



Incredible Words of Chizuk from Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov

All the Holy Neshamos of Previous Generations Anticipate the Tikun Neshamos of Our Generation in the Footsteps of the Mashiach

This week's parsha, parshas Eikev, opens as follows (Devarim 7, 12): **“והיה עקב תשמעו את המשפטים האלה ושמרתם ועשיתם: אותם, ושמר ה' אלקיך לך את הברית ואת החסד אשר נשבע לאבותיך, ואהבך. And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances and your observing and performing them; then Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers. He will love you; He will bless you and He will multiply you, and He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land—your grain, your wine and your oil . . .** According to Rashi, this opening passuk is referring to the observance of the relatively simple, easy mitzvos that most people take for granted. The commentaries point out several issues that require further clarification:

(1) This passage opens with the words: **“And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances and your observing and performing them.”** This implies that the Torah is referring here to a time when Yisrael are observant and acting in accord with the will of G-d. However, that does not seem to coincide with the conclusion of the passuk: **“Then Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.”** For, if they are abiding by the precepts of the Torah, they deserve to be rewarded in their own right; they do not need to rely on HKB”H safeguarding the covenant and chesed owing to the Avos.

(2) The previous parsha, parshas Vaeschanan, concludes as follows (ibid. 11): **“ושמרת את המצוה ואת החוקים ואת המשפטים: אשר אנכי מצוך היום לעשותם”—you shall observe the mitzvah, and the statutes and the ordinances that I command you today, to perform them.** Citing the Gemara (Eiruvim 22a), Rashi comments: **“Today, to perform them”—and tomorrow, in Olam HaBa, to be rewarded for them.** Additionally, the Gemara teaches us (Kiddushin 39b): **“שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא”—reward for the performance of a mitzvah is not granted in this world.** That being the case, the passuk that follows at the beginning of parshas Eikev is difficult to understand: **“And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances . . . He will love you; He will bless you and He will multiply you, and He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land—your grain, your wine and your oil.”** After all, we just learned that the reward for the performance of a mitzvah is not received in Olam HaZeh.

(3) We find the following elucidation from our blessed sages in the Midrash (D.R. 3, 1): **“And it will be because of your listening etc.” Halachah: If a Jew possesses a menorah made up of many pieces, is he permitted to move it about on Shabbas? The sages have learnt thus: A person who assembles the pieces of a menorah on Shabbas is obligated to bring a “chatas.” And what is he specifically liable for? Rabbi Abahu said in the name of**

Rabbi YoNasan: A person who assembles a menorah on Shabbas is akin to one who builds on Shabbas, and one who builds on Shabbas is liable. What is the connection between the halachah of **“a person who assembles the pieces of a menorah on Shabbas is obligated to bring a ‘chataf’”** and our opening passuk: **“And it will be because of your listening etc.”?**

“והיה עקב” Alludes to the Generation of דמשיחא

We will begin to shed some light on the subject with the sacred words of the great Rabbi of Apta, zy”a, in Ohev Yisrael. According to his interpretation, the passuk—**“And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances”**—alludes to the neshamos of the generation of **“Ikvisa d’mashicha”**—**the era preceding the coming of the Mashiach.** (Note the similarity between the word “eikev” and “Ikvisa.”) To achieve a better understanding of the matter, we will introduce the teachings of the Arizal in Sha’ar HaGilgulim (Introduction 15).

The Arizal teaches us that when Adam HaRishon was created, HKB”H incorporated within him all of the holy neshamos of the people of Yisrael. The elite neshamos were located in his head; in similar fashion, the remainder of the neshamos were in his heart and the other various parts of Adam’s physical anatomy, according to their spiritual level; the lowliest neshamos were located in the heels of his feet.

Now, we are all familiar with the statement of the wisest of all men (Koheles 7, 14): **“גם את זה לעומת זה עשה האלקים”**—G-d created the world with equal and opposite counterparts; good and evil parallel each other. So, just as Adam HaRishon embodied the entire structure of kedushah containing all the neshamos of Yisrael; correspondingly, there is an entire structure of Adam Bli-yaal—the wayward (wicked, ungodly) man—the yetzer hara, representing the klipah. Prior to the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as,” it contained the bare minimum of kedushah, just enough to sustain it.

However, when Adam HaRishon was persuaded to follow the advice of the nachash hakadmoni, the embodiment of the yetzer hara, all of the neshamos within him sinned with him and were corrupted. They were shed from his being

and incorporated into Adam Bli-yaal. As a consequence, the structure of kedushah was emptied out and devastated, while the body of the klipah was built. This is the message conveyed by the Gemara (Chagigah 12a): **אדם הראשון מן הארץ עד לרקיע... וכיון שסרח הניח הקב”ה ידיו עליו ומיעטו.”** **Adam HaRishon extended from the earth to the sky . . . But when he sinned, HKB”H placed His hand upon him and diminished him.** Initially, Adam HaRishon was magnificent and godly, because he contained all of the holy neshamos. After he sinned, however, he was drastically diminished, because all of the neshamos fell to the body of the klipah.

