



Parshas Eikev

שמע קולנו

Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy

“תגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”



פרשת עקב

What Makes A Gibor?

Shimon Wildes ('21)

In this week's *parsha*, while recounting the story of the *egel hazahav*, the golden calf, Moshe says "and I grasped the two *luchos* (tablets), and I threw them out of my two hands, and I shattered them before your eyes." The *Gemara* (*Nedarim* 38a) records a statement by Rabi Yochanan, in which he says that in order for *Hashem* to "rest his *shechina* (presence)" on someone (i.e. for that person to receive prophecy on a regular basis), the person must be, among other things, a *gibor*, or a mighty individual. This is learned from the above *posuk*, which shows us that Moshe had enough might to throw two massive tablets of stone, 108 cubic handbreadths each (as stated in the *Gemara*), and shatter them.

While it is easily understandable why some of the other attributes of Moshe, such as wisdom and humility, are declared necessary qualities in order to regularly receive *nevuah*, why is physical might considered a required attribute for the aspiring prophet? Additionally, why should one of these required characteristics for a *navi* be derived from seemingly unfortunate actions during a time that represented a less-than-high point in Jewish history, namely the destruction of the divine *luchos* when the nation served other gods?

While there are various explanations given by the *Rishonim* for Rabi Yochanan's statement, it is possible that another answer to the above question can be reached by looking at the Ramban on our *posuk*. The Ramban cites the *Midrash* (*Shemos Rabbah* 46:1), which provides a parable to help explain Moshe's decision to break the *luchos*. A minister writes a marriage contract for himself and a woman, and then gives it to her *shushbin* ("person appointed to defend the bride should any problems arise" -- translation from chabad.org). Soon, a bad reputation spreads about the woman regarding her faithfulness to the minister, and the

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What Makes a Gibor? - Shimon Wildes ('21)	1
Great Expectations - Dovid Tanner ('18)	2
A Short Vort - Akiva Kra ('21)	2
The Importance of Mitzvos - Noam Steinmetz ('21)	3
A Small Request - Shimi Kaufman ('21)	4
5 Minute Lomdus - Shimi Kaufman ('21)	4
What Doesn't Kill You - Shneur Agronin ('21)	5
Are We Satisfied - Yeshurin Sorscher ('21)	6
Defining Eikev - Rabbi Mayer Schiller	6
Gedolim Glimpse: Rabbi Nosson Adler - Meir Morell ('22)	7
Parsha Summary	8
Parsha Puzzlers	8

shushbin rips up the marriage contract. The *shushbin* does this to protect the woman, since she will now be judged as a single woman, rather than as an adulterous married one.

Similarly, when *Bnei Yisroel*, the "woman," served *avodah zara* and were unfaithful to *Hashem*, Moshe, the "*shushbin*," threw down and shattered the "contract" which says that *Hashem* is the one and only God of *Klal Yisroel*. He then declared to *Hashem* that the nation did not know what was written in the *luchos*, because he shattered them. By shattering the *luchos*, says the Ramban, Moshe risked his life (or share in the *Torah*, as described later in the *Midrash*), but he did so on behalf of the nation.

How is Moshe a *gibor* in this instance? Yes, he is physically strong, but beyond this, he exemplifies the traits of a *gibor* in deeper ways. A *gibor* is someone who sacrifices himself, who shows *mesiras nefesh* to the highest degree, for the right cause, when it is fitting to do so. Here too, as unfortunate as it was that Moshe needed to break the *luchos*, this action was an act of heroism, the act of a true *gibor*, done to save all of *Klal Yisroel*.

It is this quality of *gibor* that is required of those who frequently receive *nevuah*, and can be seen in the various *nevi'im* in our history. As an example,

take Eliyahu, who stood alone against all of the people, challenging the prophets of the *avodah zara* of *Ba'al* to a contest to determine who the real God is. It is possible that the people would have just mocked him, making him lose his immense stature, and quite possibly even harmed or killed him, as was done to the 'prophets' of *Ba'al* afterwards. The rulers at the time were not very righteous, as they even served the *av odah zara* that Eliyahu improved; there was nothing standing in the way of Eliyahu being harmed as a result of this bold stance. But, Eliyahu exhibited the *middos* of a *gibor*, unmasking the *Ba'al* for the sham that it was.

The problem that remains, however, is that the *Gemara* which discusses Moshe being a *gibor* gives the measurements of the *luchos* which he threw, showing that the word *gibor* here denotes physical strength, rather than *mesiras nefesh*. Regarding this, it is possible to suggest that the *Gemara's* description of the grand size of the *luchos* might, in addition to showing their physical size, be intended to show that they were big; that is to say, extremely holy and important, further depicting Moshe's *mesiras nefesh* by breaking them on behalf of the nation.

