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**RABBI WEIN'S
WEEKLY
BLOG**

Rashi comments that the word Ekev used here as meaning because or therefore is really the same word in Hebrew for the heel of a human being. Like all parts of our bodies, the heel is valuable, useful and vulnerable. Just ask Achilles! Fashion states that sinful people use the heel to trample on Godly commandments and moral strictures. The heel thus becomes a negative representation of the use of the human body for nefarious purposes.

In American slang, when one wishes to insult someone or describe that person in a negative fashion we call that person a heel. This can perhaps help us to understand the name of Yaakov in the Torah. He was called Yaakov because at birth he was holding on to the 'ekev' of his brother Eisav. The mission of the righteous is to prevent the wicked from trampling, with their heels, on all that is moral, holy and good. In that sense the task of the Jewish people throughout its history has been to hold on to the heel of Eisav and prevent it from crushing goodness and morality. And so this struggle remains with us until this very day.

Ekev in the sense of heel also represents stability and proper balance. If God forbid our heel is injured or hurts badly we cannot eat or certainly run properly. We limp and moan and pray for medical relief. Well the same idea applies to situations when we use our heel improperly to step upon any of the commandments and values of the Torah.

The wicked limp through life unbalanced and morally crippled. The heel that tramples on good, aches. It is a constant reminder of the true cost of sin and disobedience. This is really the substance of the entire message of the oration of Moshe to all of Israel here in the book of D'varim. Nothing can be clearer to us than the words of Moshe. He warns us to be very careful of how we use our heel. We should treat it as a vital organ and limb and not foolishly misuse or abuse it. Be careful what you step on. Perhaps this is implicit in the words of the Talmud, that one should lower one's eyes when walking in the public street. Step carefully. 🕒