

Eikev
Zachary Magin

Shabat Shalom!

In my Torah portion *Eikev*, Moses talks to the people before they go to the land of Canaan. He tells them all about their journey, from being freed out of slavery in Egypt to the time right before they enter Israel. Moses talks about how he received the Ten Commandments from God on top of Mt. Sinai while fasting 40 days and 40 nights. Moses reviews the whole aggravating situation with them. He tells them how he was told by God that his people are acting wickedly and that he should rush down quickly. Although Moses seems laidback when he first hears about the situation, once he actually sees his people praying to a golden calf, he gets so mad that he smashes the tablets. Then he repented to God and cleaned up after their mess by fasting another 40 days and nights and begged God not to kill them.

I connect to my Torah portion in many ways. Before my great Uncle Leon died of cancer several years ago, he told my sister to take care of Dan and me. Uncle Leon asked Rachel to be a leader for us, kind of like Moses, who was a leader of the Israelites. As I studied this portion, I realized that Rachel gets mad at me sometimes like Moses got mad at the Israelites. Now I know why. I am like the Israelites: we both block out the fact that people are trying to help us. We don't always show our appreciation. I don't say thank you enough, and the Israelites didn't follow the rules from God. I argue and the Israelites worshipped idols.

I think that is what God meant when he called them "stiff-necked". They were hard-headed and wanted to do things their own way. I am afraid that I also am like the Israelites in that way too. When my mom was trying to help me write this Dvar Torah I wouldn't listen to her and only wanted to do it my way. Once I got a grip, I actually realized that what my mom had to say may actually be smart. She wanted me to quote rabbis and research what the other rabbis had to say about my torah portion. When I finally did it, I found out that Rabbi *Sforno* explains my concept a lot clearer. He says that stiff necked people would follow their heart, or emotions, even though a Torah scholar will show them they are wrong in their thinking. In other words, we should be able to listen to what others tell us and change. My mom might not be a Torah scholar but

she has written many speeches. I realize now that I should let people help me and not always go my way. After studying my Torah portion, I now understand how interesting the Torah actually is.

I had said earlier that my great-uncle died of cancer. My dad was inspired from that tragic event to do the Pan Mass. Challenge, a 200 mile bike ride to raise money for the study and treatment of the Dana Farber Foundation for cancer. My brother Daniel discussed how our Torah portion has to do with being compassionate and kind. When we heard about the PMC for kids we knew that it had to be our Bar Mitzvah project. The bike ride that we did on June 7 was 27 miles. Our goal at the beginning of the year was to raise at least 500 dollars. The minimum you need to raise for the ride is 20 dollars, but because it is for a good cause we wanted to raise as much money as possible. In total, my brother and I were able to collect over 1,800 dollars for the PMC. I was astonished at the amount of money people donated to make a difference in the world.

I would like to thank Moshe Pinchover for teaching me my *Haftarah* and Torah portions. I would also like to thank Cantor Cohn for teaching me the service and Mrs. Fox for helping me prepare for my bar mitzvah and helping me write my *Dvar Torah*. Next, I would like to thank my brother for always helping me out and Rabbi Small for helping me throughout my life. Lastly I would to thank my parents and my sister for pushing me to do more. Thank you all for attending. Now please turn to page 1037 in the *Etz Hayim Humash*.