

# Aikev

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The heel is something we take for granted. . . until we hurt it. Toes too, but since a heel carries the brunt of a person's weight each time they step on it, a sore heel makes it very difficult to walk normally. Interesting enough, a well-heeled person is a wealthy one.

The word has considerably more meaning in Hebrew. For example, the Messianic Era which, historically, began at 4000 from Creation (240 CE), is called *Ikvesa d'Mashicha*—Heels of *Moshiach* (*Sanbedrin* 97a) for an obvious and not-so-obvious reason. The root of the name of our third forefather, Ya'akov *Avinu*, is *aikov*—heel, as it is of Akiva, as in the great Rebi Akiva. *Kabbalah* explains that this is no coincidence (*Sba'ar HaGilgulim*, Introduction 31).

The *parsha* begins with the word, but it seems to have a different meaning than heel:

*And it will be because—aikov—you will listen to these judgments and keep them. . . (Devarim 7:12)*

But we have other words for “because” that are more commonly used, prompting *Rashi* to explain:

*And it will be because you will listen:* If you will listen to the minor *mitzvos* which one [usually] tramples with his heels. (*Rashi*)

In other words, the Torah employed the word *aikov* to allude to a deeper meaning of the verse, that the Torah is specifically referring to those *mitzvos* that a person tends to treat as being of minor importance. If the *Mishkan* and the service performed therein taught us anything at all, it is that “God is in the details.” Likewise, we show how much we care for Him and His Torah by treating all aspects of it,

*especially* the parts that the *yetzer bara* wishes to neglect, with the proper respect. That's when we catch God's attention with positive results.

The *Ba'al HaTurim* whose expertise includes *gematria*, has one for the word *aikav* as well:

There are *aikav* (172) words in the first Ten Commandments, and this is [the meaning of] "*for in observing them aikav rav—there is great reward*" (*Tebillim* 19:12) . . . (*Ba'al HaTurim*)

*For in observing them there is great reward:* I was careful in its observance because of Your great good—*rav tuvecha*—that You have hidden away. According to this usage, *aikav* is like, "*because—aikav—Avraham listened to My voice*" (*Bereishis* 26:5). Another explanation of *aikav rav* is: the end of the Torah scholars is that they will come to greatness. *Aikav* is an expression of the end, and there is a similar usage in the *Mishnah* (*Sotah* 9:15): "At the end—*b'ikavos*—of the exile, prior to the coming of *Moshiach*." (*Rashi, Tebillim* 19:12)

In Hebrew, well-heeled means more than being financially endowed.

## **Shabbos Day**

THE GEMORA SAYS that history is 6,000 years long (*Yoma* 9a; *Sanbedrin* 97a), which is supported by *Kabbalah* (*Derech Hashem*, et al). What about science's opinion about the world being 14 billion years old? Not a problem if you read the right sources, but this will not be one of them.

The *Gemora* then divides the 6,000 years into three equal periods of 2,000 years each. The first is called "2,000 Years of *Tobu*—Chaos," the second is called "2,000 Years of Torah," and the final third is called "2,000 Years of *Ikvesa d'Mashicha*—Heels of *Moshiach*."

This is not only because it is the last section of history. As *Kabbalah* explains, the 6,000 years correspond to the six *sefiros*, *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tifferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*. They are the spiritual means by which God filters His light down into Creation so that everything can exist and function as it does. Each *sefirah* therefore corresponds to a 1,000-year period of history.

Though history is linear, the *sefiros* are not. They're set up vertically like a human body: *Chesed* is the right arm, *Gevurah* the left, *Tifferes* is the torso, *Netzach* and *Hod* are the right and left legs respectively, and *Yesod* is the reproductive organ. So,

as we have moved *linearly* from millennium to millennium we have moved *vertically* from *sefirab* to *sefirab*, which is like moving from the upper body to lower body. . . in the direction of the “heels” of history.

Therefore, though *theoretically Mosbiach* can come at any time, it is already 5783 and he has yet to reveal himself. He’s already here, but he hasn’t yet made himself known to mankind, and maybe God hasn’t yet made him known to himself. After all, though Miriam recognized Moshe’s importance from birth, he didn’t recognize it until God called on him in his 79th year, and after much convincing.

What’s *Mosbiach*, and really God, waiting for? We’d all like to know, but one thing is certain: the longer it takes for *Mosbiach* to show up, the closer we get to the “heels” of history. Is that just a matter of fact, meaning that we don’t have to but will only because we didn’t deserve *Mosbiach* earlier, or is it an integral part of the coming of *Mosbiach*?

