8 is followed, except that there is no need to reverse the order and place the mayonnaise in the bowl before the eggs and the onions [as is required when using oil](31).

Pieces of cooked potato may be added and mixed into the egg-onion mixture(32). If, after the mixture is prepared, an eggshell is found in it, the shell may not be removed from the mixture. Rather, the proper procedure is to leave the eggshell and the food that is around it in the bowl, and lift all of the rest of the mixture out of the mixing bowl and into another dish. Some poskim are more lenient and permit removing the shell provided that some of the mixture is removed with it(33). Other poskim strictly prohibit removing the shell in this manner(34), and it is proper to be stringent(35). When the mixture is ready, it is proper to leave it as is and not smooth it down, shape it(36), etc. It is permitted, however, to use a scoop for serving individual portions(37).

FOOTNOTES:

1 It may be prohibited because salting is part of the pickling process, which resembles cooking (Rambam), or because salting can alter the texture of the food and is similar to me'abed, tanning hide, since that too is accomplished by using chemicals to alter the texture of the hide (Rashi). 2 Indeed, in the home of the Chazon Ish and Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky, this food was always prepared before Shabbos, so as to not get involved in potential Shabbos Labors (Ayil Meshulash, pg. 157; Orchos Rabbeinu). Also, it is noteworthy that the custom in many homes is that the men, not the women, prepared this dish. Possibly this is due to the complexity of the issues involved. It is also reported that several Chasidic tzaddikim insisted on preparing this dish themselves, and it was done right at the table. 3 Eggs in a pot of water are not considered to be "mixed" with the water. It is permitted to discard the water from the pot and leave the eggs; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, quoted in The Laws of Borer, pg. 30. 4 Rama O.C. 321:19. 5 Zemiro which are sung prior to the meal are considered as part of the meal (Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, quoted in The Laws of Borer, pg. 25 and Harav N. Karelitz, quoted in Ayil Meshulash, pg. 117). 6 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-13; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv and Harav N. Karelitz (quoted in Ayil Meshulash, pg. 118). There is a minority view which holds that it is permitted to begin the preparation half an hour before the meal even if the actual preparation does not take that long (Harav S. Wosner, mi-Beis Levi 6, Borer 2). 7 Mishnah Berurah 321:45. 8 Be'ur Halachah 321:19; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:124. 9 Mishnah Berurah 321:31 and 36; since it is only prohibited to mash foods that grow from the ground. Mashing eggs may be permitted even according to the Chazon Ish (O.C. 57) who generally rules that mashing applies even to items that do not grow from the ground. See Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 344 for a

detailed explanation. 10 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-4; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 6:3); Harav S. Wosner (Otzros ha-Shabbos, pg. 157). 11 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Me'or ha-Shabbos 1:457). 12 O.C. 321:10; since that is considered a week-day activity. 13 See earlier discussion concerning the danger of leaving shelled eggs over night. 14 Mishnah Berurah 321:31. 15 O.C. 321:12. 16 Mishnah Berurah 321:45. While Chazon Ish (O.C. 57) disagrees with this leniency, Igros Moshe (O.C. 4:74-2) rules that when the need arises, even a ba'al nefesh need not be stringent. This is also the ruling of Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah and Tikunim u'Miluim 6:6) 17 O.C. 321:7 and Mishnah Berurah 25. 18 Since no liquid is being added, there is no problem of kneading. 19 Mishnah Berurah 321:14; since the oil [or the bit of vinegar which is poured over the salt and washes it away] weakens the potency of the salt. Even if no oil or mayonnaise will be mixed in, it is still permitted, since it is permitted to salt eggs (Mishnah Berurah 321:18 and 21) and it is permissible to salt the onions once they are mixed with the eggs. 20 See Mishnah Berurah 321:15 concerning cucumbers in vinegar. 21 O.C. 321:3 and Mishnah Berurah 13, 14, 15. 22 Several poskim of previous generations attest to the prevalence of this practice; see R' S. Kluger (ha-Elef Lecha Shelomo 139), Eglei Tal (Tochen 123:7); Tehilah le-David 321:22,25; Eishel Avraham Tanina 321; Minchas Shabbos 80:38; She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 80:23. 23 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 8, note 81); Tzitz Eliezer 11:36; Be'er Moshe 6:46. 24 Since normally the eggs and onions are put in first and then the oil is poured on them. 25 Rama 321:16. Wearing a glove is prohibited; Chazon Ish 58:8. 26 Mishnah Berurah 321:63. 27 Between each change of direction the utensil should be lifted out of the mixture; Chazon Ish 58:6; Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-5. 28 O.C. 324:3. 29 Minchas Yitzchak 1:74. 30 These last two options are halachically the least desirable since they are not mentioned by any early authority, and some contemporary poskim specifically disallow the practice in a thick mixture such as eggs and onions. See, however, Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74-6 who seems to allow it in all cases. See also Tzitz Eliezer 11:36, who quotes a similar ruling. 31 Since no binding takes place until the actual stirring and mixing begins. 32 Since the forbidden Shabbos Labor of kneading involves only small particles, not large pieces. 33 Based on Mishnah Berurah 319:61 concerning a fly that fell into a drink. See also Mishnah Berurah 504:20 concerning matzah crumbs. 34 Chazon Ish 54:3. 35 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 5, note 21), since an eggshell in a salad is considered more "mixed in" than a fly in a drink, and possibly all poskim would prohibit this. 36 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 80:25. See also Chayei Adam 39:1-10. Other poskim, however, are not concerned with this; see Da'as Torah 31:19 and Cheishev ha-Eifod 2:77. See also Binyan Shabbos, Boneh, Miluim 8. 37 Since the purpose is to aid in the serving process, not to shape the food; see Be'er Moshe 6:43 and 8:134. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. learn@torah.org 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 (410) 602-1350 Baltimore, MD 21208