

Parasha 46:                   **EKEV** (“Because”/“As a result”)  
Torah:                         Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25  
Haphtarah:                 Isaiah 49:14-51:3  
B’rit Chadasha: Hebrews 11:8-13 (Jeff Feinberg)  
                                  Matthew 4:1-11  
                                  Luke 4:1-13  
                                  James 5:7-11                   (David Stern)

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Meditation entitled:        “His action; what’s our reaction”

General overview of the content of Torah portion EKEV

This week’s parasha describes **how** Israel would conquer the land, **why** G-d chose Israel and **what** would be necessary for thriving in the land to occur.

Israel was to completely root out idolatry and allow G-d to prune their hearts in order to serve Him completely and effectively.

Every Remembrance Day November 11th, we say “lest we forget”...

G-d emphasized that Israel was to never forget both all He had done for Israel and how He had done it.

In EKEV, G-d stresses that we must keep in mind how sinful sin is and what He has provided us for dealing with it.

We also read an account of the building of the Ark of the Covenant to house the 2nd set of tablets of the 10 Words (Commandments). It seems that G-d allowed the 1st set of tablets to be destroyed so that we would understand that it was not the tablets themselves that were significant, but what was written on them.

In standard B’nai Chayim fashion, I will now take 4 passages from the Torah, 2 from the Haphtarah and 1 from the B’rit Chadasha and weave them into an integrated meditation.

1st Torah passage: Deuteronomy 11:10-12

*For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There, the grain that you sowed had to be watered by your own labours, like a vegetable garden, but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. It is a land the L-RD your G-d looks after, on which the L-RD your G-d always keeps His eye, from years beginning to years end       (JPS)*

Egypt was an amazingly fertile land. Every year, the Nile would flood and recede, and when it receded, it would leave silt deposits, which was where the fertility of the land came from. However, very intensive irrigation work was required to force the land to yield its crops.

By contrast, Eretz-Yisrael (the land of Israel) was (is) a veritable gan-Eden (garden of Eden) where G-d would remove the necessity of slaving 24-7 just for physical needs and where Israel would learn how to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit.

2nd Torah passage: Deuteronomy 8:14-16

*beware, lest your heart grow haughty and you forget the L-RD your G-d who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its **\*seraph** serpents and scorpions, a parched*

*land with no water in it, who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers had never known in order to test you by hardships only to benefit you in the end*

(\*scholars are not exactly sure what *seraph* means, but it is usually translated “fiery”.)

When I read this passage, my mind jumped back to Numbers 21. There, the people k’vetches and k’vetches and as a result, G-d SENT seraph serpents on the people. But in this week’s Torah portion, the seraph serpents seem to be a natural part of the wilderness: “the wilderness with **it’s** seraph serpents”. The implication is that when we disobey G-d and suffer as a result, it’s not so much G-d punishing us for our wrong doing, but that in the same way that physical laws have been built into the universe exert their effects, the laws that HaShem has built into the universe exert their effects when we attempt to move against them. To illustrate, climb up on one of the concrete towers downtown at Grant MacEwan college, jump off, and see whether or not the laws that Newton discovered will apply or not!

1st Haphtarah passage: Isaiah 50:5

*The L-RD opened my eyes, and I did not disobey, I did not run away*

In the past, the Jewish people sometimes wrote paraphrases of scripture called **Targums**. If we were to write a Targum of this passage today, we could write:

*The L-RD opened my ears, and EKEV [as a result] I did not disobey, EKEV I did not run away*

3rd Torah passage: Deuteronomy 8:1

*You shall faithfully observe all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you today, that you may thrive and increase **and be able to possess the land** that the L-RD promised on oath to your fathers*  
(emphasis mine)

This verse goes well with...

4th Torah passage: Deuteronomy 10:11

*And the L-RD said to me [i.e., He said to Moses]: ‘Up. Resume the march at the head of the people, that they may go in and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them’*

G-d stated elsewhere in the Torah (e.g., Deuteronomy 1:29,30) that He Himself would go ahead of the people and this is how Israel’s enemies would be conquered.

While I was gathering my thoughts on this week’s parasha, the following image came to mind. I pictured a person with a key to a safety deposit box containing immense riches, and that this person was trying to put this key into someone else’s hand. However, the person trying to receive the key was so tired and worn-out that they couldn’t even close their hand around the key. The key fell repeatedly onto the floor. It’s the same with us and HaShem. Yeshua is the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18) that marches ahead of us that we may go in and possess the land of Shalom that He is begging for us to take. We need to ask ourselves whether or not our hearts are set to obey Him in everything. Only then will we have the strength to close our hands around the chayim (life) that G-d is extending to us. Only then will HaShem’s heavenly rains soak into the parched areas of our lives. We absolutely CANNOT produce the fruits of the life of righteousness in our own strength. If we attempt to do so, we will exhaust ourselves spiritually, and end up again slaving 24-7 digging irrigation canals in the Egypt of this world....

B-rit Chadasha passage: James 5:7,8 (Stern translation)

*So brothers, be patient until the L-RD returns. see how the farmer waits for the precious 'fruit of the earth' - he is patient over it until it receives the fall and spring rains. You too, be patient; keep up your courage; for the L-RD 's return is near*

2nd Haphtarah passage:

*Who among you reveres the L-RD and heeds the voice of His Servant? - Though he walk in darkness and have no light, let him trust in the name of the L-rd and **rely** upon his G-d (emphasis added)*

Shabbat Shalom Mishpochah.