



An exhortation to obedience

Parashat ekev (46) – Consequently, as a result of

Torah: *Devarim* 7:12 to 11:25

Haftarah: *Yeshayahu* 49:14 to 51:3

Apostolic Scriptures: *Ib`rim* 11:8-13; *Romiyim* 8:31-39

Mosheh is still delivering his farewell speech. It is actually more of a history lesson for the new generation and a repetition of their instruction in *Torah*, *YAH's* rules for a disciplined and obedient people. He begins at *Bereshith* 12:1 where *YAH* commands *Abram* to leave his parental home and go to the land that *YAH* would show him. Just in passing: the word 'Hebrew' (cf. *Bereshith* 14:13), derived from the word עִבְרִי (*iv-Ri* [pronounced ee-Vree]) means "to pass over", which is exactly what *Abram* does in *Bereshith* 12 when he spiritually and literally 'passes over' from a pagan religion to the Way of Truth with One Creator-*Elohim* (cf. *Devarim* 6:4 et al). The word is derived from a descendant of *Noah*, *Ėber* (cf. (*Bereshith* 10:24).

As a result of (*ekav*) that 'passing over', he also became our first patriarch. Referring to *Shemoth* 33:1, we are reminded of how *YAH* told *Mosheh* to "go up from here to the land that I swore to give you". Soon, as the book of *Devarim* ends and the book of *Yehoshua* begins, we will see how the new generation of *YAH's* people also 'pass over' to the new land – both literally, across a river, and then spiritually, thus fulfilling the promise of *Bereshith* 12:2 where *YAH* will make them a great nation. It is at that very point that we will "pass over" again to a new cycle of *Torah*... '

The first verse of this week's *sidrah* is very unique:

Devarim 7¹² "And it shall be, because you hear these right-rulings, and shall guard and do them, that יהוה your *Elohim* shall guard with you the covenant and the loving-commitment which He swore to your fathers, [emphasis added]

The first word, *ekav*, also translates as 'heel' and the root word gives rise to the name *Ya'aqob*. Some may dismiss this as meaningless, but the heel is precisely what many people, so-called believers, use to trample on *YAH's* laws, His rules; hence the assurance from *Torah* that whoever keeps *YAH's* rules will receive compensation through His covenant and loving care. Along with a similar expression at the end of last week's *sidrah*, this is the only place in *TaNakh* where it occurs. The Hebrew of this reads:

וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמָעוֹן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְשָׁמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ לְךָ אֶת הַבְּרִית וְאֶת הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם: *Devarim* 7¹²

This is almost a strange expression, because the relationship between *YAH* and *Yisra'el* is determined by the covenant, the *b'rit*, that He made and to which we just referred above. Why is חֶסֶד (*Che-sed*), undeserved favour, added here?

A covenant is mutual. Two or more groups make promises to each other and enter into a mutual agreement, a covenant. This is what YAH did at *Sinai*:

Shemoth 19 ⁵And now, if you diligently obey My voice, and shall guard My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession above all the peoples – for all the earth is Mine –

The meaning here is simple: if you obey, you will be My people; if you serve Me, I will bless you. Every agreement or covenant has a similar expression: if → then. It is frequently used in computer programs as well as spreadsheets.

Chesed, undeserved favour, on the other hand, is not conditional. It is given out of the goodness of the giver's attitude, regardless of whether the recipient deserves it or not. So here we see the Father's undeserved favour poured out unconditionally, while He also keeps His side of the bargain. Some people may have come to know this word as grace, and now we see the proof that it is not something that first originated in the so-called 'new testament', much less was it brought into place by *Yeshua*!

