

Parshas Eikev

This week's parsha- Eikev, Moshe continues his retelling of the Jews' journeys, and recaps the Mitzvos which everyone should keep. The way he retells the Mitzvos, with a heavy focus on the love Hashem has for us, and in reverse us for Hashem is evident throughout the pesukim. The word Eikev means "consequence" which refers to the consequence of observing the Mitzvos of Hashem- which is the reward in Olam Haba (as some commentaries- Yalkut explain- that the reward comes at the end- which is also a way to translate Eikev). Rashi explains that even the lighter mitzvos which one would "tread on- like a heel" (sharing the same root word as Eikev) you will observe with exuberance).

Rabbi Yossi Holzberg in our weekly shiur brought down from Mepharshim that any expression of "V'Haya" (as the Parsha begins with) is a statement of simcha. This applies here, as the method by which one ought to observe the mitzvos- with happiness. In the Shiur I explained, not only does one need to try to observe the mitzvos with happiness, through performing the mitzvos one becomes happy. Another anecdote shared at the shiur was "Eikev" is a mnemonic referring to observing the mitzvos with the yoke of heaven. And finally, the numerical value of Eikev is 172, the same number of words in the 10 commandments. Which we see in perek 8 posuk 1, "Kol Hamitzva" (all the mitzvos) referring to the fact that the Jews accepted the entire Torah and cannot pick and choose what they observe.

The way Moshe gives a speech of support, and the words he uses explains to us all

these years later the vision of hope that we cannot lose sight of the mission to bring Mashiach- and rebuild the Land of Israel with the Beis Hamikdash. For example, in 7:17 the question of thinking we are outnumbered, and we have what to fear, Moshe tells us to remember what Hashem did to Egypt. The use of the word Zachor Tizkor is active memory, as opposed to "al tishkach" don't forget. The difference is, not forgetting is passive in that it is based on a live experience, that the Jews going forward would not have, as they didn't live in slavery in Egypt. Yet we need to draw on that "memory", therefore we must know that in the future, that which Hashem did, He will do it again. Furthermore, Moshe tells us not to forget Hashem even when things are prosperous.

Moshe also tells the Jews not to look to Egyptian ways of irrigating and planting, as Egypt is not Israel. Israel is unique, and new methods of planting and reaping must be discovered. Not looking to another place could be so that there is no subservience, or reliance on an outside force other than Hashem (thing of intercontinental indebtedness), whereas Israel- especially in a modern time, has adopted a non-linear path to solving issues, such as being able to harvest in desert through optimized technology such as hydroponics.

An interesting thought is that when recounting the breaking of the luchos, Moshe calls the Jews a "stiff necked people" and reminds us that we are being given the Land of Israel because Hashem differentiated us through the Torah- whereas every other nation cannot lay claim as they don't observe the Torah. Which means Moshe is continually reminding the Jews and strengthening their

ability to observe the Torah as the outcome of the path that is being created for all eternity-which is ultimately to bring Moshiach.

The Haftora is read from Yeshayahu 49:14-51:3 and is the second Haftora of consolation ahead of Rosh Hashana. There are parallel words in the Haftora that are also used in the Parsha. But the connection between Moshe's words of strength and Yeshayahu's reminder to the Jews about hope and the end of days and the fulfillment of the Torah as the path through our existence, while we are granted life on Earth, and that Hashem loves us (as we see in the Parsha) and that through our observance we will return from Exile (as seen in the words of the Haftora). 49:22 where we are told Hashem will tell the nations to free us from captivity- this follows the Messianic interpretation of Shmuel, who stated that Mashiach will be when the Jews are rulers of their own domains. Shmuel's concept is concomitant with the posuk, in that we may not physically be in "captivity", but we are shackled by rules that are not our own. In this way, when Mashiach arrives, we Jews will be released from this captivity.

Good Shabbos