

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Ekev	24 Aug. 2019	23 Av 5779	Deut. 7:12-11:25	Isa. 49:14-51:3	Matt. 16:13-20

We continue with second weeks of consolation as we get closer to Rosh Hashanah (Festival of Trumpets). During the month of Elul which is a time of repentance in preparation for the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The word 'Elul' is similar to the root of the verb 'search' in Aramaic. This year, August 31st begins the first day of repentance according to the Gregorian calendar.

Elul is the month to unlocking the inner and most potent meaning of the heart. The Hebrew letters that make the word "Elul" is aleph (א), lamed (ל), vav(ו) and lamed (ל) which is an acronym for the phrase *ani l'dodi v'dodi li* (אני לדודי ודודי לי) which means "I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me" from the *Shir haShirim* (Song of Songs) 6:3.

The word 'ekav' (עקב) means 'because'. It also means 'heels' as Ya'akov (יעקב). As we have studied in the past, Ya'akov derived from 'ekav' (עקב), as "his hand had hold on Esau's heel" when he was born. Many English version translates 'ekav' (עקב) as "if" or "when". It could have said, *im tishme'un* (if you will listen) or *keshetishme'un* (when you will listen). Instead, it says, "וְהָיָה עָקֵב תִּשְׁמָעוֹן" (*ve.ha.yah ekav tish.me'un*; (because you will listen).

Midrashically, the word 'ekav' (עקב) alludes to the sort of commandments that people may regard as unimportant, so they tend to "trample with their heels." Thus, the Torah assures that if they are care to observe these small commandments, they can be certain that Hashem will reward them with His covenant and kindness. (Rashi)

Sfas Ernes said that there are commandments that correspond to the head and the heart, and there are commandments that correspond to the heels. Even though the head and the heart are more important than the heels, it is the heels that a person stands upon for they (heels) are his foundation.

In chapter 8:1, Moshe said, "All the *mitzvot*, which I command you this yom, shall you *shomer* to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land that YHWH swore to your *ahvot*." Moshe is pointing out that we cannot pick and choose among the commandments of the Torah. The blessings promised by Hashem are contingent on Yisrael's acceptance of the entire Torah as well as contingent on all of us even today as if all 613 commandments are integrated as one.

The Midrash says that once you have begun a commandment, finish it, for it is the person who finishes it that will be identified as having done it. In Yehushua (Joshua) 24:32 speaks of "the bones of Yosef which the Yisraelites had brought up from Mitzrayim." It was Moshe who had brought up the bones of Yosef all by himself. Since he did not manage to bring them all the way into the land, the Yisraelites had to complete the task, the verse is giving credit for the entire Yisraelites.

In verse 2, "And you shall remember all the ways that YHWH your Elohim led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your *lev*, whether you would *shomer* His *mitzvot*, or not." "And you shall remember" means not to test Hashem or question Hashem. Also, by remembering what happened in the desert, you will know for certain that observing the commandments is completely good.

“To humble you” and also mean “to afflict you”, Hashem subjected you to the uncertainty of not having any reserves of food, and being forced to trust that there would be manna awaiting you the next morning on the desert floor. This was a severe test for the Yisraelites had no idea how to keep them alive in the desert. They had nothing, but manna only enough to last the day, “for when the sun grew hot, it would melt.” (Shemot 16:21) So they did hunger for it. But they did all this to keep the commandments of YHWH and follow what He had commanded. Hashem could have led them near the cities for food, but instead He put them to test which would make them that they would follow His commandments forever.

In verse 3, “And He humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna.” Hashem subjected you to hunger first, “to starve this whole congregation to death.” (Shemot 16:3) Then He gave you manna to eat. “Which neither you nor your fathers had ever known.” You did not know that one could survive for long periods on manna, nor had any such tradition come down to you from your fathers. The sages also said that Hashem had done to the Yisraelites, He had done a kindness greater than even their patriarchs had ever received. Nevertheless, the Yisraelites reached the level at which Hashem would “give them heavenly grain.” (Tehillim 78:24).

In verse 4, “Your garment did not wear out on you; neither did your foot swell, these forty years.” Moshe is pointing out all the miracles that happened to them. Even a cloth hanging outside for long period of time, it will disintegrate and become useless.

In verse 7, “For YHWH your Elohim brings you into a *tov* and spacious land” Because of your obedience to Hashem who “disciplines you” (v. 5), even though He subjected you to the hardship of hunger (v. 3) and thirst, your reward is that He will bring you into a good land.

In verse 9, “A land where you shall eat *lechem* without scarceness, you shall not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig brass.” Most lands that are fertile lack irons; often wealthiest places, such as Venice, Barcelon, and Genoa must import food. But you, the Yisraelites will eat your fill and have wealth too by having both.

We will now skip to chapter 11. Please refer to page 3 for comparison of Devarim 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. The words are similar and even seems to repeat, but there are significant differences.

1. In Hebrew, 6:5 is couched entirely in the singular. Meaning, Moshe was addressing the people individually. But, in 11:13, he is addressing to the community in plural.
2. In 6:5, the verse contains “with all your might” in English translation. Other versions replaced “might” with “strength.” In Hebrew version, it is *me'-o-de-cha* (מֵעֹדְךָ). Chumash translates as “resources”, meaning material possessions. In 11:13, “resources” are not omitted.
3. In 11:14-17, it mentions of reward and punishment. Reward when you follow His commandments and punishment for not following His commandments. Whatever our circumstances may be, we can and should continue to serve Hashem.
4. In 6:6-8, the commandment to learn the Torah is mentioned and verse 8 mentions “to bind them [words] as a sign. In 11:18, the order is reversed.
5. In 6:9, learning the Torah is mentioned with reference to teaching students. In 6:19, it is mentioned with reference to teaching one’s children.

Devarim 6:4-9	Devarim 11:13-21
4 Shema, Yisrael: YHWH is our Elohim, YHWH is Echad	
5 And you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your <i>lev</i> , and with all your being, and with all your might.	13 And it shall come to pass, if you shall listen diligently to My <i>mitzvot</i> which I command you this <i>yom</i> , to love YHWH your Elohim, and to serve Him with all your <i>lev</i> and with all your being.
	14 That I will give you the rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your oil. 15 And I will send grass in your fields for your cattle, that you may eat and be full. 16 Take heed to yourselves, that your <i>lev</i> be not deceived, and you turn aside, and serve other <i>elohim</i> , and worship them. 17 And then YHWH's wrath be lit against you, and He will shut up the <i>shamayim</i> , that there be no rain, and that the land yield not its fruit; and you perish quickly from off the <i>toiv</i> land which YHWH gives you.
6 And these words, which I command you this you, shall be in your <i>lev</i> :	18 Therefore shall you lay up My words in your <i>lev</i> and in your being,
7 And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your <i>bayit</i> , and when you walk by the ways, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.	
8 And you shall bind them for an <i>ot</i> upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.	And bind them for an <i>ot</i> upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.
	19 And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your <i>bayit</i> , and when you walk by the <i>derech</i> , when you lie down, and when you rise up.
9 And you shall write them upon the posts of your <i>bayit</i> , and on your gates.	20 And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your <i>bayit</i> , and upon your gates.
	21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which YHWH swore to your <i>ahvot</i> to give them, as the days of the <i>shamayim</i> are above the earth.