

In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel and the fallen soldiers of the IDF. Praying for the safe return of all the hostages.

בס"ד

24 AUGUST 2024 | 20 AV 5784

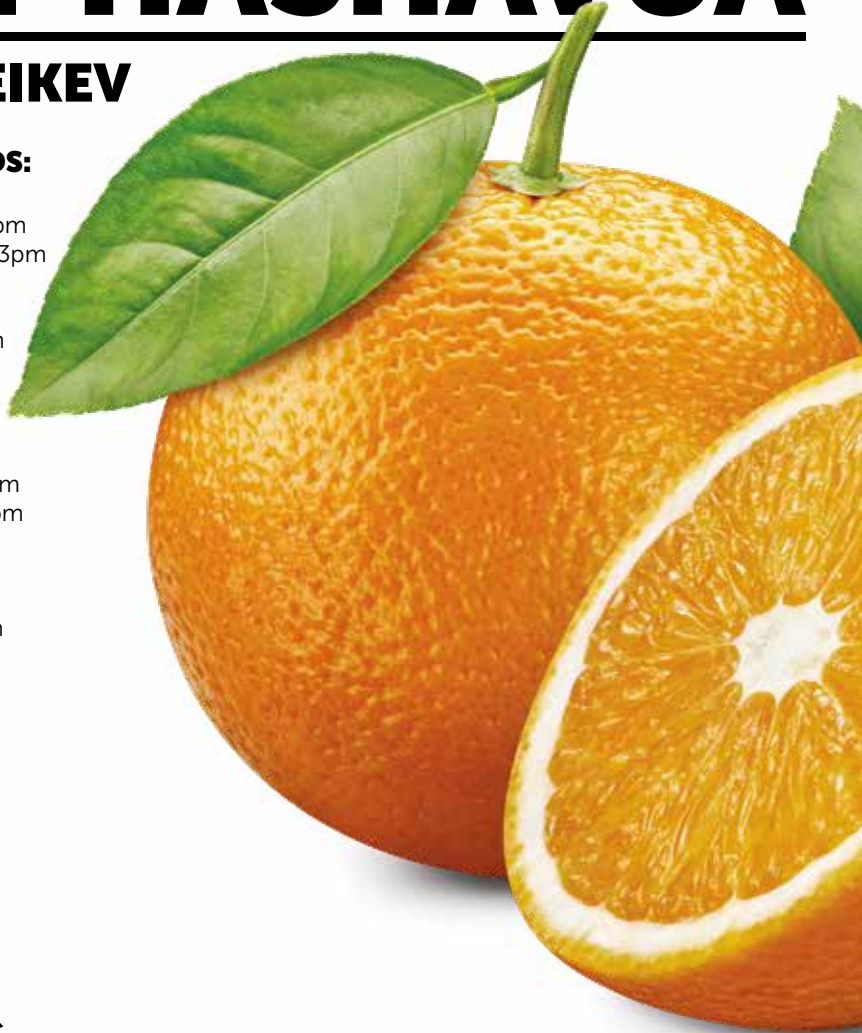
VOLUME 37 | #53

# DAF HASHAVUA

עֵקֶב | EIKEV

## SHABBAT ENDS:

London 8.55pm  
Birmingham 9.05pm  
Bournemouth 9.03pm  
Cardiff 9.09pm  
Dublin 9.25pm  
Edinburgh 9.25pm  
Glasgow 9.28pm  
Hull 9.08pm  
Leeds 9.08pm  
Liverpool 9.13pm  
Manchester 9.10pm  
Nottingham 9.07pm  
Sheffield 9.10pm  
Southend 8.51pm  
Southport 9.17pm  
Jerusalem 7.50pm



*"Hashem, your God,... will love you, bless you and multiply you, and He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your Land"*  
*(Devarim 7:12-13)*

# Sidra Summary

## **1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 7:12-8:10**

Moshe encourages the Israelites to keep God's commandments. This will allow them to prosper in the Land and to be the most blessed of peoples. In the same way that God took them out of Egypt, so too He will allow them to defeat the Cana'anite nations. The nation must destroy the Cana'anites' idols. Moshe entreats the Israelites to remember the 40 years in the desert, including the eating of the manna. God will bring them into a Land with abundant resources, where they will lack nothing.