This quality of *gevurah* is not only applicable to prophets; it is relevant to everyone. The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (1:3) says in the name of Yehuda Ben Teima that a person should be mighty like a

lion. He explains that this means one should be mighty in his heart, since the *gevurah* of serving *Hashem* comes from the heart. Thus, it is incumbent on every individual to strive for this level of *gevurah*, and to be able to be *moser nefesh* for *Hashem* and *Klal Yisroel*.

May we all be *zocheh*, if not to the high level of *nevuah*, to only gain in *yiras shamayim*, and thus to become true models of *gevurah* in our personal lives, our communities, and beyond!

Great Expectations

David Tanner ('18)

Hashem is Master of past, present and future. He knows our every secret, and is aware of everything that has happened and that will happen. As such, is it possible for *Hashem* to ever be disappointed?

והארץ אשר אתם עוברים שמה לרשתה...ארץ אשר
ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ דורש אותה תמיד עֵינֵי ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ בָּהּ
מֵרָאשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית הַשָּׁנָה:

"But the land, to which you pass to possess, is a land...that the Lord, your God, looks after; the eyes of Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year" (*Devarim* 11:11-12).

A Short Vort

Akiva Kra ('21)

In this week's *parsha*, the *possuk* says: "וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁאֵל מֵעַמְּךָ כִּי אִם-לִירְאָה אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת - "And now, *Yisroel*, what does *Hashem*, your God, ask of you? Only to fear *Hashem*, your God, to go in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the *Hashem* your God with all your heart and with all your soul" Many commentaries discuss why the *possuk* begins with the word "*viatah*" (and now). The meaning of the *possuk* would not have been changed without this word, so why is it included?

To explain this, we must look at the context of the surrounding *pesukim*, which discuss the second set of *luchos* (tablets) which were given after Moshe broke the first set in response to the sin of the *Egel Hazahav* (Golden Calf). The *Chofetz Chaim* (*Ahavas Hachessed* 2:11) explains that one might think that because we needed a second set of *luchos*, we are somehow diminished; that we are people who will always have a flawed and impure past. Therefore, the *possuk* begins with *viatah*; *Hashem* reminds us to just focus on the here and now, without worrying about the past. The *Chofetz Chaim* (*ibid.*) quotes an anonymous *gaon* who said that one of the three ideas we need to constantly keep in mind is that "we only have this day." The *Chofetz Chaim* is telling us that we cannot dwell on the past, and need to focus on improving ourselves in the moment.

Rav Baruch of *Mezhibuzh* and Rav Aharon Kahn (one of the *roshei yeshiva* of RIETS) learn a slightly different lesson. They explain that *Hashem* is telling the Jewish people that whatever happened in the past, is the past. But now, your job is just to be a Jew. One must recognize that he can always connect to *Hashem*, no matter what he may have done in the past. May we all be able to learn these lessons, to focus on the here and now, and not be held back by our past mistakes.

The Satmar Rebbe notes a strange inconsistency within the *possuk*. First, the *possuk* says “*amid eini Hashem Elokecha bah meireishis hashanah*,” - the eyes of Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year,” but the *possuk* concludes “*ve’ad acharis shanah*,” which literally translates to “until the end of year.” Why the discrepancy? Either use the definite article in both words, or don’t use it in either word!

The Satmar Rebbe answers with a deep insight into human psychology. At the start of each year, most people are filled with a sense of optimism. They tell themselves, “This will be the year—*hashanah*! I will finally stop my bad habits and begin doing things correctly.” However, most of the time, their enthusiasm fades, and by the year’s end, they sadly realize that the past year has been just “*shanah*,” another year.

The question which bothered me about the Satmar Rebbe’s answer is that it doesn’t seem to fit in the words of the *possuk*. Firstly, the *possuk* seems to be describing Hashem’s perspective, not that of human beings. And secondly, why would the *possuk* speak specifically of *Eretz Yisrael*? The disappointing contrast between expectation and reality which the Satmar Rebbe points out is certainly present in *chutz la’aretz* as well!

I would therefore like to suggest a slightly different understanding of the discrepancy between the beginning and end of the *possuk*. Perhaps we can explain the *possuk* as referring not to personal expectation, but to national expectation, to *geulah* (redemption). Understood this way, the *possuk* refers to Hashem’s perpetual hope that each year will be the year that *Klal Yisrael* does *teshuvah* and merits the coming of the *moshiach*. But if Hashem knows the future, what does it mean that each year He hopes His children will return to Him, only to be disappointed? Doesn’t He know whether *moshiach* is destined to come this year?

