

Parshat Eikav: Mind and Heart United

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

In Parshat Eikav, we read, “*Vayaha eikav tishmaun..*” - If you will listen to my laws, then I, Hashem will keep the promise I gave to the Avot to bring you blessing. The word “*eikav*” seems extraneous. The Shem Mishmuel brings a Midrash- one who assembles a light fixture on Shabbat is obligated to bring a Chatas sacrifice. Keeping Shabbat earns a Jew reward in this world. In contrast, the reward for other mitzvot will be “*eikev*”-at the end of time. The Shem Mishmuel follows with another Midrash about a King who gave his Queen two beautiful stones and then straight-away two more

What does the jeweled crown represent? Hashem gifted us with a heart and mind so that we could perfect our intellect and emotions to serve Hashem. Both are equally essential in developing an intellectual and emotional relationship with Hashem and the Torah. Avraham taught the Jewish people, *tzedakah u'mishpat*-mind and heart. *Tzedakah* means giving from the heart without judgement.

Mishpat employs the mind and the strict letter of the law. In return, Hashem gave us, *chesed v'rachamim*. *Chesed* is kindness beyond what the recipient deserves. *Rachamim* is a fusion of *chesed* and *din*, kindness beyond what is necessary, but in a certain sense deserved. When we sinned and perverted *tzedakah u'mishpat*, Hashem responded by taking away *chesed v'rachmim*. However, *l'assid lovo*-in the future, the Jewish people will repent and will restore *tzedakah u'mishpat* out of their own efforts. Hashem will then bring back *chesed v'rachmim*. Our spiritual struggles are continuous and our staunchest ally is Hashem who never leaves us even when we sin. So too, Hashem credits our repentance for His return to us. These are the four jewels that create the final crown of Israel.

The Shem MiShmuel explains, “*Ki ner mitzvah v'Torah Ohr*, the the lamp in the Midrash corresponds to Mitzvot and the Torah is light. A lamp contains light and both are purposeless without the other. This symbolizes the indivi-

bility of Torah and Mitzvot and the mind and heart. During the week, a Jew struggles to unite mind and heart to serve Hashem. On Shabbat, the lamp comes together on its own, we don't build it. This signifies the sense of completion and cessation of struggle that is the gift of Shabbat. Varying people have different size lamps on Shabbat. Their size is determined by how much effort we invested during the week in the mind/heart struggle. We can experience pleasure and true eternal reward for keeping Shabbat because Shabbat is on a kind of Olam Habah plane. The reward for other mitzvot can only be “*eikev*”-at the end of time because our weekday world is too defiled to be able to feel that otherworldly connection to Hashem. Therefore it says, “*Vahaya eikev tishmaun..*” There is one mitzvah that is olam habah and olam hazeh combined. Our struggle finds completion on Shabbat. Let us merit to attain complete unification of mind and heart so that we can merit to truly experience Shabbat, a foretaste of *Yom Shekulo Shabbat*-the great Shabbat of Olam Habah

Parshat Eikev: All the Mitzva

Based on a shiur by Mrs. Chana Prero

Chapter 8:1 states “Kol hamitzva asher anochi metzavcha hayom tishmerun la'asos. All the mitzva that I command you today, you should keep to fulfill.” What mitzva is Moshe referring to? The following verses command the Jewish People to remember their experiences in the desert. Is this the mitzva Moshe refers to in verse 1? Additionally, why does he say “the entire mitzva” or “all the mitzva?” If he is referring to a specific mitzva, he does not need to say “entire.” If he is referring to many mitzvot, then he should have said “all the mitzvot.” All refers to many; mitzva is singular. Why the inconsistent grammar?

Rashi responds in two ways: The pshat, basic explanation, and a midrashic, or homiletical interpretation. The basic explanation is that when Moshe says “mitzva”, he refers to all the mitzvot. Sometimes the Torah refers to many in the singular form, perhaps because the parts are all connected. We should read the verse, “All the mitzvot that I command you today, you

should keep to fulfill.” The midrashic interpretation is that the word kol does not mean all – it means entire. Moshe is commanding the Jewish People to complete any mitzva they begin. In order to get credit for a mitzva, one must do the entire mitzva.

Ohr HaChayim explains that people frequently do not fulfill all the mitzvot that they are commanded to do. Sometimes this stems from a belief that if I am good at a specific mitzva, I do not have to focus on other mitzvot, especially ones that seem unimportant. Moshe wants to combat this wrong philosophy, so he repeatedly warns the Jewish People to keep all the mitzvot. In our verse, he calls the entire Torah one mitzva, so that no one will mistakenly think, I don't have to fulfill some mitzvot. Just like I understand that I am supposed to do an entire mitzva, I should understand that all the mitzvot in the Torah are connected. If I don't fulfill some of the ones that I can, then it is as if I did not complete one mitzva.

