



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**

No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

29 July - 4 August, 2018
17 - 23 Av, 5778

Torah :

Deuteronomy 7:12 - 11:25

Haftorah:

Isaiah 49:14 - 51:3

■ **TORAH STUDIES**

We have many Judaic topics for you to study. We will provide the material and courses. Please write to us for more information.

■ **FAMILY PROGRAMS**

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ **GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH**

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

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BIG THINGS, SMALL PACKAGES

One Simchat Torah, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem told his disciples:

"On Simchat Torah everyone sleeps in a little, because of the hakafot dancing and the festivities of the previous evening. The heavenly angels, however, don't say drink on Simchat Torah, and they arose for the morning prayers at the usual time. But the angels found themselves with nothing to do: as the Talmud tells us, the angels cannot sing God's praises in the heavens until Israel sings God's praises on earth. So they decided to do some cleaning up in heaven in the meantime. "They found heaven littered with unusual objects: torn slippers and broken soles. The angels are accustomed to finding Tzitzit, Tefillin, and similar things up there, but they had never come across the likes of these. They decided to ask the angel Michael, the supernal advocate of the Jewish people, whether he knew the meaning of it all.

"Yes," admitted the angel Michael, 'These are the remains of last night's hakafot, at which Jews danced with the Torah.' Michael proceeded to sort the tattered shoes by community: 'these are from Kaminkeh, these are from Mezeritch, etc.'

"The archangel Metat,' boasted Michael, referring to the most prestigious angel in the heavenly court, 'ties crowns for God from Israel's

prayers. Today, I shall fashion an even more glorious crown for the Almighty out of these torn shoes.'"

This week's Torah reading begins "Vihayah Eikev Tishme'un - And it shall come to pass after you will heed..." The Torah then goes on to enumerate generous Divine blessings which we receive for our observance of the Torah and its Mitzvot.

Our Sages note that the Hebrew word "Eikev" can also be translated as "heel," and explain that this is a reference to Mitzvot which a person "tramples with his heel," i.e., those Mitzvot whose importance is not readily recognizable, but rather are subtly embedded into our everyday lives. Keeping such Mitzvot warrants God's bountiful blessings more so than does keeping the others.

When a person observes Mitzvot that are obviously important, his connection is not necessarily internalized to the greatest extent. The importance of the Mitzvot compels him not to ignore them. Right from the getgo, he accepts it as a given that ought to be observed. This being the case, his observance is not require great intestinal fortitude. He is doing what he believes he is expected to do.

On the other hand, when a person observes Mitzvot which can easily be "trampled with our heels," he displays an extra measure of devotion. By nature, these Mitzvot could easily be ignored; there is no obvious importance pushing him to observe them. Their observance requires an

Parshat Eikev

extra measure of commitment that enables man to go beyond our natural inclination. Making this additional effort evokes an extra measure of Divine favor and brings the manifold blessings enumerated in this week's reading.

By Rabbi Nissan Eizak

WHEN LOVE GROWS FROM FEAR

"Perhaps you will say in your heart, 'These nations are more numerous than I: how will I be able to drive them out?' Do not fear them. You shall remember what the L-rd, your G-d, did to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt"

Deuteronomy 7:17-18.

Rabbis are constantly teaching anyone who will listen (and even some who try not to) that the words of the Torah are eternal. The dictates are just as true now as on the day they were given. Our Torah is described as the Torah of Truth. Truth remains constant; it does not change. Just as in the days that the Jews were poised to enter and conquer the Holy Land they were commanded to disregard the superior numbers enjoyed by the enemies of our nation, so too in our times. Just as then the Jews were implored in the strongest possible terms "Do not fear them!" So too in our days must we remove the fear from our hearts and act with strength and courage.

For centuries Jews have stated in high praise of one another, "He is a true

G-d-fearing Jew...”But what of this powerful emotion called fear? What part does it play in the Jew’s life? Actually fear has a central place in our service of G-d, and as we will see serves as a stepping stone to true love of our Creator. Our portion states “Now Israel, what does the L-rd, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear the L-rd, your G-d, to go in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve the L-rd, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul.” Later still our portion reads “The L-rd, your G-d, you shall fear, Him you shall serve...”