The answer stems from the famous phrase in the *Yamim Noraim* liturgy: “*uteshuvah utefillah utzedakah ma’avirin es ro’ah hagezeirah*” - repentance, prayer and charity remove the evil of the decree. As evidenced by the story of *Purim*, even when all hope seems lost, Hashem can change the evil He ordained and replace it with salvation. So each year, even though Hashem knows whether He has decreed that *moshiach* will come this year or not, He waits to see if His children will cause him to change his decree and

bring the *geulah*.

The message for us is that in hoping for both personal and national redemption, we must not remain passive. A vague optimism and enthusiasm at the beginning of the year does not necessarily translate into a positive result by the end of the year. As the summer begins drawing to a close and we start to prepare for next year, we must be aware that without active planning and effort, we will end up with just another year. May this be “the year” when we merit both our personal and national redemption, *be’ezeras Hashem*.

The Importance of Mitzvos

Noam Steinmetz (21)

In *Parshas Eikev* (8:1), Moshe instructs the Jewish people “all the commandment (sic) which I command to you today you shall observe, and you will thrive and increase...” The *Chizkuni* gives a very practical explanation of this *possuk*, saying that this is referring to the singular *mitzvah* mentioned at the end of the previous *perek*, namely “*lo sachmod*”, the prohibition of jealousy. However, many other *meforshim* point out a glaring difficulty in this *possuk*. Why does this *possuk* use the word “all”, and then use the word *mitzvah* in singular form? Rashi understands this to mean that one should be careful to perform any *mitzvah* which they accept upon themselves in its entirety. Rav Chaim Kanievsky explains the importance of doing the full *mitzvah* from a *Gemara* in *Sotah* (13b), which warns that one who does not complete a *mitzvah* in its entirety will be brought down from a position of greatness. Rav Chaim explained that from this *Gemara* we can understand the next words of this *possuk*, “and you will thrive and increase.” When we perform an entire *mitzvah*, the *possuk* insures us that we will thrive.

The Ramban provides a separate answer for the seemingly strange wording of this *possuk*. Hashem was telling Moshe to stress to *Bnei Yisroel* the importance of not only doing the *mitzvos* which make logical sense to them, but even those *mitzvos* which are beyond our rational understanding. This concept is also implied by the very first *possuk* in *Parshas Eikev* (7:12), which says “it will be because you will listen to these laws and keep and perform them, Hashem your God will keep for you the covenant and the kindness, which He swore to your fathers.” Rashi explains that the word “*eikev*” hints at the importance of observing all of the *mitzvos*, even those which people tend to carelessly crush with

their *eikev*, or heel.

We see from both Rashi and the Ramban's explanations of the wording of this *possuk* that one should always be exceedingly careful to fulfill every single *mitzvah* to the best of their ability. Even the *mitzvos* which may not seem important to us hold incredible significance in the eyes of *Hashem*. May we all be *zoche* to fulfill each and every *mitzvah* in the proper way.

A Small Request

Shimi Kaufman (21)

There is no doubt that the pinnacle of human achievement in the Jewish view is the acquisition of proper *yiras shamayim*, fear of Heaven. It is the main purpose of our existence, and the subject of countless *drashos* and *sifrei mussar*. Success in this area has been the hallmark of *tzaddikim* and *gedolei Torah* since the days of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. This quality is so coveted that Rav Mendel Slotzker once commented that he would give up his entire reward in *Olam Haba* to merit the level of *yiras shamayim* which the *Beis Halevi*, Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, had attained in his lifetime. By Divine decree, *yiras shamayim* is difficult to obtain; Rav Itzele Peterberger (*Ohr Yisroel, Sha'arei Ohr* 2) writes that *Hashem* deliberately removed our instinctive *yiras shamayim* from our hearts, so that we would work on developing this quality ourselves. Growth in *yiras shamayim* is a lifelong endeavor, and is the main goal of every Jew's life.

In light of all this, a *possuk* in this week's *parsha* appears strange. As part of Moshe's final speech to *Klal Yisroel*, he exhorts them to stay true to *Hashem* and the *Torah* during their conquest of the land. He states (*Devarim* 10:12) "and now, *Yisroel*, what does *Hashem* your God ask of you; only to fear Him... to go in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Him... with all your heart and soul." From the wording of this *possuk*, it would seem that Moshe is making a trivial request; **all He asks** is that you fear Him! And yet, we know that acquiring true *yiras shamayim* is anything but trivial! Why does Moshe minimize the enormity of this task?