As mentioned earlier, this particular expression is not found in many places in Scripture. However, we see two important events in the *TaNaKh* where it appears. In addition to the point where the people prepare to enter the promised land, we find it at the dedication of the first temple in *Shelomoh's* prayer:

Melakim Aleph 8 ²³and said, "יהוה Elohim of Yisra'el, there is no Elohim in the heavens above or on earth below like You, **guarding Your covenant and loving-commitment** with Your servants who walk before You with all their heart, [emphasis added]

We also find this again with the return of the exiles from *Babylon*:

Neḥemyah 9 ³²"And now, our Elohim, the great, the mighty, and awesome Ėl, guarding the **covenant and the loving-commitment**, let not all the trouble that has come upon us, our sovereigns and our heads, our priests and our prophets, our fathers and on all Your people, from the days of the sovereigns of Ashshur until this day, seem little before You. [emphasis added]

The original Hebrew again reads "*et hab'rit v'et hachesed*", covenant and undeserved favour in both cases. It seems therefore that both are necessary, otherwise it would not be used in Scripture, especially as it is called, centuries apart. Three men who lived devoted lives experienced and wrote this down: *Mosheh*, *Shelomoh* and *Neḥemyah*. The last two, however, had less of a task at hand, for the people were already a great nation – *Mosheh* was the person chosen by YAH to bring the great nation into being. We find a similar text also in the Apostolic or Messianic Scriptures:

Hazon 14 ¹²Here is the endurance of the set-apart ones, here are those guarding the commands of Elohim **and the belief of יהושע**. [emphasis added]

What we see here: perseverance of the set apart = covenant (honour, keep); undeserved kindness/loving care = what *Yeshua* came to do for us on the torture stake. Interesting how Scripture literally reveals itself!

This "making into a great nation" that we read about comes with certain responsibilities, however. YAH expects His people to be set apart, to always obey His commands. This also includes driving out the pagan nations so that no pagan influences are carried over, in case their set apart could be questioned:

Deḇarim 7 ¹⁶"And you shall consume all the peoples whom יהוה your Elohim is delivering over to you – your eye shall not pardon them. And do not serve their mighty ones, for that is a snare to you.

Please keep this verse in mind, as it is something we will return to at the end. This verse is also proof that we cannot be couch potatoes, as we have pointed out in the past. We must actually do something, never to

try to improve on YAH's work, but in full obedience to His command. We see a beautiful representation of this:

Mizmor 144 ¹²Because our sons are like plants Grown up in their youth; Our daughters like hewn stones, Polished, like a palace building; ¹³Let our storehouses be filled, Supplying all kinds; Let our sheep bring forth thousands And ten thousands in our fields; ¹⁴Our cattle well-laden; No breaking in, no going out; And no crying in our streets. ¹⁵Blessed are the people who have it so; Blessed are the people whose *Elohim* is יהוה!

One of the most important commands is to exercise the trust that YAH will fulfil every promise. Every person who maintains this premise can be assured of YAH's forgiveness and care and the believer's consequent share in eternal life. Unfortunately, there is the lie, mainly from christianity, that keeping the law, the rules that YAH gave at *Sinai* to every *Torah* believer, is no assurance of eternal life. This is once again a distortion of the truth, as preached by many prosperity preachers. As *Torah* believers, we keep the rules of YAH in obedience because we have already recognised and received salvation through *Yeshua* ; we therefore do not keep the 'law' to be saved, but because we are already saved! This also does not mean that we, by our attempt to keep the law, are in any way perfect – holy as some may call it – but we recognise in every respect our fallibility as humans and realise that no one can Ėber fully fulfill or keep the law in every respect (cf. *Galatians* 3:11; *Romiyim* 3:20-24 et al). The 'law', YAH's *Torah*, therefore shows us that we are sinners and out of gratitude for *Yeshua*'s salvation, we keep *Torah* in obedience. The other statement that we must reaffirm here is that we are in no way trying to be better than anyone else. We live a separate lifestyle, 'holy', as we understand from Scripture. As law-abiding followers of *Torah*, we are not better than others, although the accusation is often hurled at us.