*Point to Consider: Which mitzvah is derived from 8:10?*

## **2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 8:11-9:3**

Moshe warns the Israelites not to forget God once they enter the Land. They should not fall into the trap of thinking that they inherited the Land thanks to their own efforts and merits; rather it was God who guided and protected them during the years in the desert. Failure to heed this lesson will result in exile from the Land.

## **3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 9:4-9:29**

The Israelites should remember that they are a "stiff-necked people" and they are not inheriting the Land because of their own righteousness. In fact, since leaving Egypt, they repeatedly provoked God, initially with the sin of the golden calf, which Moshe now recalls in detail. He also reminds them of the sin of the spies.

## **4TH ALIYA (REVI'1) – 10:1-11**

Moshe describes how he carved two new

stone tablets, having broken the first set upon seeing the worship of the golden calf when descending Mount Sinai. In the aftermath of the golden calf, the tribe of Levi was set apart for its special functions of guarding the Ark and serving God.

## **5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 10:12-11:9**

Moshe urges the Israelites to fear and love God and to open their hearts to Him. Moshe recalls the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds and the earth swallowing Korach and his rebels.

## **6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 11:10-21**

Moshe goes on to say that God always has "His eyes" on the Land of Canaan. He then tells them a passage which we recite twice daily as the second paragraph of the Shema (see Authorised Daily Prayer Book, p.68). It spells out the benefits of fulfilling the commandments and the consequences of neglecting them. The mitzvot of tefilin, mezuzah and studying Torah are stated.

## **7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'1) – 11:22-25**

Moshe urges the people to remember their Torah learning and to have a connection with Torah scholars (see Rashi).

## **HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 49:14-51:3)**

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the second of the seven 'haftarot of consolation' read after Tisha B'Av. Just like a mother does not forget the child of her womb, so too God will never forget the Jews and will avenge those nations who have persecuted them. Yeshaya famously calls upon the Jews to be a "light unto the nations".

## **United Synagogue Daf Hashavua**

Produced by US Education & Events together with the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

**Editor-in-Chief:** Rabbi Baruch Davis  
**Editorial and Production Team:**

Rabbi Daniel Sturgess  
Rabbi Michael Laitner  
Rebbetzen Nechama Davis  
Joanna Rose  
Laurie Maurer  
Richard Herman  
Tatiana Krupinina

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# Moshe's Review of the Sin of the Golden Calf



**RABBI ALAN LEWIS**

Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation

In this week's parasha, Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael (the Israelites), "*And I turned, and I came down the mountain (Sinai), and the two Tablets of the Covenant were in my two hands and I saw your sin (worshipping a golden calf) against Hashem, your God, and I took hold of the two Tablets and I threw them from my two hands and I broke them in front of your eyes*" (Devarim 15-17).

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Ferber (1879-1966) asks why the Tablets were first called the 'Tablets of the Covenant' and then afterwards, just 'Tablets'?

Furthermore, he asks, how could Moshe break these holy Tablets? According to *Halachah*, one is not allowed to throw *Tefillin* onto the ground, and if dropped by mistake, one needs to fast. If a *Sefer Torah* falls, Heaven forbid, then a whole community might need to fast. Therefore, how could the Tablets, which were fashioned by God Himself, with His writing, be thrown on the ground?

Rabbi Ferber comments that the sanctity of the Tablets remained

## As soon as Moshe saw that Bnei Yisrael had resorted to the worship of a golden calf, the letters flew away from the Tablets.

as long as the letters of the Ten Commandments were written on them. As soon as Moshe saw that Bnei Yisrael had resorted to the worship of a golden calf, the letters flew away from the Tablets (*Midrash Tanchuma Eikev 11:1*). This is hinted to in the word *v'ashlichem*, "and I threw them". This word could be written with a letter *yud* between the letters *lamed* and *chaf*, but this is not the case. This missing *yud*, which has a numerical value (*gematria*) of 10, is a reference to the Ten Commandments. When these letters miraculously flew away, Moshe found himself just holding onto tablets of plain stone. Therefore, the stones were no longer referred to as the 'Tablets of the Covenant'. Essentially, when Moshe broke them, their level of holiness had already ceased. They no longer even had the holiness of a *Sefer Torah* or even *Tefillin*.

