



From the desk of  
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## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad \* Batei Hora'ah \* Religious Services \* Marriage Licensing \* Kashrut \* Mikvaot \* Eiruvim

## TORAT

## Parashat Eikev

## HAMELECH

### It's The Little Things That Count

The *parashah* begins: "*Vehoya eikev tishma'un* – And it shall be, in response for your heeding..." Rashi renders "eikev" as a heel, meaning to say: If those *mitsvot* which people tend to tread upon with their heel, i.e. disregard and treat lightly,... if you listen to them and perform them just right... Hashem will guard for you the covenant and the kindness which He swore to your forefathers. He will love you, He will bless you, He will increase you. He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain, your wine and your oil and your livestock...

All of this, because of what? Because you made sure to be careful even with those *mitsvot* that people tend to disregard.

### In Hashems Eyes

Too many people these days get caught up with the headlines and the spotlights. People aim to get the Nobel Peace Prize, simultaneously being obnoxious and cruel to their closest family members. They want to see their picture on the front page and plastered all over the city.

But what does Hashem value? "This is what Hashem says: The Heavens are my Throne and the earth is my footstool... I made everything... nonetheless, what strikes up My interest? The

humble, low-profile fellow, who is meticulous about following My command."

Hashem is not blinded by limelights. He cares about those who care for one and all, even when the camera is not flashing.

### Sins of the Heels

David Hamelech said (Tehillim 49), "The sin of my heel encircles me." Dovid feared the "little" sins, which we do without even realizing. He knew that those are what make all the difference.

The daughter of Rabi Chanina ben Dosa received a terrible punishment. She was sentenced to serve an indefinite term in a Roman home for defilement of maidens. All because of what? Because one time, she was walking delicately in the presence of Roman officials. When one Roman governor said to his comrade, "Wow! That young lady has a pretty prance!" she put in extra effort to improve her steps.

At that, Hashem decreed for her the aforementioned terrible punishment. This, in the Medrash's eyes, is an example of "sins of the feet" which bring calamity in their wake.

### More Feet Problems

Gm. Shabbat (62b) shares with us some more "sins of the feet" which do not go unnoticed. Yeshaya HaNavi laments the immodest conduct



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of the females of his generations. They would walk so slowly so as to be noticed by male passersby. "With their feet, they would anger Hashem" (Yeshaya 3:18). They would purposefully pass by young Jewish lads and step on their feet, intending to arouse attention and desire (Rashi ad loc). They would also fill their shoes with fine smelling perfumes and walk around the streets of Yerushalayim. When they would find young victims – *bachurei Yisroel* – they would approach and stamp down hard, spreading the perfume all over, specifically in the direction of the *bachurim* so as to arouse their evil inclination.

When the *churban* came, these young ladies received their due punishment.

### The Web

Once Mashiach comes, Hashem will slaughter the *yetzer hara*. The righteous will perceive it as a tall mountain. The wicked will perceive it as a strand of hair. Both groups will cry. Why do the wicked perceive it as a strand of hair? Because all of their wickedness began when they violated "small" transgressions which were relatively easy to refrain from doing. But one thing leads to another. It is like a spider web. It starts out thin and feeble. But the spider then repeats his actions, each time strengthening the web until it becomes as thick as a strong rope. So too, when a

sinner repeats his sins, he gets stuck on his own web. He also proceeds from bad to worse.

One of the biggest traps of the *yetzer hara* in our generation is the improper use of unfiltered internet. It is so ironic how people freely use the terms "web" and "net" and "*reshet*" and do not even realize that all of these are things which trap those who innocently land on/in them.

### Royal Resumé

Let us return to the importance of "small" deeds. The Medrash says that Hashem only appoints someone to greatness after checking him out in a "small" matter. For example, He tested Dovid's suitability to serve as king by observing how he treated the sheep.

In today's world, before appointing someone to public position, he is checked for his orating skills, his power of influence and ability to convince others and his obstinance and staunchness. Additionally, his resume will be studied – what has he done or accomplished in the past.

Hashem Yitbarach had other things in mind. It did not disturb him that Moshe had a speech impediment. It did not matter that Dovid had a bad reputation due to questionable lineage. What mattered to Hashem was that each showed dedication and devotion to those under his care.