The *Gemara* (*Berachos* 33b) addresses this question, explaining that "for Moshe, *yiras shamayim* was a small thing." While it is certainly understandable that a prophet who

5 Minute Lomdus

Shimi Kaufman (21)

Q. The *Sha'agas Aryeh* (2) quotes the *Pri Chadash*, who writes that the Rambam held that the second *parsha* of *krias shema* ("*vehaya*") is included in the *de-oraisa* obligation, just like the first. The *Sha'agas Aryeh* argues that this is not the case, since if this were so, the Rambam would logically also maintain that the order of the three *parshiyos* of *shema* (first *ve'ahavta*, then *vehaya*, and then *vayomer*) is also required *medeoraisa*. However, the Rambam rules (*Hilchos Krias Shema* 2:11) that if one said the second *parsha* before the first, he still fulfills his obligation, since they are not next to each other in the *Torah*. This is not the case by *tefillin* and *mezuzah*, where the inclusion of all *parshiyos* is required *medioraisa*, and placing them out of order makes them *pasul*. According to the *Pri Chadash*, who maintains that the Rambam views the second *parsha* of *krias shema* as a *deoraisa*, why does the Rambam say that one who switched the order is still *yotzai*?

A. *Tefillin* and *mezuzah* are *cheftzos* (objects) of a *mitzvah*, which the *Torah* requires be constructed in a very specific manner. If the order of the *parshiyos* is switched, it is not a pair of *tefillin* or a *mezuzah* at all, because it is made in a different way from how the *Torah* prescribed. By *krias shema*, the different *parshiyos* are not one "object", but rather separate paragraphs. The required order is a separate *halacha* about which *parsha* should be said first. Thus, this order should be kept ideally, but if it is not, it is not enough to make the entire *krias shema* invalid, since all the *parshiyos* were still recited.

- Source: *Mishmeres Chaim Chelek III, "Krias Shema Utefillah"* 3

spoke to God face-to-face would find true fear of Heaven to be instinctive, Moshe was saying these words for posterity, for all future generations of *Klal Yisroel*. Was Moshe so blind to his bias that he could not recognize that this was a major challenge to the rest of the nation? Why would Moshe risk demoralizing the entire nation by referring to this *nisayon* in such dismissive terms? Even if Moshe felt *yiras shamayim* was a small thing, why would he speak to the rest of the nation from that perspective?

The answer to this question may lie in a story about Rav Boruch Ber Lebowitz, author of *Birchas Shmuel* and one of the foremost Talmudists of the last generation. Rav Boruch Ber was once in a doctor's office, to take care of a particular ailment. While there, he noticed that the doctor's study was filled with *seforim* on *kabbalah* and Jewish mysticism. However, there was a

distinct lack of *seforim* on basic *Gemara* and *halacha*. When Rav Boruch Ber asked the doctor about his odd assortment of books, the doctor responded “with all due respect for the Rav, doesn’t the *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 28a) say that study of the *Ma’aseh Merkava* (*Yechezkel* 1:4-26; used as a blanket term for all Kabbalistic study) is a big thing, while the study of the discussions of Abaye and Rava (a blanket reference to all *Gemara* study) is a small thing? If I have the choice to study a “big thing” or a “small thing”, why would I not choose the small thing?

Rav Boruch Ber laughed, and then responded. “Let me ask you something”, he said to the doctor. “If you saw a man drowning, and jumped in to save him, is that a ‘big thing’, or a ‘small thing’?”

“Certainly, a big thing”, the doctor replied.

“And yet”, continued Rav Boruch Ber, “if someone in that situation neglected to attempt to save that man, what would you say about him?”

“I would say, Rabbi, that he is a very wicked person! It is a basic obligation to try and save the lives of others!”

“Exactly!” exclaimed Rav Boruch Ber. “The *Gemara* never meant to disparage the study of Talmud by calling it a small thing! Rather, the *Gemara* was merely saying that it is a basic obligation for every Jew! Just as the person who saves the drowning man is praised for doing so but criticized for not doing so, so too, the person who neglects to study *Gemara* is criticized for their failure to do so.”

Perhaps, this is why the *Gemara* says that to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, *yiras shamayim* was a small matter. Moshe certainly recognized the challenges inherent in attaining *yiras shamayim*, but he also understood better than anyone else how necessary of an endeavor it was. With his speech, Moshe echoed the words of the *mishna* (*Avos* 2:21) “you are not expected to finish the work, but you are not free to ignore it.” Moshe was expressing that, while *yiras shamayim* may be difficult to attain, it is still the obligation of every Jew to work towards that goal. It is a “small thing” not in the effort it requires, but in that it is a basic requirement for every member of *Klal Yisroel*.

How can we work on developing this *middah*? Rav Itzele Peterberger (*Ohr Yisroel*, *Etz Pri*) develops the concept that there is both internal and external *yiras shamayim*. The end goal is to develop internal *yiras shamayim*, to the point where we instinctively recoil from sin. The way to attain this level is to practice external *yiras shamayim*, by being extremely careful

about every aspect of our *Torah* observance. Eventually, our actions will be able to influence our internal *yiras shamayim*. May we all be *zoche* to fulfill Moshe *Rabbeinu*’s request and acquire true *yiras shamayim*!