Therefore, from that time onward, HKB”H sends His Shechinah in every generation in the merit of Yisrael’s service. Its job is to extract from Adam Bli-yaal all of the holy neshamos in an orderly fashion from top to bottom. Then they will be born into this world by Yisrael who fulfill the mitzvah of “pru u’rvu.” Thus, by studying Torah and observing mitzvos, they will be rectified and cleansed of their part in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” After this tikun, they will once again be an integral, inseparable part of the body of kedushah of Adam HaRishon, which will be rebuilt in this manner.

According to this scheme, the Shechinah initially extracted the highest level neshamos associated with the head of Adam HaRishon during the first generations. Thereafter, it systematically extracted additional neshamos associated with the remaining parts of his anatomy in each and every subsequent generation. These neshamos successfully achieved tikun in Olam HaZeh and were restored to the body of kedushah. Ultimately, in the final generations, the only neshamos that remain to be rectified are the lowest level neshamos associated with the heels.

The Arizal explains why these final generations are referred to in the nomenclature of Chazal as **“Ikvisa d’mashicha,”** as we find in the Gemara (Sotah 49b): **“בעקבות: משיחא חוצפה יסגא”**—**in the period preceding the coming of the Mashiach, insolence will soar.** For, in those generations, only the lowliest neshamos, those associated with the heels of Adam Bli-yaal, will remain unrectified. It will be necessary to extract them and rectify them in order to restore them to the body of kedushah, to the heels of Adam HaRishon. When the tikun of all the neshamos has been accomplished, the Melech HaMashiach will come. Hence, the depiction

“Ikvisa d’mashicha” (often translated as the “footsteps of the Mashiach”)—indicating that the neshamos of the last generation, the neshamos in the heels, will ultimately bring the Mashiach.

This coincides beautifully with the words of the Arizal in Likutei Torah (Ki Seitzei). There he provides a novel explanation of the Gemara’s statement (Yevamos 62a): **“אין”** **“בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף”**—**the son of David will not come until all the neshamos have been removed from the “guf.”** The Gemara is stating that Mashiach ben David will only come after all the neshamos have been extracted from the body of Adam Bli-yaal and restored to the body of kedushah. Compare this to the enlightening words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh in parshas Ha’azinu. He interprets the passuk (Devarim 32, 35): **“לי נקם ושיולם לעת תמוט רגלם”**—**Mine is vengeance, and it will repay at the time their foot will falter.** In other words, when all the sparks of kedushah will vacate the feet of the klipah, the time of the geulah will arrive, when HKB”H will exact vengeance from the enemies of Yisrael.

“והיה עקב תשמעון” Alludes to the Neshamos of Ikvisa D’Mashicha

With this understanding, we can now examine the words of the Ohev Yisrael related to the words **“והיה עקב תשמעון”**. Here is a loose translation of what he writes:

As we know, all the neshamos of Yisrael were contained in Adam HaRishon. There were different types of neshamos, some on higher levels than others. Those neshamos that were associated with the head and brain of Adam HaRishon were most certainly of a very high nature. Some were associated with his torso and some with his lower extremities. The intellectual level of each neshamah was related to the nature of the limb the neshamah was associated with. Most certainly, the nature of the neshamos contained in the heel of Adam HaRishon were on a much lower level than the quality of neshamos associated with his torso and all the more so his brain . . .

But now that the tikun of all the neshamos has been completed, the only neshamos remaining are those in the

heels. In the words of Chazal, the heels of Mashiach. At the end of the galus, prior to the arrival of the Mashiach, the neshamos influenced from above are like the heel. They represent the final refinement and tikun. Those neshamos are the last remnants from the body of Adam HaRishon.

Notwithstanding, even in this generation, where we have neshamos from the heel, when a person works hard to serve Hashem and connects himself with the Supreme Adam, then even those neshamos achieve a tremendous elevation, rising to their source . . . This is the message of the passuk: ‘והיה’ implies simchah; there is simchah and celebration for the Almighty; עקב תשמעון את המשבטים ‘האלה—since even those neshamos associated with the heel observe all of the Torah.

