

SHABBAT GUIDE

EKEV

ABOUT THE STORY OF EKEV

The word *ekev* means “heel.” The kabbalists tell us that all the souls that are reincarnated in our generation today come from the body of Adam. The parts of Adam’s body that are left to correct in our generation are his heels and feet. The heels and feet of Adam are what are most connected to *Malchut*, our physical world. A connection to this powerful reading enables us to rise above the influences of this physical world, to elevate to a more spiritual way of living and being, and to make the corrections we are here to make in this lifetime.

MICHAEL BERG ON EKEV

The great kabbalist, Rav Brandwein, shares what was revealed to him concerning this reading. Rav Brandwein speaks only about the first three words of the portion Ekev—“*Vehaya ekev tishmeun*”—which literally translated mean, “And it will be when in the end, you will hear.” The beginning of the understanding, he says, is this: *Vehaya* represents joy, *ekev* represents humility, and *tishmeun* represents being guided by the Light of the Creator. When you have joy, are developing your humility, and diminishing your ego, then you will begin to be guided, hearing the Light of the Creator. Only an individual who is constantly endeavoring to diminish his ego to achieve greater humility can come to *tishmeun*, can come to hear.

The Zohar says that even the most giving person who leaves this world without having obtained the secrets and without working to study the wisdom of the Zohar, did not accomplish its purpose and cannot remain in the supernal world of the souls, because every single soul has a dual purpose: an elevation of consciousness and understanding that comes from the learning and attaining of the secrets of this world, and the action. One without the other does not complete the soul’s purpose.

Sometimes when we study Kabbalah, we believe it’s for the purpose of making us a better person. And

while that is true, it’s also important to remember the secret Rav Brandwein gives about this week: unless our consciousness is constantly being elevated, our connection to the Light of the Creator and all the Light and blessings that can come from that connection cannot be achieved. The Zohar here is talking about when the soul leaves this world, but this teaching is true every single day.

The secret of this Shabbat is a reawakening of our need for the constant elevation of consciousness for ourselves and the world. Because even the most beautiful actions done without a constant elevation of consciousness to the attainment of the secrets of the Zohar and Kabbalah limit the elevation of the soul. And when the soul’s elevation is limited, the amount of Light, blessings, and strength that it can bring down to its life is limited. However, if we spend time each day working to elevate our consciousness, the soul enters into the uppermost chambers, and is able to bring back down into this world all the Light and blessings it is meant to have in this next day.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Re’eh speaks of the importance of seeing the good in our lives. Most situations come with a mixture of good and bad; when we choose to see the positive, we open ourselves to the Light and its blessings. This week, work on finding the good aspects of the people and happenings in your life.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.