The answer to that question may have to do with what God told the snake for his part in the sin of eating from the *Aitz HaDa’as Tov v’Ra*:

*And I shall place hatred between you and between the woman, and between your seed and between her seed. He will crush your head, and you will bite his heel—akev. (Bereishis 3:15)*

### **Seudas Shlishis**

THEY ARE COMPLETE opposites, *Mosbiach* and the snake. It was the snake that “led” man into exile from Paradise at the beginning of history, and it will be *Mosbiach*, God willing in our time, who will lead us back there at the end of history. And yet, their *gematrios* are the same: 358.

It’s similar to another anomaly: The *gematria* of Eisav, who was been the greatest source of war in the history of mankind, is equal to the *gematria* of the word for peace, *shalom*: 376. How can two polar opposites have the same *gematria* when the same *gematria* usually means that the ideas are exactly like one another?

The answer is, water. That is, we can learn about the answer from water. Humidity is something that is sensed but not seen. If you cool the air down enough, water droplets will form which can be felt *and* seen. If the water is cooled even further it will eventually become ice, which seems like the exact opposite of the moisture with it began.

Examining all three will show that each possesses the same water molecules. It is

only the structure and state of those molecules that was changed as a result of a change to the environment. A decrease in temperature causes the water molecules to lose energy and slow down, which results in water molecules that are closer together and a decrease in water volume.

Applying this idea to the above pairing of words, the difference between the original snake and *Mosbiach*, or Eisav and *shalom*, was not the essence of each thing, but the state of reality in which they existed. As is apparent in so many cases, it's not the thing itself that gives life or takes it, but the state of existence in which it appears:

Does a serpent kill, or does a serpent keep alive? No. When the Jewish people directed their thoughts above and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were healed. Otherwise, they died. (*Rosh Hashbanah 29a*)

This means that the snake should have been mankind's ticket to redemption, not exile, and the *Gemora* says something to that effect (*Sanbedrin 59b*). Likewise, Eisav should have been our path to peace, which would explain why Yitzchak invested so much in him, and was prepared to give him the *brochos* instead of Ya'akov. In fact, ideally, Eisav should have been Dovid *HaMelech*, red, ruddy, "blood on his hands," and the fourth Forefather (*Kehillas Ya'akov*).

So what transformed the snake from friend to foe, and Eisav from peace loving to peace destroying? The *matzav*, that is, the situation in which they existed. When Adam *HaRisbon* ceased to direct his thoughts to his Father in Heaven, it changed the snake. When Ya'akov did the same, it undid his father's effort to turn Eisav around.

The question is, when did Adam *HaRisbon* do that, and it seems that Ya'akov *Avinu* never took his mind off God. What are we missing?

### ***Ain Od Milvado, Part 61***

THE SIN OF eating from the *Aitz HaDa'as* is not as simple as it appears in the Torah. Obviously, there was a lot more going on *kabbalistically*, and *Kabbalah* explains a lot of it. In fact, it explains that before the snake could even get to Chava to convince her to eat, Adam had already "sinned" with the tree without yet physically touching it. His sin had already transformed him and the entire world, including the snake. The *Gemora* even goes so far as to say that he became a heretic (*Sanbedrin 38b*).

What about Ya'akov *Avinu*? He certainly never did anything heretical and remained the "choicest" of all the *Avos*. So what, if anything, did he do wrong that required Eisav to go a different route to the Messianic Era?

This:

*Ya'akov said to Rivkah his mother, "My brother Eisav is a hairy man, whereas I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will touch me, and I will appear to him as a deceiver, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing."*  
(Bereishis 27:11-12)

This of course was when Rivkah instructed Ya'akov to deceive Yitzchak into giving Eisav's blessing to him, and Ya'akov worried about being discovered and cursed by his father as a result. But interestingly enough, Ya'akov didn't question whether his mother was right or wrong about what she planned, because he had already made that decision when he decided to buy the birthright from Eisav decades before. He was more worried about being caught and cursed even if he was doing the right thing in the end. . . seemingly a violation of *ain od Milvado*.

In other words, if Ya'akov knew that his mother was right, he should have trusted that God would protect him, as He ended up doing. Ya'akov should have just focused on his part, as his mother told him to do, and let God take care of the rest. . . as Chava and Adam *HaRishon* should have done in their time as well.

This requires more explanation, but the main point for now is that this is what mankind has been fixing up ever since history began. It is what we profess to be doing every time we say the *Shema* and proclaim God's unity. It was the snake who caused mankind to view God in the opposite manner, and every time a person fails at *ain od Milvado*, it is as if the snake has once again bitten their "heel."

It may not be apparent yet, but we will see how Eisav's anti-Semitism over the millennia has been to return us back to the level of *ain od Milvado*, intellectually and emotionally. *Mosbiach* will certainly do this, and then finally at long last, the heel will be healed for good.