



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT EKEV

The Whisper of a King's Love

Parshat Ekev opens with a promise: "And it shall be, because (ekev) you listen to these laws... Hashem your God will keep for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your fathers" (Deut. 7:12).

The word ekev/אָכֵב means "because," yet its root, akev/אָכַב, also means "heel." Rashi explains that this teaches about the mitzvot a person might "trample under their heel" — the ones we tend to consider small or less significant. The Torah reminds us: it is precisely these "heel mitzvot," the quiet, consistent acts of Jewish life, that hold the key to our enduring bond with Hashem.

In Judaism, greatness can be found in the smallest of deeds.

For example, we declare daily: "Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad". In artscrollian: "Hear O Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One." Immediately afterwards, we recite "Baruch Shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed" in a whisper. The Gemara (Pesachim 56a) explains that Moshe Rabbeinu heard this verse from the angels. Since it is a heavenly praise, too elevated for us to proclaim aloud, we say it quietly, this is to teach us that the holiest truths are sometimes expressed in the gentlest of ways.

The first of the 10 Commandments opens: Anochi Hashem Elokecha, "I am Hashem your God" (Devarim 5:6). R' YY Jacobson explains that "Hashem" refers to the infinite, transcendent God utterly beyond human comprehension, while "Elokecha" refers to the personal, immanent God - the One who is with you in every detail of your life.

The first of the Aseret HaDibrot is not so much a command as it is an introduction. Hashem is saying: "I, the infinite Creator and King, am also your God - close to you, caring for you, walking beside you." He is not distant; He is intimately involved in our lives.

This duality of God being both infinite and personal mirrors our spiritual lives. We often seek the "grand" moments of connection: the soaring prayer, the deep insight, or a moving song. But Parshat Ekev teaches that the grand is built on the small. Our relationship with the Infinite Hashem is sustained by the personal connection to Elokecha, nurtured in the daily humble "heel" of actions.

The heel is the part of the body that is in the most contact with the ground, the realities of everyday life. That is exactly where Hashem's presence can rest most fully. The beautiful moments of the "head" and "heart" are important, but they are made possible and lasting through the steady faithfulness of the "heel."

The message is clear: never dismiss the small. The mitzvot and acts of kindness that seem ordinary are, in truth, the very foundation of spiritual greatness. They are where the infinite meets the everyday; where the transcendent Hashem becomes your personal Elokecha.

May we learn to cherish the heels of our lives, to infuse the ordinary with holiness, and to feel the closeness of Hashem in each step of our journey.

(Written by my dear friend, Shlomo YomTov)

Small?

"And it shall come to pass, 'ekev' you will listen to these decrees" (Deut 7:12).

Eikev literally means "heel," suggesting the mitzvot we might regard as small or overlook. The Ramban teaches that the blessings of rain, grain, and peace are directly tied to careful observance of even these "small" commandments.

In Hashem's eyes, no mitzvah is insignificant. The quiet deeds, like, picking up a piece of trash, speaking kindly to a stranger, pausing before acting, may be tiny in human terms, but carry cosmic significance. Sometimes the mitzvah we think is least important is the one that tips the heavenly scales.

But then we ask ourselves, how can it be that such a small deed can have such significant consequences?

Consider an analogy from Hilchot Shabbat.

Hashem commands us not to turn on a light switch. One might ask, "What's the big deal? It's just a light switch! Does it really make such a difference to Hashem?"

Imagine someone sentenced to death by electrocution. As they're strapped in and drawing their final breaths, one person's job is simply to flip a switch. That tiny action — so small in itself — decides everything. It's literally the difference between life and death.

We don't know how much of an impact our small deeds have. We could look at them as "just" being something small, but in the eyes of Hashem they indicate much more. The small deeds that we sometimes tend to overlook can be the deciding factor of abundance or famine, rain or drought; even life or death.

Let us take away from this that we never see the full picture and never know how much greatness we could bring to the world by "just" doing something small.

(Written by my dear friend, Benyamin Borochow)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rachamim Ben Shifra Yitzhak Ben Naama Frida Bat Yaffa
Yisrael Ben Miriam Ehud Ben Miriam Shlomo Zalman Ben Miriam Miriam
Bat Bakol Aviva Bracha Bat Ora Avraham Ben Elisheva Penina

*"Remember you don't need a certain number of friends, just a
number of friends you can be certain of."*