Mosheh tries to convince the people strongly to do as YAH commands them, possibly also so that they do not develop any form of fear again, which they will use as an excuse of entering the promised land. He once again gives the promise:

Debarim 7 ²²"And יהוה your *Elohim* shall drive out those nations before you, little by little. You are not allowed to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

Mosheh explains that corpses that may be scattered everywhere, as well as parts of the land that have long been abandoned, may cause dangerous animals to increase due to the sudden 'feast' provided by the corpses of the enemy. They may therefore not destroy the enemy quickly, because it would be physically exhausting to deal with animals and nations at the same time, so the extermination of the pagan peoples had to be disciplined and steadily. However, this process could once again degenerate into negative thinking which could turn into rebellion and eventual surrender to the pagan nations.

There are various groups of people who like to use these and similar verses to imply that YAH of the "old testament" is a cruel Ėl. However, this could not be further from the truth. In a case like the one we are studying here, He commanded the complete extermination of the wicked because they would contaminate the chosen people with their wickedness, their idolatry. However, these pagans invaded the land that YAH had promised to His people hundreds of years before. We will learn a little later why YAH wanted to exterminate the pagans:

Debarim 9 ^{4b}But it is because of the wrong of these nations that יהוה is driving them out from before you.

Pagan traditions are full of strange rites and customs, some of which may also be part of certain curses pronounced on individuals, groups and even the idols. It is also only human to want to amass wealth for oneself, which is why YAH gives the following command through *Mosheh*:

Debarim 7 ²⁵"The carved images of their mighty ones you are to burn with fire. Do not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it, for it is an abomination to

יהוה your Elohim. ²⁶“And do not bring an abomination into your house, lest you be accursed like it. Utterly loathe it and utterly hate it, for it is accursed.

How many abominations do you have in your home, detestable things that are in no way approved by YAH? It may be a cross of any kind, possibly a cross with a figure of Jesus hanging from it (as is the custom of the Catholics), even a picture of the Last Supper, a Christmas tree, strange and unnatural characters that your children fall asleep with – there are too many to list. Your child may be able to choose which idol he or she wants to go to sleep with tonight! Everything remains a type of image and is completely contrary to the second word of the ten that YAH gave us at Mount Sinai. There are literally hundreds of these things available everywhere and most should be avoided. It may not be your child, but perhaps you yourself who brought that idol home...

Under no circumstances may we worship anything or anyone other than our Creator-El, Yahuah; not even Yeshua:

🕯 **Mattithyahu 4** ¹⁰Then יהושע said to him, “Go, Satan! For it has been written, ‘You shall worship יהוה your Elohim, and Him alone you shall serve.’ ” [emphasis original]

🕯 **Yohanan 4** ²³“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father also does seek such to worship Him.

There are several other verses, but we must also realise that there is a big difference between worship and showing respect. Although this is a topic that should be treated separately, preferably during a *midrash*, we can briefly mention the following. In *Mattithyahu*, mentioned above, we saw the words ‘worship’ and ‘serve’. When we would bow down before Yeshua in respect, it is because we are following Him at the command of YAH. However, we may not pray to Him, because He taught us to pray only to our Father (cf. *Mattithyahu* 6:9 and *Luqas* 11:2). We may not serve Him either, for He is only the Salvation, the plan that YAH made to cleanse us from sin, but we must faithfully follow Him and show Him honour; if the word ‘worship’ would apply here, so be it.

All these expressions, words, come back to one central idea: obedience to our Creator-El. We serve Him alone, and only do so by our obedience, by doing what He requires and also in His way, according to His *mishpatim*, rules, not as we want to do it. Remember what happened to *Nadab* and *Abihu*. You may perish in flames with your Christmas tree – note, perish, not just go up!