For centuries Jews have stated in high praise of one another, “He is a true G-d-fearing Jew.” And yet today in many circles such praise would be construed as being almost backward, or at the very least awkward. Many spirited debates have been held on the necessity of fearing the Almighty. Many feel that only love is needed, and associate fear as a negative emotion in relation to G-d.

Our portion indicates that the opposite is true. If we study the issue we learn that there is a progression regarding one’s emotional attachment to the Creator. According to our Sages the most basic emotion is fear, and they elaborate that this means fear of punishment. This same theme is echoed in the Ethics of Our Fathers where the Mishnah reminds us not to lose faith in the concept of Divine Justice (that we will be held accountable for our actions).

If we parallel our spiritual service with our growth as human beings we see the same holds true in raising a child. When a parent imparts standards of behavior upon a child, he or she starts by making clear that there will be negative consequences if the child acts out in a negative manner. While love is of course given in copious amounts, the parent cannot expect the young child to modify his behavior based only on love. It may be argued that a young child does not even feel love until some maturation has occurred. This is because love is a more complex emotion that comes when the intellect has evolved to some degree, while fear is more instinctual.

Love is a more complex emotion that comes when the intellect has evolved to some degree. A Jew starts out with this baseline fear of punishment, which leads to love; a type of love that stems from our appreciation for all that G-d gives us. We then grow even further and develop a sense of awe in relationship to G-d. Awe is an outgrowth of the previously attained levels. Because we are in awe of G-d our behavior is modified yet further, so that every step we take and regardless of our surroundings we are cognizant of the G-dliness which envelops us, leading us to higher plateaus. Finally we reach the highest emotional level, where we love G-d to such a degree that we do all in our power whenever we can for Him, simply because we desperately desire to please Him.

The steps in the person’s emotional progression are available for any who chooses to access them. May we be successful in our emotional ascent towards the heights of

true love and fear of our G-d!

By Rabbi Yeruchem Eilfort

***Please work with your Chaplain/
Rabbi to ensure plans are in place
for the Holy Days!***

In Jewish History

Tuesday, 19 Av, 5778 - July 31, 2018

Passing of Rabbi Yaakov Culi (1732)

Born in Jerusalem in 1689 (5449?), Yaakov Culi moved to Constantinople, Turkey, where he found adequate facilities and financial backing to publish the scholarly output of his learned grandfather, Rabbi Moses ibn Habib, including classics such as *Get Pashut* and *Ezrat Nashim*.

The brilliant young scholar quickly came to the attention of the chief rabbi of Constantinople, Yehuda Rosanes, the undisputed leader of Sephardic Jewry at the time, and he was appointed to the beth din (rabbinical court).

Upon the passing of Rosanes, Rabbi Yaakov edited and published his late teacher’s writings with his own additional glosses: *Mishneh Lamelech* on Maimonides’s *Mishneh Torah* and *Perishat Derachim*.

Toward the end of his own short life, Rabbi Culi began work on the *Mea’am Loez*, a compendium of rabbinic lore and commentary on all books of Scriptures. He wrote in Ladino, then the common language of the Sephardic diaspora.

Unfortunately, he never completed his project and passed away on 19th Av, 5492 (1732), having only completed the book *Genesis* and most of *Exodus*. However, subsequent scholars used his extensive notes to finish the work. Popular to this day, the *Mea’am Loez* has been translated into many languages, including Hebrew, English, and even Arabic.

Wednesday, 20 Av, 5778 - August 1, 2018

Zohar Published (1558)

First printing of the *Zohar*, the fundamental work of the Kabbalah (Jewish esoteric and mystical teachings), authored by the Talmudic sage, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

Passing of R. Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1944)

Av 20 is the *yahrtzeit* (anniversary of the passing) of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1878-1944), in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was Chief Rabbi of Yekaterinoslav (currently Dnepropetrovsk), and was arrested and exiled to Kazakhstan by the Stalinist regime as a result of his work to preserve Jewish life in the Soviet Union.