Mitzvos that a Person Tramples with His Heels Alludes to the Body of Adam HaRishon

Based on what we have learned, let us revisit Rashi’s comment: The words **“והיה עקב תשמעון”** refer to the observance of the relatively easy mitzvos that a person takes for granted, that he tramples with his heels. Let us refer to the incredible words of “chizuk”—encouragement—that Rabeinu Chaim Vital writes in Sha’ar HaGilgulim (Introduction 38). He heard them from his mentor, the Arizal, and it behooves us to publicize them throughout the communities of Yisrael. They concern the mitzvos performed in our latter generations:

I once asked my teacher of blessed memory: How could he tell me that my soul was so special? After all, even the smallest in previous generations was a tzaddik and chassid that I do not even reach his heels. He replied to me: Know that the greatness of a soul does not depend on a man’s deeds but only on the respective time and generation. Thus, a very minor deed in this generation is equivalent to many significant mitzvos in other generations. Because in these generations, the klipah is extremely strong, immeasurably so. That was not the case in earlier generations. Had I been in the earlier generations, my deeds and wisdom would have surpassed several of the early tzaddikim.

As we know, Rashi’s concise comments often contain profound, concealed wisdom. Thus, we can suggest that

he intended to teach us that the words **“וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה”** are a wonderful allusion to the lowly neshamos of the **“Ikvisa d’mashicha.”** While they are incapable of performing the mitzvos with the lofty intent of those who lived in earlier generations, nevertheless every mitzvah they perform is viewed as **“relatively easy mitzvos.”**

This then is the message concealed in his eloquent words: **If you observe the relatively easy mitzvos that a man (Adam) tramples with his heels.** Rashi is alluding to **Adam HaRishon**, who is reclaiming (to his body of kedushah) all the neshamos of Yisrael he shed and relinquished due the **“cheit Eitz HaDa’as.”** In the later, final generations, he is already **“trampling with his heels”**—standing on the neshamos of the **“Ikvisa d’mashicha”** that have returned to him. All the mitzvos they perform are viewed as **“relatively easy mitzvos that a man (Adam HaRishon) tramples with his heels.”** Nevertheless, **“וְהָיָה”** this will bring HKB”H great joy and simchah—**“because of your listening to these ordinances and your observing and performing them.”** As the Arizal explained to Rabbi Chaim Vital: **Even a very minor deed in this generation is equivalent to many more significant mitzvos in other generations.**

The Entire Body of Neshamos Stands on the Neshamos in the Heels

It is with great pleasure that we can now delight in the incredible words of chizuk written by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy”a, in Ateret Tzvi on the Zohar hakadosh (parshas Shemos). He presents what he told the great Rabbi of Apta, zy”a, the author of the Ohev Yisrael, concerning the neshamos of our generation. While it is true that they are lowly neshamos in comparison to those of previous generations, since they are the neshamos of the heels. Nevertheless, they possess a unique attribute; the entire body and universe of neshamos stand on them and are supported by them—just like the entire body stands on its heels. Furthermore, they complete the process of refinement of the entire body of kedushah, from the soles of the feet to the head.

Concerning this topic, we find a wonderful passage in the complete Irin Kadishin authored by the great Rabbi Yisrael of Rozhin, zy”a:

Now, in these later generations, the main focus of Bnei Yisrael should be to fortify their emunah. For, in truth, the neshamos of Bnei Yisrael stem from the first man. And the neshamos of Yisrael comprise an entire body. Just like a body is comprised of a head, body and lower extremities, so, too, the neshamos of the last generation—“Ikvisa d’mashicha”—they represent the heels. Yet, a person should not get despondent thinking that the neshamos of these generations are from a lowly place. Rather, he should believe that even the slightest utterance from a Jew makes an impact above. And even though the service of the malachim is superior to the service of human beings, HKB”H specifically chose the service of the lowly man. Similarly, the Creator specifically desires the service of the neshamos of the last generations of the “Ikvisa d’mashicha.” For, just as the lower extremities need the body and the head; so, too, the head needs the lower extremities; they hold the entire body erect and support it.

The Tikun of the Neshamos of Ikvisa D’Mashicha Elevate the Holy Avos

Following this sublime path, we will now explain the connection between the mitzvos performed by the generation of the **“Ikvisa d’mashicha”** and the passuk: **“And it will be because of your listening to these ordinances and your observing and performing them; then Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.”** Why should HKB”H safeguard the covenant and the chesed that He established with the holy Avos?

Let us endeavor to explain. Yes, it is true that the reward for the performance of mitzvos is not received in this world. Nevertheless, as we have learned, through their service of Hashem, the generations of the **“Ikvisa d’mashicha”** complete the general tikun of the entire body of kedushah of the neshamos. Hence, it turns out that not only do they benefit but the holy neshamos of previous generations also benefit, including the elite neshamos that were in the head of Adam HaRishon. After all, the entire body stands on the heels of the feet, and as a result of their tikun, they complete the tikun of all the neshamos contained in the body of kedushah.

