

Parsha Eikev Q&A

Twenty questions, every answer from Rashi

1. The parsha opens with the word “eikev,” which also means heel. Which mitzvos was Moshe talking about?

The mitzvos people treat as small and trample with their heels — keep those too.
(Rashi 7:12, [ויהיה עקב תשמעון](#))

2. Why does the Torah call a person’s flocks “ashteros”?

Because they make their owners rich. (Rashi 7:13, [ועשתרת צאנך](#))

3. What was the tzir’ah, and what did it do to the nations?

A flying creature that shot poison into them and blinded their eyes wherever they were hiding.
(Rashi 7:20, [הצרעה](#))

4. Anyone who does Hashem’s will has nothing to fear from wild animals — so why did the nations have to leave slowly, because of wild animals?

Because it was already revealed before Hashem that Klal Yisroel would sin in the future.
(Rashi 7:22, [פן תרבה עליך חית השדה](#))

5. When two people work on the same mitzvah, whose mitzvah is it called?

The one who finishes it. Moshe carried Yosef’s bones out of Mitzrayim, but Klal Yisroel buried them — so the mitzvah is called by their name. Start a mitzvah, finish it. (Rashi 8:1, [כל המצוה](#))

6. What happened to their clothing in the midbar?

The ananei hakavod scrubbed and pressed it so it looked freshly laundered, and the children’s clothing grew along with them, like the shell of a snail. (Rashi 8:4, [שמלתך לא בלתה](#))

7. The pasuk says their feet did not “batzeika.” What does that mean?

Their feet did not puff up like dough (batzek), the way feet swell for people who walk barefoot.
(Rashi 8:4, [לא בצקה](#))

8. Moshe said the nations were mightier than Klal Yisroel. Does that mean Klal Yisroel was weak?

No — you are mighty, and they are mightier than you. (Rashi 9:1, [גדלים ועצמים ממך](#))

9. The word “luchos” is written without a vav. What does that teach?

That the two luchos were exactly the same as each other. (Rashi 9:10, [לוחות](#))

10. Moshe was on the mountain for three sets of forty days. When did the last set end?

On Yom Kippur — the day Hashem said “I have forgiven,” which is why that day was set aside for forgiveness ever since. (Rashi 9:18, [ואתנפל לפני ה' כראשנה ארבעים יום](#))

11. Why was Hashem angry with Aharon after the eigel?

Because he listened to the people. (Rashi 9:20, [ובאהרן התאנף ה'](#))

12. Hashem told Moshe to carve the luchos first and then make the aron — but Moshe made the aron first. Why?

Because he thought: when I come down holding the luchos in my hand, where will I put them?

(Rashi 10:1, בעת ההוא)

13. Why was shevet Levi chosen to carry the Aron and serve Hashem?

Because when everyone else went wrong with the eigel, shevet Levi did not — so Hashem set them apart.

(Rashi 10:8, 'ה' הוא הבדיל)

14. “What does Hashem ask of you? Only to fear Him.” What do Chazal learn from that word “only”?

That everything is in Hashem’s hands except for yiras shomayim — that part is up to us.

(Rashi 10:12, כי אם ליראה)

15. Why does the Torah add “for you were strangers in Mitzrayim” when it tells us to love a ger?

A fault that you have yourself, don’t point out in your friend. (Rashi 10:19, כי גרים הייתם)

16. Dasan and Aviram were swallowed “among all of Yisroel.” How did the ground reach each one of them?

R’ Yehuda says the ground split open under each one wherever he ran. R’ Nechemiah says the ground sloped like a funnel, and each one rolled down until he reached the one place that had split.

(Rashi 11:6, בקרב כל ישראל)

17. How was watering a field in Mitzrayim different from Eretz Yisroel?

In Mitzrayim you had to leave your sleep and haul water from the Nile on foot, and only the low ground got watered, so you carried water uphill. In Eretz Yisroel you sleep in your bed and Hashem waters the low ground and the high ground all at once. (Rashi 11:10, והשקית ברגלך)

18. What is decided at the beginning of the year?

On Rosh Hashanah it is judged what will be by the end of the year. (Rashi 11:12, מרשית השנה)

19. When is the right time for rain to come down?

At night, so it doesn’t bother anyone. Another explanation: on Friday nights, when everyone is home.

(Rashi 11:14, בעתו)

20. Why keep mitzvos like tefillin and mezuzah even in galus?

So that we stay marked as Hashem’s people, and so the mitzvos won’t feel brand new to us when we come back. (Rashi 11:18, ושמתם את דברי)