What Doesn’t Kill You Makes you Stronger

Shneur Agonin (21)

While reading through the *pesukim* of this week’s *parsha*, *Parshas Eikev*, I came across one particular *possuk* which especially piqued my interest. The *possuk* (*Devarim* 8:16) reads: “[It is *Hashem* who] feeds you the *mann* in the wilderness that your forefathers did not know of, *to afflict you and test you, in order to benefit you in the end.*”

First of all, why does Moshe *Rabbeinu* consider the fact that *Hash nem* provided us with a consistent source of sustenance to be some sort of affliction? Secondly, how would such a struggle benefit us “in the end?” Finally, what essential lesson and *chizuk* can we glean from this *possuk* that has relevance to our everyday lives?

To address the first question, the *Gemara* in *Yoma* (74b) discusses the meaning of the word “afflict” in that *possuk*. According to one *amora*, the *possuk* demonstrates the inherent lack of security which the *mann* caused the Jews to feel. The Jews might have enjoyed the bountiful reapings of one day’s *mann* harvest, but who could guarantee that more *mann* would be forthcoming the next day? Since *mann* never remained fresh for more than one day (*Shemos* 16:20; save for *mann* gathered for *Shabbos* on Friday), the Jews quite literally lived from one “paycheck” to another. Thus, even in the midst of one day’s bountiful selection, the Jews were worried that perhaps *Hashem* would not grant them the same heavenly victuals later on. As the *Gemara* there puts it, “one with bread in his basket [i.e. he who knows from whence his next meal will come] cannot be compared to one without bread in his basket.” Consequently, the *mann* posed a significant challenge which the Jews dealt with. But, now that we can understand how the *mann* represented a struggle, what does Moshe *Rabbeinu* come to tell us that *Hashem* intended to “benefit us in the end” through it?

Several commentators attempted to decipher this *pasuk*’s odd conclusion. *Rabbeinu Bachye* writes that the focal point of this specific challenge was to foster a sense of *bitachon*, trust in *Hashem*, within the hearts of the Jews. Indeed, the Jews experienced anxiety due to the uncertain nature of the *mann*, but what eventually came of it? Over time,

they recognized that, despite their fears, the next day would always bring more *mann* with it. Through this gradual realization, the Jews developed a legitimate recognition of *Hashem's* dominion over the entire world, in addition to a natural inclination to trust that He would provide for their needs. Evidently, only by conquering the visceral insecurities brought about by the *mann* could the Jews find this *bitachon* within themselves.

This idea leads into the explanation of Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, the *Chofetz Chaim*. He writes (*Chofetz Chaim Al Hatorah*) that *Hashem* tested the Jews via the *mann* in order to observe if they would conduct themselves according to *halacha* despite their worries, which might have distracted them from their obligations vis-à-vis the *Torah*. By continuing to observe the *Torah* even in times of duress, *Hashem* intended to strengthen the Jews' resolve and commitment. This can be compared to a professional runner training in high-altitude environments. The thinner air conditions one's lungs to work efficiently even in less-than optimal conditions. *L'havdil*, *Hashem* provided the Jews with a method through which they could fortify their identities, thus ensuring continued *Torah* observance even during our darkest hours.

Combining both of the ideas presented by *Rabbeinu Bachye* and the *Chofetz Chaim*, one can learn from *Parshas Eikev* that challenges can allow us to tap into our own indescribable potential for growth. However, this only holds true assuming one maintains a sense of *bitachon*, trusting that *Hashem* brings about these numerous spiritual and material obstacles which we face in life in order to elevate our *Torah* observance and relationships with Him. With His help, may we all merit true closeness to *Hashem* through the trust which we place in Him, knowing that though we may encounter the trials and tribulations of this world, we can also find the greatest opportunities through them for growth.

Are We Satisfied

Peshurin Sorscher (21)

In this week's *parsha*, we see the source for why we thank *Hashem* after eating bread. The *possuk* states (*Devarim* 8:10) "you shall eat, be satisfied, and bless *Hashem*". There is a famous *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 118a) which says that the process of obtaining food is "as difficult as splitting the *yam suf* (Red Sea)." We often eat bread without thinking about the complex and laborious process of getting it to our tables. Making bread requires months of toil, all beginning with one person taking one seed and planting into the ground. From that one seed, emerges the suste-

nance which allows man to eat and survive. This simple *possuk* holds a treasure trove of understanding as to why we should be thankful for the food we eat.