In Shemot 32:15, we are told

that the two Tablets of Testimony were "in his hand", implying that Moshe was holding the Tablets in one hand. However, at the time that Moshe broke them, the verse tells us that he threw them from his "two hands", plural! Why is this?

Rabbi Ferber reasons that, as long as the letters of the Ten Commandments were engraved on the stones, Moshe was able to carry them in one hand. But as soon as the letters disappeared, Moshe required both hands to hold onto the tablets, since they became very heavy. Therefore, Moshe comments (in our *parasha*) that he had to hold onto the *two* stones; they became so heavy, he was forced to drop them.

Perhaps we can suggest the following allusion: The holy letters disappeared from the Tablets when confronted with Bnei Yisrael's betrayal of the Torah. At that point, the Torah became like a heavy yoke to Bnei Yisrael. This is one of the reasons why the Torah is compared to water. Someone who is in water does not feel the heaviness of a load they are carrying and only when coming out of the water do they feel its weight.

May we merit that the Torah will never be a burden to us but will be a source of constant inspiration that carries us throughout our days.

# Universal Worries and Ancient Idolatry



**RABBI DR  
HARVEY  
BELOVSKI**

Emeritus Rabbi of Golders Green Synagogue and Organisational Consultant for the United Synagogue

The Book of Devarim is filled with warnings against idolatry. This is understandable, as Devarim is a series of speeches that Moshe addresses to the generation who will encounter – and, presumably, be tempted by – the idolatry that was rife in the Land they are about to enter. While idolatry of the sort described in Devarim seems alien, we would be foolish to consign it to a distant past.

This is masterfully demonstrated by the Italian physician and Torah commentator Rabbi Ovadia Seforno (approx. 1475-1549). Seforno was influenced by the wave of positivity towards Jews in Renaissance Italy. He obtained a medical diploma from the University of Ferrara by papal dispensation. His commentary is characterised by a particular focus on narrative continuity, as illustrated by his approach to the segue between chapters seven and eight of Devarim.

The final section of chapter

seven acknowledges the people's apprehension about seizing a land inhabited by a strong population (v.17). In response, God encourages them to remember His intervention at the Exodus from Egypt and promises a repeat performance in the Land (vv.18-19). The passage ends with an exhortation to destroy the idols in the Land so as not to be seduced by them; they must be utterly reviled, as they are anathema to God (vv.25-26).

Chapter eight opens with an apparently unrelated topic:

"You shall take care to observe every commandment that I am commanding you today, so that you will live, be fruitful, enter and take possession of the Land that the Lord promised to your ancestors" (v.1).

Seforno's genius is evident in how he links these sections:

People are drawn to idolatry to attain transient success, which fits into three categories: i) attaining long life; ii) having children; iii) achieving wealth. Yet through fulfilling the mitzvot one may achieve all three. Hence the Torah says: i) "so that you will live" = you will attain long life, even in this

transitory world; ii) "be fruitful" = you will have many children; iii) "enter and take possession" = you will achieve wealth and honour by taking possession of the Land (Seforno ad loc., paraphrased).

Seforno teaches that the desire for long life, progeny and material success are natural and universal. As the people prepared to enter an unfamiliar Land, they would be naturally concerned about their physical security, the wellbeing of their children and their material wealth. At a time of worry, they might be tempted to turn to idolatry of the Land, a possible alternative source of success. As such, God reminds the people of His intervention in Egypt and the importance of eliminating idolatry from the Land. Instead, they are to observe the mitzvot of the Torah, the only true sources of success and the sole keys to effectively possessing God's Promised Land.

With a brief, subtle comment, Seforno weaves together apparently unrelated passages, while showing that the drive for idolatry is simply an ancient manifestation of human needs that transcend time, place and culture.

