

## It's the Little Things that Count

### Deut., Ch. 7

12. And it will be, if you will listen to these ordinances and keep them and perform, that the L-rd, your G-d, will keep for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.

13. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your soil, your grain, your wine, and your oil, the offspring of your cattle and the choice of your flocks, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

*If you will listen to these ordinances and keep them and perform,*

The commentaries dwell on the Hebrew word eikev in this verse -- an uncommon synonym for "because." Many see a connection with the word akeiv (same spelling, different pronunciation), which means "heel".

#### Rashi

The verse is suggesting if you will heed the minor commandments which a person tends to trample with his heels (then G-d will keep his promise to you).

#### Midrash

King David said, "Master of the Universe! I do not fear the important precepts of the Torah, because they are obviously important. Rather, I fear the minor precepts, perhaps I was lax with them because they are minor and you said: Be careful with a minor precept just like an important one. Thus the verse says, "In keeping them there is great reward (eikev rav)." And it is also written, "Oh how great (rav) is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you." This refers to the reward for observing "minor" precepts.

#### Onkelos

Heeding G-d's instructions will be closely followed (come at the heels of) the reward detailed in the verses that follow.

#### Midrash

The reward for heeding detailed in the verses that follow will be bestowed in the messianic future (the end or "heel" of history, i.e. "there will be reward in the 'heel'-era for your heeding.")

#### Tzemach Tzedek

Eikev is a reference to *ikvata d'meshichah*, the generation of "the heels of Moshiach" (the last generation of the Exile is called "the heels of Moshiach" by our sages because: a) they are the spiritually lowest generation, due to the "descent of the generations"; b) it is the generation in which the footsteps of Moshiach can already be heard). This is the generation that will "hearken to these laws," as Maimonides writes: "The Torah has already promised that the people of Israel will return to G-d at the end of their exile, and will be immediately redeemed."

#### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Our commitment to Torah should be such that it permeates us entirely, so that also our heel -- the lowest and the least sensitive part of the person -- "hearkens to these laws, observes them and does them." In other words, our relationship with G-d should not be confined to the holy days of the year, or to certain "holy" hours we devote to prayer and study, but should also embrace our everyday activities. Indeed, this



### פרק ז

יב. וְהָיָה עִקְבֵי תְשׁוּמָעוֹן אֶת  
הַמְשָׁפְטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמְרָתֶם  
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אִתְּם וְשָׁמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵיךָ  
לְךָ אֶת הַבְּרִית וְאֶת הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם : ג.  
וַאֲהַבְּךָ וּבְרַכְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ וּבְרַכְךָ פְּרִי בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ  
דְגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהָרְךָ שֶׁגַר אֲלֹפִיךָ וְעֶשְׂתָרֶת צֹאנֶךָ  
עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְתֶת לְךָ :

“lowly” and “spiritually insensitive” part of our life is the foundation of our relationship with G-d, in the same way that the heel is the base upon which the entire body stands and moves.

*If you will listen*

### **The Lubavitcher Rebbe**

Listening or hearing is a lower level of perception than seeing. Indeed the name of this parsha, eikev, literally means heel, the lowest extremity of the body and the most insensitive part. On the other hand, hearing involves our interpretive efforts more than seeing, since seeing is a more direct experience than hearing. We are quicker to know what it is we have seen than what it is we have only heard about and are more staunchly convinced of the truth of what we have seen. Attaining knowledge through hearing requires more effort. The same holds true for Divine perception. The advantage of “hearing” is that it requires us to reach deeper into our personalities, forcing us to forge a more profound relationship with G-d than that which is accomplished through “seeing”. The service of hearing refers to a simple devotion and raw commitment to G-d. Seeing refers to a level of greater awareness and experiencing a much loftier experience of spirituality that overtakes our entire consciousness. Only if we observe the commandments out of simple devotion to G-d will we be as careful about performing the “lighter” ones as we are about performing the “heavier” ones. Our devotion will prompt us to seek to serve Him completely, fulfilling all His commandments without distinction.

### **Avot 4:2**

The reward of a commandment is a commandment.

### **Chassidic Masters**

By fulfilling G-d’s commandments we connect with G-d in the most intimate way possible. It is this very intimacy that is the true reward for performing commandments, as our Sages say, “The reward of a commandment is a commandment.” (Avot 4:2) The material bounty promised here and in the messianic era is not an end in itself but rather a means to facilitate our further performance of mitzvot.

## SUMMARY

- We cannot ignore the “heel” mitzvot which must be done with the same enthusiasm as the “head” mitzvot because ultimately they are both the wish of G-d.
- Our relationship with G-d began much like a dynamic courtship. We, the Jewish people, were “infatuated” with G-d, with His power and might in freeing us from our Egyptian exile and with His overwhelming loftiness in presenting us with His Torah.
- But, then, like in a marriage, with our continuing familiarity, we let down our guard. There was “a loss of love and affection” and our behavior no longer reflected the same nuances of care as in previous generations.
- Particularly in the darkness of our exile, in a time when the relationship is stressed and when our spiritual prowess is on the wane, that we must focus on keeping the intimate connection, through the daily gestures by remembering to keep the heel mitzvot just like the head mitzvot.