We all know that *Hashem's* judgement is perfect, and that everything that he does is truthful. Yet we find in *birchas kohanim*, the *bracha* which is recited by the *kohanim* for the congregation, that *Hashem* favors *Bnei Yisroel*. How can *Hashem* be an honest judge, and at the same time show favoritism to a certain group of people? The *Gemara* answers (*Berachos* 20b) that the reason why *Hashem* favors the Jews is because they go above and beyond when it comes to thanking *Hashem* for their bread. Even though we technically only have to *bentch* when we are satisfied (as the *possuk* mandates), nevertheless, we thank *Hashem* even when we only have a small amount of food. *Hashem* therefore says that since we Jews go beyond the requirements of the law, we are worthy of favor. Due to our viewing even the smallest aspects of creation with gratitude, we are worthy of receiving favoritism from the King Of Kings. If this is the case, how much more blessing could we acquire if we remembered to thank *Hashem* for every little thing in our lives? More to the point, how much better off would we be if we made sure that the time we reserved for *bentching* was actually designated to truly thank *Hashem* for the food which we ate?

We often forget that the difference between a good and not-so-good *bentching* only comes down to a few minutes. It is a small thing, but one which can have tremendous impact on our lives. I once heard from one of the *maggidei shiur* in our *yeshiva*, Rabbi Netanel Danto, that a great way to progress as a *ben Torah* is to recite *bentching* with concentration, making sure to pronounce each word correctly. Rabbi Danto also advised that if we ever find ourselves in a situation where we rushed through *bentching*, we should make sure to say it again slowly afterwards (obviously without *Hashem's* name). This small change in our daily lives can change the way that we view the world. Rav Avigdor Miller constantly reiterates in his book *Rejoice O' Youth* that the way to connect with *Hashem* and to become true *bnei Torah* is to be thankful for all the amazing things that *Hashem* has given us. He explains that we focus on the few things in our lives which seem to be negative, even though the amount of noticeable good is far greater. By making an active effort to appreciate *Hashem's* involvement in our lives, we can change our whole outlook on life to be more positive. And all of that begins with a proper recitation of *bentching*. We should all merit to take our *bentching* to higher levels, and to merit *Hashem's* favoritism!

The Elusive Translation of Eikev

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמָעוֹן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשִׁמְרָתָם וְעֲשִׂיתָם
אֹתָם וְשָׁמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת־הַבְּרִית וְאֶת־הַחֹסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לְאֲבוֹתָי

"And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances, and your observing and performing them; then Hashem, your God, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers." (Devarim 7:12)

This *possuk*, and particularly the word עֵקֶב (*"eikev"* from here on out), are subject to multiple understandings. Most simply, the word means "since", that since we listen to the *mitzvos*, Hashem guards our covenant with him. Rashi, however, offers a unique explanation of this word, explaining that the words *"eikev tishmiun"* mean to say that even the relatively light commandments which a person tramples with his heels (*eikev*), you shall listen to."

The source given by Rashi for this comment is the *Midrash Tanchuma*. We do not find, in any of the Midrashic texts we have, Rashi's precise wording. (A momentary digression: there are three versions of the *Tanchuma* which we know have existed. One of them has been completely lost to time. It is possible that Rashi's wording may be found there. Alternatively, Rashi is simply shortening and paraphrasing the text of the *Tanchuma* which we do have.) In our versions of the *Midrash*, it states "there are light mitzvos which people do not pay attention to, but they throw them under their heels. . . ." Thus, Rashi uses the *Tanchuma* to understand *eikev* as meaning heel in the sense of these "light mitzvos."

The commentaries on Rashi, such as the *Levush Haorah*, all wonder what compels Rashi to translate *eikev* in this manner, as opposed to the simple translation of "heel." We know that Rashi's approach is always to seek out a *Midrash* which explains an issue within the *pshat* (simple understanding) of the *possuk*. What issue did Rashi have with the *pshat* in this instance? The *Ohr Hachaim* seems to compound this *kashya* by referencing Rashi's explanation as *drush*, removed from the simple meaning of the *possuk*. What pressing need did Rashi see which compelled him to cite this *Midrash*?

The Ramban offers four alternatives to Rashi's *Tanchuma*, and proposes a serious question against it. He begins by citing the *possuk* (*Bereishis* 26:5) which says *"eikev asher shama Avraham bikoli"*, which translates to "because Avraham obeyed my voice." In that context, the word *eikev* simply means "because." Why couldn't Rashi use this explanation here?

The Ramban then proceeds to quote Rashi and (according to the *Tur's* reading) question him. The *possuk* here makes reference to *mishpatim*, which are monetary laws. These *halachos* are extremely dense and complex, and can hardly be called "light". Thus, according to Rashi, the *possuk* would be contradicting itself, first making reference to these light *mitzvos* with the word *"eikev"*, and then recalling the complex *dinim* of *Choshen Mishpat* (monetary law)!

