כב אב, תשעו August 26, 2016

פרשת עקב

From the heel up

The word עקבrepresents that which is figuratively low and as Rashistates at the start of Parsha...דש בעקביו; the relatively light Mitzvos that one tramples on. This is shown to us in the following:

1) עקב is a heel, the lowest part of the body.

2)עקיבאר' is rooted in the term עקב since he came from a humble, low beginning.

3) The name Yakov is also rooted in עקבas this is what he was called before he overcame the Malach of Esav which elevated his status.[[1]](#footnote-2)

4) Our generation- the lowest- is called עקבתא דמשיחא.[[2]](#footnote-3)

Although this is the lowest of generations, it is the one that brings Moshiach forth. One reason givenwhyMoshiachhasn’t come yet is so that there should be more BaalaiTeshuva. Thus, it says at the outset of our Parsha- והיה עקב תשמעון- the generation of עקבתא דמשיחא should listen to the Mitzvos and do Teshuva, thereby bringing Moshiach.[[3]](#footnote-4)

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The day with a name

Looking closely at the days of creation we notice it says יום אחד, יום שני and so on. That is, except for Friday where it says יום הששי.[[4]](#footnote-5) What is the reason for this?

When a census was being taken in ParshasPinchas, we find that aה andי were added to the names as in**ה**חנכ**י**. Rashi[[5]](#footnote-6) explains this is because the non-Jews would say that the Jewish mothers were together with Egyptian men so why do they trace their ancestry to their tribes. Therefore, Hashem put his name- י-ה- on them to testify that they are children of their fathers.

With this we can answer our question. The sin of Adam- which brought death to the world- took place on Friday.[[6]](#footnote-7) The Pe’erAhron[[7]](#footnote-8) explains that Hashem therefore put his name on this day as the י and ה of **ה**שש**י** spell י-ה.

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100 Brachos

The ShulchanAruch tells us we are obligated to recite at least 100 Brachos daily.[[8]](#footnote-9) This is alluded to in many places.

1) To say a Bracha is to say thank you to Hashem. Is it any surprise that מודים, the Bracha of gratitude in ShemonehEsrei equals 100 in Gematria.[[9]](#footnote-10) This explains the meaning behind the population of the tribe of Binyamin in the census- 35,400.[[10]](#footnote-11) The ChasamSofer[[11]](#footnote-12) explains that the source of blessing is in the חלק of Binyamin in the BeisHamikdash as it says כי שם צוה ה' את הברכה.[[12]](#footnote-13) The BeisHamikdash was a place of הודאה as the Gemara[[13]](#footnote-14) says הוד refers to the BeisHamikdash. Calculating the amount of Brachos we say in a year (354 days), we arrive at a total of 35,400, the population of Binyamin.

2) The 100th chapter of Tehillim is מזמור לתודה - to thank.

3) We say in Nishmasוגו' הן הם יודו- they will thank Hashem.הן הם yields a Gematriaof 100.

4) The word על in נאם דוד... הוקם על[[14]](#footnote-15) totals 100 alluding to the 100 Brachos.

5) הנה[[15]](#footnote-16) כי כן יברך גבר- we should say a Brachaכי כן times.That is 100 (Gematria of כי כן).[[16]](#footnote-17)

6) The Baal Haturim points out that the initials of משה איש האלה-ים are מאה, referring to the 100 Brachos.[[17]](#footnote-18)

7) The Gemara derives the Halacha of 100 Brachos daily fromכי אם ליראהועתה ...מה ה' אלה-יך שואל מעמך.[[18]](#footnote-19) The Pasuk states [[19]](#footnote-20)**ס**וד **י**-ה-ו-ה**ל**יריאיו. Adding up these initials we notice it totals 100.

8) The ChidusheiHarim[[20]](#footnote-21) teaches us just as the 100 אדנים; sockets were the foundation of the Mishkan so too are the 100 Brachos the foundation of Kedusha in each of us. אדנים is related to the word אדון; master since through a Bracha we testify that Hashem is the master over creation. The 100 Brachos are the 100 sockets to the Mishkan of each Jew.[[21]](#footnote-22)

The 100 Brachos were instituted by Dovid to stop the tragedy of 100 people dying daily.[[22]](#footnote-23) Indeed, the Malach appointed over death is known as the ס-ם, numerical value 100.[[23]](#footnote-24)Dovid wanted to reverse the 100 קללות to ברכות. In fact, קללה consists of the letters הלל(symbolizing Bracha)ק (numerical value 100).

