

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Ekev	4 Aug 2018	23 Av 5778	Deut. 7:12-11:25	Isa. 49:14-51:3	Matt 16:13-20

The word ‘*ekev*’ (עֵקֶב) means ‘because’. It also means ‘heels’ as Ya’akov (יַעֲקֹב). As we have studied in the past, Ya’akov derived from ‘*ekev*’ (עֵקֶב), as “his hand had hold on Esau's heel” when he was born. Many English version translates ‘*ekev*’ (עֵקֶב) 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 עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמָעוֹן” (*ve.ha.yah ekev tish.me’un*; (because you will listen).

Hashem gave the Ten Commandments which contains all 613 *mitzvot*. The Ten Commandment itself contains 172 words (in Hebrew) which is same numerical value as עֵקֶב (2+100+70). So, the Torah is saying, “It shall come to pass, ‘*ekev tishme’un*’ – because you will listen, i.e., observe ‘*ekev*’ – the 613 *mitzvot* which are in the 172 words of the Ten Commandments. When we do so, “YHWH your Elohim God shall keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto your fathers.” (Deut. 7:12)

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> says that Abraham kept the entire Torah as said, “because that Abraham hearkened ‘*ekev asher Avraham bekoli*’ to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”. (Gen. 26:5) Therefore, we can conclude by ‘*ekev*’, Abraham kept all 613 *mitzvot*.

The Gemara<sup>2</sup> also says that the world will exist for 6,000 years. First 2,000 years were utterly void of Torah. This was concluded when Avraham was 52 years old who introduced Torah at that time (1894 B.C.E., Gregorian calendar starts at 3894 B.C.E.). Second 2,000 years of Torah without Mashiach (1895 B.C.E. – 106 C.E.). And last 2,000 years will start the era of Mashiach. The second era ended 172 years later (106 C.E.) after the destruction of the Second Temple and the era of Mashiach started. With the word, ‘*ekev*’, the Torah is hinting that ‘*ekev*’ after the destruction ‘*tishme’un*’ (you will hear) the footsteps of Mashiach.

“Because it shall come to pass,” the Midrash interprets to mean as “the end of days, the World to Come.” That is when Hashem will reward us for our good deeds, since there is no reward for fulfilling the *mitzvot* in this world.<sup>3</sup> Questions arise: Is it proper for Hashem to delay our reward for so long? After all, Hashem said we are not to withhold the wages of employees. (Lev. 19:13) Rashi<sup>4</sup> taught that Hashem observes the Torah’s commandment. So, why is He breaking His Torah here?

The answer is He is not. For we do not finish our ‘job’ with the performance of any single *mitzvah*. Rather, every *mitzvah* whether it is small or large becomes part of a larger effort by contributing to bringing the world to its complex outcome that only Hashem knows. Since we know that Hashem would not ‘transgress’ the prohibition of withholding the wages, we can conclude that each *mitzvah* is regarded as one small part of a person’s overall mission, to be completed only at the end of our life.

This does not mean we have to wait until the end to receive the ‘rewards.’ Hashem already gave us the blessing, as said, “He will love you, and bless you, and multiply you: He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your corn, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep, in the land which He swore to your *ahvot* (fathers) to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples: there shall not be male, or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And

<sup>1</sup> BT, Yoma 28b

<sup>2</sup> BT, Avodah Zarah 9a

<sup>3</sup> BT, Kiddushin 39b

<sup>4</sup> Rashi, Shemot Rabbah 30:9

YHWH will take away from you all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Mitzrayim, which you have seen, and know about, upon you; but will lay them upon all them that hate you.” (7:13-15)

Hashem gave us already physical blessing ‘because’ (*ekev*) of His mercy as a condition that we keep His “*mispatim* (ordinances), and *shomer* (safeguard), and do them.” (v. 12) As for the spiritual reward, as long as we are alive in this world, our tasks of fulfilling the *mitzvot* are incomplete. When our physical body returns to the earth, we are to receive ‘the wages’ that was due for the day’s work as Hashem promised us.

Therefore, Rashi said we are to grab on to the heels (*ekev*) of commandments as they are the lowest and the smallest part of our body. We are to observe every single mitzvah for it is connected to our body. Yeshua said, “And you shall love the Master YHWH your ALOHA with all your lev, and with all your being, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first mitzvah. And the second is like it, namely this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There are no other mitzvot greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31) His words contain all the Ten Commandments which has 613 commandments in two verses. So, the question is, “How will you show your love to Hashem?”