The *Zichron Ozer*, an anonymous, contemporary commentary on the Ramban, suggests an answer for Rashi, based on the fact that there are many miniscule details within monetary *halacha* which people do not consider to be so significant. Thus, the *possuk* uses the word *mishpatim* to reinforce that we must be careful about all *mitzvos*, even those which appear insignificant. However, the Ramban regards this approach as far from satisfactory, and instead offers three other alternative explanations.

The first explanation, cited in the name of *"meforshim"* but really a reference to the *Ibn Ezra*, is that the word *eikev* means "a reward in the end." The *possuk* therefore reads "and it will be, as the end result of listening to the ordinances . . . then Hashem will guard, etc." Here again, according to the *Ibn Ezra*, we have a simple explanation of the *possuk*, which Rashi chose not to give. Once again, we are forced to ask why Rashi did not opt for a more simple explanation of the *possuk*. The Ramban offers four *pesukim* to validate the *Ibn Ezra*, where a bodily limb is used in reference to a chronological order or order of importance, such as "head" being the first or most important thing, and "tail" meaning the last or least important. Thus, the Ramban posits that the word *eikev* could feasibly be a reference to an end result, using the heel's position at the end of the body as a metaphor. (Interestingly enough, and worthy of further discussion, the Ramban does not offer any examples of the word *eikev* being used this way in any other context.)

The Ramban then turns to Onkelos, who translates *eikev* as *"chalaf"* meaning "in exchange for." The *possuk* thus translates to "and it will be in exchange for listening to the ordinances . . ." The Ramban attempts to prove this explanation by citing examples of *eikev* meaning "going around" or "crooked." The Ramban says that this is what the *Targum* meant by *"chalaf"*, and that the *possuk* would then read "and it will be after going around, the result will be . . .". Admittedly, the Ramban's explanation of Onkelos seems to be far removed from the simple meaning of the word *chalaf*.

In his concluding paragraphs, the Ramban brings many more proofs to *eikev* being a reference to some form of "circling to a conclusion". This appears to be

an attempt to combine the explanations of Onkelus and the *Ibn Ezra*. The Ramban also agrees that a simple *pshat* in the word could simply be “since”.

And so, we are left with a glaring question on Rashi. Why did Rashi abandon these potential explanations of the word, and instead cite the *Midrash*? Every commentary on Rashi searches for a justification of his use of the *Tanchuma*. The *Gur Aryeh* explains that what troubled Rashi was that the *possuk* abandoned the standard word, “*im*” (if). The very fact that the *possuk* used a peculiar language forced Rashi to find an alternative explanation.

The *Be'er Heitiv* has an alternative explanation for Rashi, namely, that the word *eikev* means something which is certain, not something which is conditional! The *possuk* in *Bereishis* means that Avraham surely obeyed *Hashem*’s voice. Thus, the Ramban’s first

pshat of “since” or “because” cannot work here.

According to both the *Be’er Heitiv* and the *Gur Aryeh*, Rashi saw a fundamental issue with the *pshat* in this phrase, which led him to cite the *Tanchuma* to justify the use of the word *eikev* in this context.

As for the issue raised by the Ramban from the word “*mishpatim*”, we can explain using the *Zichron Ozer*, that Rashi understood this as a reference to those aspects of monetary law which are generally neglected. Alternatively, the *Gur Aryeh* brings sources where the term *mishpatim* includes all *mitzvos*, even those outside of *Choshen Mishpat*. According to this explanation, Rashi would read the *possuk* as warning us to adhere to the minor details of all *mitzvos*, not just monetary ones. Whether the category of “minor details” is objective or subjective, will have to be subject to further *iyunim*.

For more MTA Torah, join our WhatsApp group, where we share weekly recorded divrei Torah from our yeshiva community, shiur updates, and more! Use your phone camera to scan the QR code to join the chat, or to listen to this week's dvar Torah, from our Head Of School Rabbi Joshua Kahn.



Parsha Puzzlers

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the summer!
1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the commentaries in the Mekraos Gedolos Chumashim, along with the Toldos Aharon on the side to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. The word “*eikev*” in the first *possuk* of this *parsha* is used to mean “if”. Give three explanations for this unusual expression.
2. The *possuk* (11:14) uses three words to refer to rain, those being “*matar*”, “*yoreh*”, and “*malkosh*”. What are the differences between these three types of rain?
3. In the *haftorah*, the *navi* says “look at Avraham your father, and Sarah your mother, who bore you” (Yeshayahu 51:2). Why does the *navi* reference Avraham and Sarah in this *nevuah*?

