

This shall be the reward when you listen to these ordinances. (7:12)

The word "*eikav*," when or because, also means heel. Thus, *Rashi* interprets the phrase to mean: when you listen to those *mitzvos* that appear to be of lesser significance, commandments which a person might tread upon with his heel. In *Pirkei Avos, 2:1*, *Rebbi* says, "*Be as scrupulous in performing a minor mitzvah as a major one, for you do not know the rewards given for mitzvos.*" Can we view any *mitzvah* to be minor? Yes, if we view *mitzvos* to be a confirmation of ceremonies and rituals. When we realize that each *mitzvah* is one component in a vast integrated system, however, we no longer question the degree of importance. When each component exists to perform a specific function in an interrelated system, all are equally important.

Horav Shlomo Breuer, zl, interprets the word "*eikav*" as "consequence," since the heel naturally follows the foot movement. Hashem calls upon us to fulfill our Divinely mandated duties. He promises the prosperity of our material existence as a natural consequence. This interpretation focuses upon the second word of the phrase, "*tishmeun*", and its root, "*shma*" to hear/listen. He cites the *Midrash* that discusses why Moshe used the expression "*Shema Yisrael*" to address *Klal Yisrael* as they prepared to cross the Jordan. The *Midrash* analogizes this to a king who gave his bride two precious stones in recognition of her virtues. After the wedding, much to the king's chagrin, she lost one of the stones. He admonished her to be very careful not to lose the second stone. Hashem rewarded *Klal Yisrael* for the two virtues expressed in the words "*naase v'nishma*," "we will do and we will listen/obey." When they sinned with the Golden Calf they lost one "stone". Thus, He took "*naase*", "we will do," from them. Thus, He reminded the nation to "listen" - to be especially cautious not to lose the second virtue/stone - *v'nishma*.

This is the message of *Shema Yisrael*. *Klal Yisrael* - listen! If you listen and obey Hashem's command, you will repair the rift, correct the deficiency which was created by the sin of the Golden Calf. Our *pasuk* "*v'hayah eikav tishmeun*", underscores this same idea, as it admonishes us to listen carefully to Hashem's laws.