

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 18 Av 5786, corresponding to August 1, 2026.

TORAH DIALOGUE
(p. 780 Hz) (p. 1032 S) (p. 687 Hi) (p. 980 AS)

EIKEV עקב

Deuteronomy 7:12

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1. Moshe reminds the people not to forget Hashem. Moshe sees the doom and gloom in the people's future. He knows that the new generation never saw the miracles in Egypt, the Splitting of the Sea, and the Revelation at Sinai. They did experience Hashem's daily miracles in the desert. Close to three million people were given food and water, and received the divine protection, physical and spiritual, while traveling in the desert. How could they succumb to idolatry after forty years with no idolatry in their midst? One factor that Moshe saw in the divine spirit was that Bnei Yisrael were never to remove all the Canaanites from the Promised Land. Hence they were clearly surrounded by the idol worshippers. And then there were no daily miracles. This combination of new living conditions made it hard to stay loyal to Hashem.

2. Once Yehoshua died, the cycle began. Loyalty to Hashem would fade; idolatry would be embraced. Hashem would allow foreign kings to dominate the Jews in Israel. The people would cry out to Hashem, and Hashem would save them. The people would then return to Hashem. Then this cycle would repeat itself over and over again in Jewish history. Hashem was kind to them, but this cycle would continue numerous times until the Temple was destroyed. And Bnei Yisrael would suffer exile for a longer period of time.

3. In the desert they ate Mannah and make a Berachah, HaMotzi Lechem Min HaShamayim, to Hashem Who brought bread from Heaven. Now they would live in Eretz Yisrael and eat from the seven blessed "fruits" of the Land. The new Berachah was HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz, to Hashem Who brought bread from the Land. The transition was simple and clear. In both cases one can see that the food came from Hashem. Man worked the land, sowing, plowing, reaping, all through his hard work and sweat. It didn't take long for man not to see Hashem's blessing in what he ate. This would lead them all to be disloyal to Hashem, truly unfaithful to Him. They quickly began to think that every blessing was the result of their own work. They no longer thought that their blessings came from Hashem.

4. Reciting Grace after Meals (Benching) is a Torah Mitzvah; it is incumbent upon each of us to thank Hashem for the food that we ate. In this way, we see Hashem in our daily lives. We thank Hashem for the food and for the Land. I find it interesting that I can eat a complete meal in America and yet thank Hashem for the food AND for the land of Israel, even though I did not eat any food from Eretz Yisrael. In the 21st century, we can easily resolve the issue without any strenuous thinking. We can include some food from Eretz Yisrael in any meal for which we have to Bench. This is not a Halachic suggestion, but why not? We are able to do it without any hardship on our part. The real answer is to see that we are required to think of Eretz Yisrael at various times. In the Berachot after the Haftorah. In the Sheva Berachot at and after a wedding. And in the Shemoneh Esrei. A constant reminder of our linkage to Eretz Yisrael.

5. Why is Aharon's death mentioned within the story of the sin of the Golden Calf? We might have surmised that Aharon's death was due to his involvement in the sin. But it is not so. The Rashbam points out that Aharon's death occurred some 38 years after the Golden Calf incident. Plus the dignity of his passing in the Biblical narrative is one of a great portrait of a terrific person. Great care is taken in the story of his passing as a very special death. It was more than a death. It was described as a ceremony of transmitting the office of the Kohen Gadol to Aharon's son Elazar. This was a great tribute to Aharon, seeing the passing of this role to his son while on his deathbed.

6. What does Hashem really want from us? (10:12). He asks us to fear Him, to follow in His ways, to love Him, and to perform His Mitzvot. These can be part of normal life. He doesn't ask us to do any supernatural or difficult to perform actions.

7. Water is a major issue in Israel and all over the world. Egypt depends on the Nile River. Israel must rely completely on rain, emphasizing our dependence upon Hashem's blessing. Today we recognize the need to preserve our water supply. And it is that way all over the world. The world recognizes the need to recycle our water. I have visited the kosher factories that slaughter meat and chicken. They also kasher the products using a great deal of salt. These factories have spent millions of dollars to build the facilities to clean the salt water after they rinse off the salt from the meat and chicken. Years ago when we visited Israel, there was true concern over the fresh water supply. Over the years Israel answered the need. Today Israel has built seven large desalination plants that

dot the Mediterranean coast to make sure that Israel has enough fresh water for its needs. But it is still in our prayers, as in the second paragraph of the Shema that we read near the end of this Parshah.

8. Midrash. The Midrash echoes Moshe's concern over the abundance that we are able to accrue in our lives. We must remember that we do not possess wealth. Hashem has appointed us caregivers with what Hashem has blessed us with. We are required to feed the hungry and dress the poor with what Hashem has "given" us.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT EIKEV 5786

I. From the Text

1. How does Moshe advise the people to respond when they are confronted with larger enemy armies? (7:18)
2. Name the blessed seven "fruits" of Eretz Yisrael. (8:8)
3. Are the required Berachot before and after eating bread from the Torah or from the Rabbis? (8:10)
4. What were the only things that Hashem requested from the people? (10:1...)
5. How many Jewish souls descended from Canaan to Egypt in Yaakov's time? (10:22)

II. From Rashi

6. The word Eikev is translated by Onkelos as a reward. How did Rashi interpret it? (7:22)
7. Why will Bnei Yisrael prove victorious in their battles against the Canaanites? (9:5)
8. Why was the 10th of Tishrei (Yom Kippur) selected as our Day of Atonement? (9:18)
9. Until the Final Aron (Ark) was constructed for the Mishkan, where were the Tablets stored? (10:1)
10. What is meant by "to serve Him with all your heart"? (11:13)

III. From the Rabbis

11. What test was there in the desert during the long journey? (Steinsaltz)
12. What is the source of the honey that they will have in Eretz Yisrael?
13. What were the First and Second Tablets made from?

IV. Midrash

14. The Midrash states that the one who starts a Mitzvah should persevere to finish it. Why?

V. Haftorah. Isaiah

15. What will happen to the Land when the Jewish people will return to it?

VI. Relationships

16.
 - a) Moshe - Chur
 - b) Miriam - Elazar
 - c) Itamar - Pinchas
 - d) Rivkah - Rachel (2 answers)
 - e) Aharon - Misha'el

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT EIKEV 5786

1. Don't be afraid; remember what Hashem did to the Egyptians.
2. Wheat, Barley, Grapes, Figs, Pomegranates, Olive oil), and Honey.
3. Before: Rabbinically. After: Torahitic.
4. To fear Hashem and obey the Mitzvot and to love Hashem.
5. 70.
6. As an unimportant Mitzvah (one that you step on with your heel).
7. Because the Canaanites are sinful, and because Hashem promised the Patriarchs.
8. Because on the 10th of Tishrei, Moshe came down from Mt. Sinai for the third time, this time with the Second Set of Tablets and Hashem's forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf.
9. In a wooden Ark in Moshe's tent.
10. To pray to Hashem.
11. Whether the people would obey the Mitzvot even when all their physical needs were provided for them by Hashem.
12. It is date honey.
13. First Tablets: we don't know. Hashem made them.
Second Tablets: from precious stones (Yerushalmi Talmud Shekalim 5:2)
14. The credit for the Mitzvah will be given to the person who finishes it.
15. The Land will become revitalized.
16.
 - a) Uncle Moshe
 - b) Aunt Miriam
 - c) Uncle Itamar
 - d) Aunt Rivkah, and Mother-in-Law Rivkah
 - e) First Cousins (Misha'el was Uziel's son Aharon was Amram's son. And Amram and Uziel were brothers.)