We see the idea of 100 Brachos from an earlier origin. In the episode of Yakov fighting with the Malach, the שטן (Malach) took the 100 Brachos.[[24]](#footnote-25)ויגע בכף יריכו; the שטן hit the ball of Yakov’s thighbone.[[25]](#footnote-26)The word כף has a sum of 100. Thus, Yakov's name was changed to ישראל since Yakov symbolizes אמת as it says תתן אמת ליעקב. Adding 100 (Brachos) to אמת (441) we get a result of 541, the same as ישראל.[[26]](#footnote-27)

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Fear in the air

The שבעה דנחמתא; the 7 weeks of consolation which follow the 3 weeks, correspond to the 7 Sefiros- Chessed, Gevura, Tiferes and so on. The first of these Parshios is ואתחנן. Rashi tells us ואתחנן is a term used in conjunction with מתנת חנם: a gift for free- that which is rooted in the trait of Chessed.

Following this pattern, this week’s Parsha- Eikev- is lined up with יראה; Gevura.[[27]](#footnote-28)We therefore see that the Parsha of יראה (...שואל מעמך בי אם **ליראה**...) which we say after Shacharis is contained in this week’s Parsha. Is it any wonder that the Pasuk states עקב ענוה יראת ה'[[28]](#footnote-29), grouping together יראה and עקב. This week’s Parsha has the השפעהof יראה in it and is therefore easier to access this week. Let us take advantage of this special opportunity.

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In this week’s Parsha we have the Mitzvah of BirchasHamazon- ואכלת ושבעת וברכת.[[29]](#footnote-30) Here are a few stories that show us the importance of Benching with Kavana. The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva would only wash for המוציאif he knew he had time for the proper Kavanain Benching. R’ Shalom ShachnaZohn once washed on Motzai Shabbos for the SeudasMelave Malka very late. Now at 2 a.m. he told his grandson to wake him in a half hour so that he could have Kavana to Bench. How many of us would do the reverse in that situation- speed through Benching to get to bed.

A Jew who lived on Malachi street in Yerushalayim once heard his neighbor benching with tremendous Kavana like he never heard before. Upon questioning him about this he said when he was approaching the age of 13, his Rebbe in Europe took the class to R’ Meir Shapiro, the Rosh Hayeshiva of Chachmei Lublin. He quoted to the class the SeferHachinuch[[30]](#footnote-31) that says one who is careful in Benching will always have sustenance בכבוד. He was so inspired by this that he took upon himself to bench with Kavana. A few months later he was taken to the concentration camps where he had to pass through two selections to survive. The first was to be a certain height. Although he wasn’t tall enough, he was able to make it seem as though he was. The second test was to tell them a profession he was skilled in, that could help the Nazis. Since he was very young he didn’t have one. However, the man adjacent to him suggested that he be his assistant as a cook. As it turned out he passed both selections. Now that he worked as an assistant to the cook he had access to plenty of food and was therefore well fed. This was a fulfillment of the words of the SeferHachinuch as he benched with Kavana and thus had plenty of what to eat. Hence, even many years after the holocaust he still kept this up.