We see in various places in this study, as well as in other places in Scripture, the word ‘today’, the Hebrew word היום (*ha-Yom*), concerning the execution of YAH’s rules. The rules are given for today and tomorrow, not yesterday, because we cannot change the past (8:1, 11, 18). We learn from this that life results from following the rules of *Torah* in obedience. This means that someone who disregards the rules is on the road to eternal death, while someone who keeps the rules is on the road to eternal life. Someone who breaks the rules will face death twice – both in this life and after the resurrection. Someone who keeps the rules will face life twice – in this life and also after the resurrection. Recall the words of Yeshua as he hung on the torture stake between two criminals and one of them turned his life to Yeshua:

Luqas 23 ⁴³And יהושע said to him, “Truly, I say to you today, you shall be with Me in paradise.”

From the Apostolic Scriptures we learn that both Yeshua and *Sha’ul* utter blessings before a meal. These all refer to the offerings we learned about in *Wayyiqra* 1-7. However, there is a command in *Torah* in which we are taught to give thanks after a meal. Some people may have experienced this earlier in their lives where a father or a grandfather would bring these blessings and thanksgivings, but as our love for YAH has diminished and priorities in our lives have changed, these beautiful customs have flown out the window. May it be YAH’s will that people be awakened to this again, as well as the prayer of thanksgiving after meals.

One of the most important reasons why we thank YAH after a meal is for protection from idolatry, something that can very easily happen if we do not stay focused on the provision we receive from YAH:

Debarim 8 ¹⁰And you shall eat and be satisfied, and shall bless יהוה your Elohim for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹“Be on guard, lest you forget יהוה your Elohim by not guarding His commands, and His right-rulings, and His laws which I command you today,

Near the end of chapter 11 this week we see a repeat of what we covered last week: instructions for integrating YAH’s words and our way of life:

Debarim 11 ¹⁸And you shall lay up these Words of Mine in your heart and in your being, and shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, ²⁰and shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

This is liturgically the second of three parts of the *sh’ma* and is known as וְהָיָה (*v’hayah*), and it shall be. This reaffirms the link between *Yisra’el*’s devotion to YAH and the resulting blessing as the chosen people. Every person walking the Way of Truth should pray the full *sh’ma* every morning and every evening as part of their evening prayer, along with a personal petition. Examples of these [prayers](#) are available on our [website](#).

We know from experience that YAH repeats everything that is important and this is no exception. The only difference here is that a wonderful promise is now added in the following verse:

Debarim 11 ²¹so that your days and the days of your children are increased on the soil of which יהוה swore to your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens on the earth.

This entire chapter contains several Hebrew idioms: in verse 7:17 we read “When you say in your heart,” which simply means that someone might have doubts. At the end of the *sidrah*, similar to 7:24, we learn:

Debarim 11 ²⁵No man shall stand against you. יהוה your Elohim shall put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, as He has spoken to you.

Again, these words, “no man shall stand against you,” is a Hebrew idiom that simply indicates military confrontation between *Yisra’el* and an enemy nation, but where YAH, as Owner of the land, is the Conqueror by His power and presence. He also conquers the enemy in our lives in various ways; one of the most important is to do what *Yeshua* did – fight the enemy with quotes from Scripture. We see in the words of *Luqas* how *Yeshua* is led into the wilderness by *Ruach haQodesh* to be tested by the adversary:

Luqas 4 ⁴But יהושע answered him, saying, “It has been written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of Elohim.’ [emphasis original]

Similar tests and more, my dear brother and sister, may lie ahead for you and me. *Yeshua* is referring here to *Debarim* 8:3 where *Mosheh* mentioned in his account of the *man* that *Yisra’el* ate in the wilderness. Most commentators agree that the book of *Debarim* would be *Yeshua*’s favourite book, because He frequently quoted from it:

- .during His testing by the adversary in *Mattithyahu* 4:1-16 and *Luqas* 4:1-13;
- .the Sermon on the Mount in *Mattithyahu* 5-7 has many parallels with *Debarim*;
- .*Yeshua* quotes *Debarim* 6:5 as the most important command, as we see in *Mattithyahu* 22:34-40; *Marqos* 12:28-34; *Luqas* 10:25-28;
- .The authoritative *Y’hudim* (Pharisees and Sadducees) considered this book to be the most important book in *the Torah* and therefore *Yeshua* frequently quoted from it to point out their errors.