We can now add a fantastic point based on a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Behar 111b). The three Avos accomplished the tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” In the process, they paved the way for all of Yisrael to also be able to rectify their part in that fateful sin. Therefore, the Gemara says (Berachos 16b): “אין קורין אבות אלא לשלשה”—**only three are referred to as Avos.** So, just like a father bequeaths all of his possessions to his son; in similar fashion, the holy Avos bequeathed to all of Yisrael their descendants the ability to rectify their part in the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.”

Accordingly, it was the task and responsibility of the Avos to rectify the fallout from the sin of Adam HaRishon. Hence, they accepted upon themselves the tikun of the body of Adam HaRishon—to return to it all of the neshamos that it had shed and had fallen to the body of Adam Bli-yaal. Now, it is written in this week’s parsha (Devarim 8, 1): **כל המצוה אשר אנכי מצוך היום תשמרון לעשות—all the mitzvah that I command you today you shall observe to perform.** Rashi comments in the name of a Midrash Aggadah: **If you have begun to perform a mitzvah, complete it. For, it is only attributed to the one who completes it.** Therefore, the work of the Avos will only be complete after the tikun of the entire body of neshamos.

Now, seeing as the last generations complete the tikun of the lowly neshamos of the “Ikvisa d’mashicha,” they are essentially completing the task of the holy Avos; they are completing the tikun of the entire body of kedushah that was corrupted by the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” This is an example of the principle (Sanhedrin 104a): **“ברא מזכני אבא”—a son can earn merit for a father.** In the merit of the tikun accomplished by their offspring, the Avos are rewarded for completing the tikun of the body of neshamos.

The Generations of Ikvisa D’Mashicha Are Analogous to Assembling the Parts of a Menorah

In Sha’ar HaKavonos, the Arizal teaches us that true tzaddikim do not wish to benefit from the rewards due to others. Thus, the holy Avos do not wish to benefit from the reward due them in the upper world for completing the tikun of the body of neshamos on account of the service provided

by the generations of “Ikvisa d’mashicha.” Hence, the Avos return the reward they receive in the upper world to the members of Yisrael who completed the tikun.

In this light, it gives me great pleasure to interpret the juxtaposition of the pesukim. The preceding parsha concluded with the passuk: **“You shall observe the mitzvah, and the statutes and the ordinances that I command you today, to perform them.”** As mentioned above, Rashi comments: **“Today, to perform them”—and tomorrow, in Olam HaBa, to be rewarded for them.** In other words, there is no reward for the performance of mitzvos in Olam HaZeh. However, the first passuk of the next parsha provides a clarification: **“והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה”—if the neshamos that represent the “עקב”—the heel—of Adam HaRishon will observe and perform all the precepts of the Torah; “and you will observe (take care) and perform them”—the Ohev Yisrael interprets this to mean that you will take care not to abandon the body of kedushah and, by doing so, you will perform the necessary tikun for the neshamos in the body of kedushah. Then, the Torah promises: “Hashem, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers”—he will pay them the reward of the holy Avos.**

Let us explain. By rectifying the neshamos in the heels, they assist the holy Avos; their task of completing the tikun of the entire body of neshamos, from head to toe (heel), is finally accomplished. Now, the Avos are already in the World of Truth, so they themselves are entitled to receive the rewards for their mitzvos. Yet, since they do not wish to benefit from the reward due on account of their descendants, HKB”H gives their reward to Yisrael even in Olam HaZeh. That is the covenant and chesed that G-d safeguards for the forefathers.

We now have cause to rejoice. We can now comprehend the profound words of Chazal in the Midrash: **והיה עקב תשמעון וגו’ Halachah: If a Jew possesses a menorah made up of many pieces, is he permitted to move it about on Shabbas? The sages have learnt thus: A person who assembles the pieces of a menorah on Shabbas is obligated to bring a “chatas.”** They are utilizing a metaphor

to convey a crucial message. In the merit of the tikun of the neshamos performed by the later generations of the “Ikvisa d’mashicha,” they are in essence assembling the entire body related to the neshamah.

In reality, they are only rectifying the neshamos of the heels, alluded to by Rashi’s words: **“relatively easy mitzvos that man tramples with his heels.”** Nevertheless, since they are completing the assembly of the entire body of

neshamos, it is analogous to someone who assembles the parts of a menorah on Shabbas. Even though all the parts already exist, since he is assembling them to complete the structure of the menorah, it is viewed as if he built a new entity on Shabbas; hence he is liable. Thus, we see the extent of a good deed. The latter generations that complete the assembly of the body of neshamos are credited for having built the entire body.



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