לעילוי נשמת אברהם יצחק בן שמואל עוזיאל

1. Breishis 32:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See Sota 49b [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This explains ישובו על עקב(Tehillim 70:4) as it refers to those of the generation of עקב doing Teshuva. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Breishis1:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. 26:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. See Iyov 3:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Hagada 13b. The Agudas Azov asks why we recite the Bracha of בורא פרי הגפן on wine and not בורא פרי העץ? The Midrash (BreishisRabba 15:8) tells us the sin of the EitzHadass was with grapes (wine). Thus Hashem doesn’t want to mention העץ with it since it says המן העץ; did you eat form the tree (Breishis 3:11), by the sin if Adam. Hashem doesn’t want to pain a creation. For this reason, its name isn’t mentioned (גפן) rather it just says העץ. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Orach Chaim, 46:3. The ChasamSofer (Toras, Moshe, Eikev, s.v. מה) calculates that there are 57 years from the age of 13 until 70 (the life span of the average person as it says in Tehillimימי שנותינו...שבעים שנה. The reward for each Bracha is 10 זהובים; golden Dinars- currency (Chullin 87a). As a result, the reward for 100 Brachos over 57 years is more than 18 million זהובים. (10 זהובים is 250 זוזים [Zuz is a type of currency.] This is a nice sum of money as one living in the times of the Gemara could live on 200 זוזים for a year- Bartenura on Peah 8:8). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Avudraham on ShemonaEsrei [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Bamidbar 1:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Toras Moshe, Bamidbar, s.v. וצבאו [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Tehillim 133:3, see Zevachim 118b [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Brachos 58a [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Shmuel 2, 23:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Tehillim 128:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. R’ Bachaye, Eikev [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Devarim 33:1. He explains further that this is the meaning in ה' אלה-י ...**אלף** פעמים (1:11) since there are 10 זהובים per Bracha (Chullin 87a), giving a total of 1,000 (100 multiplied by 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Devarim 10:12, Menachos 43b, see Tosafos, s.v. שואל. On Shabbos we say אין כאלקינו which contain the initials אמן (**נ**ודה-**מ**י-**א**ין). Through saying אין כאלקינו we complete the 100 Brachos since on Shabbos the ShemonehEsrei is shorter producing less Brachos. The Gemara (Menachos 43b) tells us R’ Chiya the son of R’ Avya would complete the 100 Brachos on Shabbos and Yom Tov by reciting Brachos on fragrances and delicacies. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Tehillim 25:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Brought in Mayana Shel Torah, Pikudai, 38:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. The 100 אדנים are the 100 א-ד-נ-י’s; Brachos- we say every day. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. BamidbarRabba, 18:21. Mishna Brura 46:14. See Tur, 46. Really, it was from the days of Moshe but it was forgotten. Dovid is the one who reinstituted it (KadHakemach, 2) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. The ChasamSofer says the 100 Brachos we say daily is to nullify the power of the ס-ם, Gematria 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. The Satan, Yetzer Hara and MalachHamaves are one and the same (Baba Basra 16a). This is the MalachYakov fought with. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Breishis 32:26. The end letters of נפ**ש** וטי**ט** אי**ן** (Yeshaya 57:20-21) spell שטן because that is what the שטן is. One way to fight that is as the next Pasuk there says- through the Shofar. Is it any wonder that we blow 100 Shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana (Tur 592), counteracting the Satan’s power. After all Rosh Hashana is called יום תרועה (Pinchas 29:1), a day to break the Yetzer Hara, the Satan (תרועה is a broken sound which alludes to breaking the Yetzer Hara- SeferHachinuch 311.). This explains the dictum ל**שטן**אדם פיויפתחאללעולם (Brachos 19a) as we do it through the Shofar which is just a sound, not words. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Also אמת without the א which represents Hashem (א equals one referring to ה' אחד) spells מת. Who is the Malach of עשו? The מלאך המות!Yakov who fights him, embodies the attribute of אמת. The Gemara (Brachos 5b) teaches us that אמת refers to תורה. תורה is called תורת חיים, thereby counteracting death. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Additionally, עקב means a heel- very hard part of the body- the idea of Din; Gevura. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Mishlei 22:4. Another explanation in these words is that יראה is in ParshasEikev. ענוה refers to Moshe, the most humble man. Now it can be translated that Moshe speaks of יראה in ParshasEikev (also see Brachos 33b). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Devarim 8:10. It is one of two Brachos that are דאורייתא. The other is BirchasHatorah. Why is it that we recite this after we eat whereas BirchasHatorah is before we learn (Brachos 21a)? We say these Brachos when we are satiated. Hence, after we are satiated from eating, we Bench as it says ואכלת **ושבעת וברכת.** However, in regard to Torah- the more one learns the hungrier he gets for it. We see many examples of this by observing those who truly learn. As a result of this, the most satiated one is in regard to Torah is before he begins learning. We therefore say the Bracha before we learn. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Brought in Mishna Brura 185:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)