We notice here that the adversary does not let him down easily. Twice *Yeshua* rebukes him from Scripture and the third time he quotes Scripture himself! As usual, he will give his own version of it, anything that is not fully correct or complete. When *Yeshua* rebukes him from Scripture again, he eventually gets the message and leaves. Once again, however, we see the importance of knowing *YAH's* Word, making it part of our way of life; not just memorising certain verses or sending them on social media, but to understand the full content of Scripture, live according to it and be able to apply it correctly. It is therefore unnecessary to argue with others about their faith life; Scripture must speak for itself and it uses your and my mouth to bring it to fulfillment. We can do nothing to change the brainwashing that the enemy has made people go through, except to intercede for them and plead Father's covenant and favour over them.

We are reminded of things that can ignite *YAH's* anger. When the nation of *Yisra'el* refused to keep their part of the covenant, they very quickly tried to fill the void with an idol – the golden calf. Many people are prone to act similarly to this day. The promise we made will condemn us if we do not keep it. We must therefore fulfill the responsibility of our promise by honouring *YAH's* Word, in order to receive the blessings:

Yehezqel 11 ¹⁹ "And I shall give them one heart, and put a new spirit within you. And I shall take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,

After 40 days on Mount *Sinai*, *Moses* returned with the newly written tablets of stone to give to the nation of *Yisra'el*. This is a prophetic reference to *Yeshua's* favour for every *Torah* believer. *YAH's* renewal of the marriage covenant is a prophecy that is still being fulfilled in our time. We saw evidence in *Ma'asei* 1 of *Yeshua's* *talmidim*, 40 days after his resurrection, asking him if he would restore the kingdom of *Yisra'el* (cf. *Ma'asei* 1:6). They were not asking about his death and resurrection, but about the reunification of the two houses, the testimony of heaven on earth in those who hold to the truth of the Word. The festival of *Shav'uot* in *Ma'asei* 2 did not bring about anything new, but the beginning of the restoration of the heavenly Kingdom. When the two witnesses of our Messiah truly obey the covenant, the good news already given to mankind at *Sinai* will all be brought together, the restoration of the Kingdom of *Yisra'el* (cf. *Ib'rim* 8:8-10).

We experience how *Yeshua* is currently busy gathering his flock, the two scattered houses of *Yisra'el*, to restore truth on earth. At that time, he clearly instructed his *talmidim*:

Mattityahu 10 ⁵ **יהושע** sent these twelve out, having commanded them, saying, "Do not go into the way of the nations, and do not enter a city of the *Shomeronim*, ⁶ but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of *Yisra'el*.

One of the vexing questions that arises from *sidrah ekev*: Does the *Torah* forbid interracial marriages? Although there is no definite rule that approves or forbids it, we do read in *Debarim* 7:3 and *Ezra* 9:12 that no intermarriage may take place, although it is mainly determined as a result of idolatry. However, we see in *Ezra* 10 and *Neḥemyah* 13 that men married foreign women during their exile and as a result (*ekav*) had to send the women away. Although we do not detect a racial overtone here, history has repeatedly proven that pagan customs are learned, rather than pagans repenting. King *Shelomoh* is a shining example of this.

We would like to conclude this study with an appropriate blessing used by various *Torah* believers around the world:

**ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיִּי עוֹלָם נִתֵּן בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בָּרוּךְ
אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.**

Baruch atah Yahuah Eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher natan lanu torat emet Yeshua meshicheinu vechayei olam nata b'tochenu, barukh atah Yahuah, noten ha-Torah.

Blessed are You, יהוה, our Creator-Ėl, King of the universe, You who gave us the truth of Torah – Yeshua, the Anointed One, our Salvation, who thereby also brought about eternal life for us. Blessed are You, יהוה, giver of Torah.

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources:

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by 'Elohim' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009, unless indicated differently.

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