Gedolim Glimpse: Rabbi Nosson Adler

Meir Morell ('22)

Rabbi Nosson Adler (1741–1800) was born in Frankfurt, Germany. When he was a child, the Chidah (Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai) visited Frankfurt to raise money, and quickly became fond of little Nosson. As he got older, Rabbi Adler attended the *yeshiva* of Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, the *Pnei Yehoshua*. However, Rabbi Adler considered Rabbi David Tevele Schiff (Who would later become the Chief Rabbi of the UK) to be his main *rebbe*. In 1761, he established his own *yeshiva*, which was attended by many students who would eventually become prominent rabbis in their own right. Among these *rabbonim* were Rabbi Avraham Auerbach, a famed German Talmudist; Rabbi Avraham Bing, a rabbi in Würzburg; Rabbi Sekl Loeb Wormser, a known “*ba'al shem*” (someone who utilizes the names of God to perform miracles); and, most famously, Rabbi Moshe Schreiber (Sofer) (*Pictured on the left*), the Rav of Pressburg, more commonly known by the name of his magnum opus, the *Chasam Sofer*.



Rabbi Adler devoted himself to the study of *kabbalah* in the style of the *Arizal*, which influenced many aspects of his life. He assembled a study group with which to learn *kabbalah*. He hired a Yemenite to teach him the Yemenite pronunciation of Hebrew, which is deemed by many to be closer to the original pronunciation, and let him live in his house for a few months, in order to fully grasp the pronunciation. He prayed with the *nusach* of *Halebi*, a sect of Syrian Jewry. He was also open to *chassidus*, which at the time was extremely controversial. His *talmidim* claim that he performed several miracles, as well as frightening many with predictions of calamity. These mystical leanings eventually resulted in rabbinic action; in 1779, a proclamation was made that rabbi Adlers assemblies were *assur*. Rabbi Adler, however, paid no attention to these orders. His doors remained open day and night, and he declared all his possessions to be *hefker* (ownerless), to prevent anyone who accidentally took something to be liable for theft.

In spite of his ongoing conflict with the congregational authorities, Rabbi Adler's fame as a pious and scholarly individual continued to grow. In 1782, he was elected rabbi of Boskowitz in Moravia. But his excessive dabbling in mysticism made him enemies, and, as a result, he was forced to abandon his *kehilla* in 1785 and return to Frankfurt. Rabbi Adler's continued adherence to his proclaimed doctrine led to a renewal of the *cherem* (ban) in 1789, which was not repealed until shortly before his death in Frankfurt, on September 17, 1800, the 27th of *Elul*, 5560. His wife, Rachel, daughter of Feist Cohen of Giessen, survived him. He left no children, though Nathan Marcus Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, was named after him.



Rabbi Adler was averse to literary publications, likely due to his mystical beliefs. The *kabbalists* claimed that real esoteric theology should never be published, but should only be orally transmitted to worthy disciples. He wrote brief, marginal notes in his *mishnayos*, mostly cross-references to other relevant sources. Some of these were collected and explained ingeniously by B. H. Auerbach, under the title *Mishnas Rabbi Nosson*. One responsum of his can be found in the *shailos uteshuvos* of the *Chasam Sofer*, Yoreh De'ah, 261.

Parsha Summary

Moshe continues his final speech to *Klal Yisroel*, informing them of the great rewards for following the *mitzvos* and the importance of trusting in *Hashem*. The *mitzvah* of *birchas hamazon*, the blessing after eating bread, is also mentioned. Moshe warns the people not to fall into idolatry in the face of their success, as they did by the incident of the *Egel Hazahav*, the Golden Calf. Moshe tells the people that they only merited to survive after that incident because of the *zechus* of their forefathers, the *chillul Hashem* (desecration of the name of God) that would have resulted had the people been destroyed, and Moshe's prayers. Moshe describes how the very land of *Eretz Yisroel* will respond based on how we are upholding the *Torah*. In this context, Moshe says the second paragraph of *krias shema*. Moshe concludes that if the people follow the *Torah* and maintain complete faith in *Hashem*, they will be successful in their conquest.

Rosh Yeshiva: Rabbi Michael Taubes

Head of School: Rabbi Joshua Kahn

Associate Principal: Rabbi Shimon Schenker

Rabbinic Advisor: Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson

Editors in Chief: Yisroel Hochman, Shimi Kaufman

Head Writer: Yeshurin Sorscher

Assistant Head Writer: Yosef Flamenbaum

Executive Editors: Yitzchak Hagler, Meir Morell

שבת

שלום!!!

This Publication contains Torah matters and should be treated accordingly.

To sponsor a week of Shema Koleinu please email shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org