*Tishme’un* (תשמעו, you will listen) is written in plural. Meaning, Hashem is referring to many people. Whereas *ve-shamar* YHWH *Elohekha lekha* (וַיִּשְׁמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ, Hashem will guard you), ‘you’ is in a singular form. So the main way to attain Godliness is through the “many,” as everyone and everything becomes united. Once we are united, we can draw our individual blessings.<sup>5</sup>

“You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.” (Deut. 7:14) What is the connection between the blessed and infertility? The Midrash Rabbah<sup>6</sup> answers that Rivkah was barren until Yitzchak prayed for her, so the nations would not say, “Because Lavan blessed her” (Gen 24:60)

The Sefer HaAggadah contains a section called Traits and Attitudes which explains many aspects of human personality that arises while we live on this earth. For next two weeks, we will discuss each aspect as how it applies to our thoughts, decisions, and actions that are needed to encourage not only to us, but to others that we affect daily. Here are few examples of their teachings.

The sages teach there are three qualities that differentiate between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are like Abraham who had a generous eye, a humble spirit, and a lowly soul. The righteous enjoy their share in this world and inherit *olam haba* (World to Come), as said “That I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries.” (Prov. 8:21) The wicked are like Balaam who had an evil eye, a haughty spirit, and an overambitious soul. And they will inherit Gehenna and descend into the pit, as said, “But Thou, O God, wilt bring them down into the nethermost pit; men of blood and deceit shall not live out half their days.” (Psa. 55:23) (Peace)

As such, we are to be righteous with peace rather than strife. Hillel said, “Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace, pursuing peace, loving mankind, and bring them near to Torah. Even though the school of Hillel disagreed with the school of Shammai on what is forbidden or permitted, they did not refrain from marrying each other. Thus, they showed love and friendship toward one another. “Love ye truth, but also peace.” (Zech. 8:19) (Peace and Strife)

<sup>5</sup> Likutey Halakhot II, p. 76-39a

<sup>6</sup> The Midrash Rabbah, Beresheet 60:13

Any controversy or strife that is carried for Hashem's sake will in the end be of lasting worth, but any that is not for Hashem's sake will not be lasting. We have just discussed the controversy between Shammai and Hillel. As such their controversy was for Hashem's sake, we continue to discuss their halacha to this day. What is not for Hashem's sake? It is the controversy caused by Korah and his company when they challenged Moshe's authority as their leader. (Peace and Strife)

The First Temple fell because of idolatry, sexual immorality, and bloodshed. The Second Temple fell because of hatred without rightful cause for it is considered without rightful cause, it is worse than three sins which caused the fall of the First Temple. As such a house with dissension will be destroyed at the end. Hashem will not be idle as He has shown, "And fire came forth from YHWH, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense." (Num. 16:35) (Strife)

Hillel said, "Judge not your fellow man until you have been in his place."<sup>7</sup> There is a story of a man who hired himself to a landowner. When it was time for the man to return home, on the eve of the Day of Atonement, he asked for wages from the landowner. However, the landowner said that he did not have money, nor cattle, nor land, nor the property. The man packed his belongings and returned home in despair. After the holiday, the landowner came to him with food, money, drink. The man replied to questions by the landowner by saying, "Perhaps you (landowner) purchased merchandises with the money owed to me. Perhaps you hired the cattle to others. Perhaps you have not tithed the vegetables. Perhaps you devoted all your properties to Heaven." The landowner exclaimed, "I vowed all my properties so that my son to occupy himself to study the Torah." But the vow was absolved." He then blessed the man, "as you judged me on the scale of merit, so may He who is everywhere judge you on the scale of merit." One tradition says, the landowner was R' Eliezer ben Hyracanus and the hired man was Akiva.<sup>8</sup>

But a reproof for Hashem's sake is permissible as it brings peace and evil departs from us, as said, "But to them that decide justly shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them." (Prov. 24:25) "He that rebuke a man shall in the end find more favor than he that flatter with the tongue." (Prov. 28:23) The sages said, "All peace that has no reproof with it is not peace."<sup>9</sup> (Reproof, Flattery, and Hypocrisy)

There is also a consequence when one is held back from reproof. The answer is found in Isaiah 3:14, as said, "YHWH will enter into judgment with the elders of His people, and the princes thereof." In plain meaning, the princes 'sinned'. However, the punishment is also with the elders as they did not 'reproof' them. (Reproof, Flattery, and Hypocrisy)

That being said, Yeshua says, "How can you say, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' while you yourself fail to see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Luke 6:42) Once we remove the beam / plank from our eyes, then we can reproof. If we don't remove the plank from our eyes first, we then become a hypocrite. (Reproof, Flattery, and Hypocrisy)

We are also not to flatter as said, "they that are godless in heart lay up anger." (Job 36:13) "His speech is smooth as butter, but war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, yet they are swords unsheathed." (Psa. 55:21) Yeshua expands "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed. It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, who would betray

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<sup>7</sup> Avot 2:5

<sup>8</sup> Sefer HaAggadah, Four traits and Attitudes, Charitable Judgment and Suspicion, p. 692

