

## *Eikev*

The Torah portion of this week's Sidra begins with the verse *Vehaya Ekev*, "And it shall come to pass, because you hearken to these ordinances (of the Torah) to keep and to do them, that the L-rd thy G-d shall keep the covenant with you and the kindness which He swore unto thy fathers."<sup>1</sup>

From the first two words of this verse *Vehaya Ekev* we may derive two important lessons about how a Jew is to serve his Creator. The first lesson is *Vehaya*—to serve G-d with joy. *Pesikta-Zutrassa*<sup>2</sup> comments that the word *Vehaya* connotes joy and happiness. So too, does the *Midrash Esther-Rabbah* state that *Vehaya*—"And it will be on that day, the great shofar will sound;"<sup>3</sup> meaning the shofar of salvation and redemption heralding the return of the exiled to our Holy City, Jerusalem.

The second lesson is from the word *Ekev*. The word *Ekev* is also translated as heel and sole of the foot.<sup>4</sup>

The heel of the foot is the least sensitive and therefore denotes the lowest part of the human body. Nevertheless, here too the Torah teaches us *Vehaya Eikev Tish-maon*. Even our ordinary, everyday, mundane matters must be permeated with Torah and Mitzvoth.

As the founder of Chabad, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, explains in his holy sefer *Tanya*, "Although the Patriarchs and Moshe Rabenu are compared to the head and we in latter generations are compared to the feet, nevertheless, the feet have an advantage, for they carry and uphold the entire body."

Rabbi Schneur Zalman further explains, "Every Jew has inherited from the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, an inherent love and fear of G-d. All that a Jew has to do is to awaken and reveal these emotions which he already possesses in his G-dly soul. Because a Jew neither wants, nor can he ever be severed from the Almighty."

The saintly philosopher and Biblical commentator, *Ramban*, writes that the word *Eikev* is also mentioned in regard to our Patriarch Abraham, *Eikev Asher Shomah Bekoli*, "Because he has hearkened to my call."<sup>5</sup> This indicates that the Jewish people have always and will forever observe the Torah with great joy and happiness.

Being that our generation has suffered so many painful upheavals and holocausts, it behooves us to double and quadruple our efforts in the area of Torah study. We should all actively seek to bring our children and youth closer to Torah study and observance.

May we all take inspiration from this week's Sidra to learn to serve the Almighty with joy and devotion, and to permeate our every action and deed with Torah warmth, coupled with a genuine measure of *Ahavas Yisroel*—love of our fellow man.

We pray that we shall all realize the fulfillment of the last verse in the Sidra of *Eikev*, "That no man shall be able to stand against you, for the L-rd your G-d shall put the fear and dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread upon, as he has spoken unto you."<sup>6</sup>

May this come to pass speedily in our days, through the complete and final redemption, with the coming of *Moshiach*.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Devorim 7:12
2. Vaetchanan 6:10
3. Isaiah 27:13, Radak
4. Zohar I: 206a. Shaloh
5. Bereishis 26:5
6. Devorim 11:21