Malbim agrees that “all the mitzva” refers to the entire Torah. He explains that people have asked why G-d gave the Jewish People 613 mitzvot? Weren't the seven Noachide Laws sufficient to achieve shleimut, completion?

One way people respond is that these are different ways to achieve shleimut. They explain by comparing to a sick person who goes to a doctor to get medicine. The doctor prescribes Medicine A. Then, he goes to a second doctor. This doctor prescribes several medications and tells the patient that he can choose the one he prefers. Malbim rejects this approach to the Torah. G-d is not giving us choices – to fulfill the seven Noachide Laws or the 613 mitzvot. He does not give 613 mitzvot to choose one from among them. We are commanded to fulfill them all – they are one unit, which why Moshe refers to them in singular.

The seven Noachide Laws enable a person to attain completion in this world and allow society

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to function. In order to have a functioning, productive life in this world, people cannot kill, steal, serve idols, curse G-d, abuse animals, commit adultery, and they must set up a system of courts to enforce these laws.

Torah, and its 613 mitzvot, enables a person to attain a higher level of spiritual completion. One who keeps the mitzvot can cleave to G-d

and attain prophesy. He or she will merit eternal satisfaction – in the World to Come, not just in this world.

Some of the mitzvot of the Torah only apply to the Land of Israel. The Malbim explains that there is an even higher level of shleimut that can only be attained in the Land of Israel. However, to attain this high level of shleimut,

one must be in the land of Israel. Eretz Yisrael is suited for completion because there are many mitzvot that are unique to it.

"All the mitzva" then, explains the Malbim, is one unit – consisting of all the mitzvot –that must be fulfilled in its entirety. It is a set of commandments that bring us to a higher level of personal perfection.

Tehilim 48: Jerusalem- The Eternal City Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

The 46th chapter in Tehilim discuss the special hashgacha Hashem has for Yerushalayim. It depicts a major natural disaster that wiped out entire countries and caused a tremendous death toll. Empires fell and new ones arose in their place. The commentators interpret Tehilim chapter 48 as the response of those who came to see how Yerushalayim survived, though it lay on a major fault. The city is described as, "Yefe nof m'sos kol h'aretz-Fairest of sites, joy of all the earth." Rashi explains the word nof as either a beautiful crown, region, or bride. It's the source of joy and in fact the center of the universe. Rashi explains that Yerushalayim was called the joy of the land as it was the place where people brought sacrifices and gained atonement for their sins. Seforno says people came there to find teachers of justice and true faith.

"Hashem in the city of palaces is known as a stronghold." Rashi says this is the place where one will come to know Hashem. Seforno adds, in those palaces the people will learn and teach Torah and Hashem will be known. Malbim says, the strength of her palaces that withstood the great storms indicates that Hashem's special *hashgacha* rests on the city and they will come to know Him.

"Behold, the kings have gathered, they have passed through together." In the war of *Gog U'Magog* they will gather in an alliance to destroy the city. Seforno explains that this refers either to Shlomo Hamelech or Mashiach. The kings will gather to try to determine what is the secret of the Jews survival against all odds. At first, they were astonished and then it turned into terror. They were shaken up spiritually; they were afraid of their own immorality and rushed to correct their ways. Rashi explains that they saw Hashem going out to battle for His nation. Other commentators say it refers to the prophecy of Yechezkel that at the battle of *Gog U'Magog* against Jerusalem, Hashem will fight for us. Seforno says they were shocked at the wisdom of the nation and feared they would conquer the entire world.

"As we heard, so we saw." Redak says when Gag and Magog fall, the world and the Jews will say, "As we heard, so we will see." Other say, the people came to see the grandeur of Jerusalem and they said, there's no exaggeration. Hashem is omnipotent, controlling heavens and earth. We are like puppets in His hand. Seforno says, as we heard in the *Torah* in *Devarim* that Hashem will make us superior amongst all the nations of the earth, so we

saw in our days. This refers either to the days of David or Shlomo or *Mashiach*. Malbim says it refers to the kings of other nations who will come back and report to their people that what they heard about Yerushalayim is what they saw. Hashem had spared the city while the area around it was destroyed, clearly proving that His *hashgacha* rests on Yerushalayim. "We hoped or imagined what your *chesed* would be like when you would again rest in your Temple." Seforno says, we can only imagine in light of the miracles we witnessed, what your loving kindness will be like in the future when You will finally come to rest in the Temple. "Like Your name Hashem is Your praise... Your right hand is filled with justice." *Chesed* without justice might imply that You would forgive atrocities. When we saw not only your *chesed* to us but also justice against those who wronged us, that is when we saw, you are like your name, *Elokim*- din that seeks justice. Simply being saved and not seeing justice meted out is not sufficient.

"Tell it to the last generation... for this is Hashem forever, He will guide us to eternity." We tell the non -Jews, this city is the place where Hashem's presence is felt most tangible. *Malbim* explains, the word *al mut* implies that we are calling on the other nations to recognize the beauty and eternity of the city.