<sup>9</sup> Genesis Rabbah 54:3

Him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Yeshua answered, "You have said it yourself." (Matt.26:24-25) R' Eleazar said, "A community given to flattery is banished in the end."<sup>10</sup> (Reproof, Flattery, and Hypocrisy)

"Who have said: 'Our tongue will we make mighty; our lips are with us: who is lord over us?'" (Psa. 12:4) The Talmud<sup>11</sup> said that those who speak slander cannot greet the Shekinah (Presence) as it causes the Shekinah to leave the body to heaven above. The slander is worse than murder (Gen. 4:13), unchastity (Gen. 39:9), and idolatry (Exod. 32:31) put together. As to the slanderer it is said, "May YHWH cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speak proud things!" (Psa. 12:3) "They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walk through the earth." (Psa. 73:9) "Death and life are in the hand of the tongue. (Prov. 18:21) R' Sheshet said in the name of R' Eleazar ben Azariah: He who speaks slander, he who accepts slander, and he who gives false testimony against his transgression deserve to be cast to the dogs, for the word "You shall cast it to the dogs" (Exod. 22:30) are followed directly by "You shall not take up a false report" (Exod. 23:1), which may be read, "You shall not spread a false report." R' Simeon ben Halafta said, "No man can say to another, "My conduct is better than yours.""<sup>12</sup> (Slander and Disclosing Another's Secret)

Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: The world endures because of three things: Justice, truth, and peace. Rava said: Jerusalem was destroyed only because men of integrity were no longer found there. Hashem hates a person who says one thing in his mouth, and another in his heart.<sup>13</sup> Hashem also said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right." (Num. 27:7) Whom do you wish to be?

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<sup>10</sup> BT, Sotah 41b-42a

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 42a

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 693-695

<sup>13</sup> BT, Pesachim, 113b

(신 7:13) 곧 너를 사랑하시고 복을 주사 너를 번성하게 하시되 네게 주리라고 네 조상들에게 맹세하신 땅에서 네 소생에게 은혜를 베푸시며 네 토지 소산과 곡식과 포도주와 기름을 풍성하게 하시고 네 소와 양을 번식하게 하시리니

(신 7:14) 네가 복을 받음이 만민보다 훨씬 더하여 너희 중의 남녀와 너희의 짐승의 암수에 생육하지 못함이 없을 것이며

(신 7:15) 여호와께서 또 모든 질병을 네게서 멀리 하사 너희가 아는 [애굽](#)의 악질에 걸리지 않게 하시고 너를 미워하는 모든 자에게 걸리게 하실 것이라

(막 12:30) 네 마음을 다하고 목숨을 다하고 뜻을 다하고 힘을 다하여 주 너의 하나님을 사랑하라 하신 것이요

(막 12:31) 둘째는 이것이니 네 이웃을 네 자신과 같이 사랑하라 하신 것이라 이보다 더 큰 계명이 없느니라 (레 19:18)

(잠 8:21) 이는 나를 사랑하는 자가 재물을 얻어서 그 곳간에 채우게 하려 함이니라

(시 55:23) 하나님이며 주께서 그들로 과멸의 웅덩이에 빠지게 하시리이다 피를 흘리게 하며 속이는 자들은 그들의 날의 반도 살지 못할 것이나

(스 8:19) 오직 너희는 진리와 화평을 사랑할지니라

(민 16:35) 여호와께로부터 불이 나와서 분향하는 이백오십 명을 불살랐더라

(잠 24:25) 오직 그를 견책하는 자는 기쁨을 얻을 것이요 또 좋은 복을 받으리라

(잠 28:23) 사람을 경책하는 자는 험로 아침하는 자보다 나중에 더욱 사랑을 받느니라

(사 3:14) 여호와께서 자기 백성의 [장로](#)들과 고관들을 심문하러 오시리니

(욥 36:13) 마음이 경건하지 아니한 자들은 분노를 쌓으며

(시 55:21) 그의 입은 우유 기름보다 미끄러우나 그의 마음은 전쟁이요

(마 26:24) 인자는 자기에 대하여 기록된 대로 가거니와 인자를 파는 그 사람에게는 화가 있으리로다 그 사람은 차라리 태어나지 아니하였더라면 제게 좋을 뻔하였느니라

(마 26:25) 예수를 파는 유다가 대답하여 이르되 랍비여 나는 아니지요 대답하시되 네가 말하였도다 하시니라

(시 12:4) 그들이 말하기를 우리의 혀가 이기리라 우리 입술은 우리 것이니 우리를 주관할 자 누구리요 함이로다

(시 12:3) 여호와께서 모든 아침하는 입술과 자랑하는 혀를 끊으시리니

(시 73:9) 그들의 입은 <sup>2)</sup>하늘에 두고 그들의 혀는 땅에 두루 다니도다

(잠 18:21) 죽고 사는 것이 혀의 힘에 달렸나니 혀를 쓰기 좋아하는 자는 혀의 열매를 먹으리라