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Neither had held any prior public position. The verse even stresses, regarding Dovid Hamelech (Tehillim 78:70), "And He took him from the sheep-pen... to shepherd His nation, Jacob."

### Big and Small

When Rabi Yosi ben Kisma was unwell, Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon visited him. Rabi Chanina asked R' Yose, "Am I getting Olam Haba?"

"Did you do anything notable?" was the reply.

"Well, one time, I was meant to distribute Matanot La'evyonim on Purim, and the funds got mixed up with my personal savings, so I gave it all to the poor."

"If that's the case," said R' Yose, "I wish I could get as good a portion as yours!"

Now, here was R' Chanina ben Tradyon, who was teaching Torah publicly against Roman decree. He endangered his life. But that was not enough. That was done publicly. It could have been done with ulterior motives of honor and prestige. Reb Yose was looking for a good deed done out of the limelight, something that only Hashem knows about. Something that some consider small and Hashem considers "big".

### 400 Times

Rav Preida had a student who had difficulty grasping the lesson. On a normal day, Rav Preida

had to repeat himself 400 times before the student would understand.

One day, Rav Preida had somewhere important to go after the lesson. This time, 400 times were not enough. The student was too nervous about his Rebbe's departure. So Rav Preida sat with him and taught him for another 400 times!

At that, a Heavenly Voice proclaimed, "Rav Preida, as reward for your efforts, would you like another 400 years of life, or that you and your entire generation merit a portion in the World-to-Come?"

Selfless Rav Preida chose the latter, and the Heavenly Voice proclaimed, "Grant him both!"

We see that one person's private act affected his entire generation.

### Erev Yom Kippur

One Erev Yom Kippur, Rav Yisroel Salanter sat down and wrote a letter of recommendation for a young man who had requested one a few days earlier. Members of his household asked him why now, of all times. He simply answered, "I really wanted to take care of this earlier. But I was so busy with other things. Now is my first opportunity. I am sure that from his end, he is waiting anxiously for my reply. So the sooner, the better."



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For Rav Yisroel Salanter, another Jew's plight was high on the agenda.

### Rabi Ovadiah

In a similar vein, I once sent my *sefer* about-to-be published to Maran Harav Ovadiah Yosef zt"l. Just then, the Rabanit passed away, so I went for *Nichum Aveilim*. The crowd was quite large, as you can well imagine, so the *menachamim* each passed by the *aveilim* quickly, like a single fine line, uttering *divrei tanchumin* and passing on. Just after I passed, Rav Yitzchak Yosef said to his father, "Abba, that was Rav Malka!"

Rav Ovadiah called me back and apologized for not noticing, and immediately called for his assistant to write a letter of endorsement for my *sefer* in his name, as he could not write it now, as he was in *aveilut*.

I apologized and said, "No, that is not why I came. I came for *Nichum Aveilim*. I can return a different time for the letter."

But Rabi Ovadiah insisted.

Here is an example of a man who can put his own worries on the side and be concerned with other people's needs.

### The Main Address

I remember a large gathering. Rav Shach was to deliver the main address. This was when Rav

Shach had taken an active role in the political arena, for the good of promoting Torah values. Everyone was all ears. And what was the main thrust of the speech? He implored everyone to *bentsch* from a *bentsher*, a *bircon*. Do you hear that? Here is a Gadol B'Yisroel, with so much going on, and he uses his position and publicity to strengthen a simple *mitsvah* instead of talking anything political.

### On the Home Front

Also in the Jewish home, do not think that only the "big" things matter. More important than one time gifts is the day-to-day relationship, kind words and extending a helping hand, forgiving and forgetting inconveniences, and paying attention to keeping all of the daily *mitsvot*, not just the ones which come from time to time, such as the holidays. Make sure to keep Shabbat, *kashrut* and *taharat hamishpacha* down to their finest details, all the while maintaining peace and serenity. That is where we will really cash in. Those deeds and words which many disregard and treat lightly; those can be our biggest enemy, or on the contrary, if we keep them right, they will be our greatest source of blessing.

Fondly,

Shabbat Shalom,

Mordechai Malka