# In God's Sight



**RABBI  
BARUCH  
DAVIS**

Daf Hashavua Editor-  
in-Chief

Uri King's Bar Mitzvah, on Thursday 12 October 2023, at a hotel next to the Dead Sea, was an occasion of joy and sadness. The family's emotions were still raw from their trauma, the Kibbutz Be'eri massacre a few days earlier. Rabbi Tzvi Erlich had taught Uri the portion of Bereishit, how to put on *Tefillin* and to say the *Shema* by heart. Uri's mother Zahavit recalled:

*The whole world knows what happened to our beloved kibbutz on Simchat Torah. We locked ourselves in our safe room for 36 (!) hours. 36 hours without water, electricity or food while the terrorists outside murdered and slaughtered. Each time the fear in us grew, we prayed together and repeated the Shema with Uri. These words that he had just recently learned took on enormous significance in that day and a half, up until the moment when we were rescued.*

*At the Bar Mitzvah we prayed Birkat HaGomel, the traditional prayer of deliverance, for surviving our ordeal. And we prayed for the safe return of the hostages and, of course, for the rejuvenation of our community. With deep emotion, Uri recited the Shema with Rabbi Tzvi.*

In the midst of the tears, the rabbi, relatives and friends made a *simcha* for the family, conveying a message that has been felt

throughout this entire year of 5784 – *Am Yisrael Chai*, a message greatly strengthened by Zahavit herself.

I was particularly struck by this message a week before Shavuot when, a little over a year since the tragic loss of Lucy, Maya and Rina Dee Hy"d at the hands of terrorists, Rabbi Leo Dee and family, and thousands of other people, celebrated the completion of a new *Sefer Torah* in their memory. One of the parks in Efrat, their hometown, was filled with 4000 schoolchildren and many adults, with speeches and singing by the children and visitors.



Some of the 4000 children at the Sefer Torah celebration in memory of Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee Hy"d

Then, on Shavuot night, what seemed like the entire town of Efrat was awake all night, attending one (or more) of the many learning programmes. In our shul, the first two speakers had both lost sons in

the current war. The first was Yami Weizer, who spoke about *mesirut nefesh* – giving one's life under extreme circumstances - through the ages. He then spoke about his son Roey's *mesirut nefesh* on 7th October, when he saved many lives before he tragically fell in battle. The second was Rabbi Avri Newlander, whose son Elkana, a medic, died in Gaza, whilst tending to the needs of the injured. Avri spoke about the biblical Elkana, the prophet Shmuel's father, and how his son was similar in that he never saw a problem as unsolvable and always tried to bring people together.

Capping the night was a talk about the role of *Shema* through the ages, ending with a story in which two brothers and their nephew had raced to Kibbutz Be'eri on 7th October, to rescue as many people as they could. When they approached one safe room, the people inside were scared to open the door, in case of terrorists. One of the rescuers shouted out "*Shema Yisrael...!*" – and they opened the door.

*Parashat Eikev* contains many praises of the Land of Israel. "It is a Land of streams and springs... an abundance of food... you will eat, be satisfied and bless Hashem, your God, for the good Land which He has given you" (Devarim 8:7-10) and "God's eyes are always upon the Land, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year" (11:12).

With all the immense challenges of 5784, we are constantly hearing stories of hope, faith and Divine guidance.

# August 1939 and Its Lessons for Today



Shock at the Zionist Congress in Geneva as Chaim Weizmann, David Ben Gurion, Moshe Sharett and other delegates hear news of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact



## RABBI MICHAEL LAITNER

US Director of Education  
& Head of Research at  
The Rabbi Sacks Legacy

After the recent South African elections, Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein shared a powerful message on his YouTube channel. He described his dilemma when relating to the new government of national unity generally and whether to participate in its inauguration ceremony. On the one hand, he continued to strongly oppose South Africa's vitriolic policies towards Israel. On the other, he acknowledged the importance of supporting the new government in providing a desperately needed better future for his nation. In his search for guidance, Rabbi Goldstein referred to the impossible circumstances, 85 years ago in late August 1939 at the 21st Zionist Congress in Geneva, on the cusp

of World War Two. Alongside the gathering storm clouds of war and persecution of Jews, the Congress was faced with two chastening decisions by the British government following the St James' Conference in London earlier that year.

The first was the abandonment of provisions contained in the 1937 Peel Commission Report which had reaffirmed British commitment to a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. The second, expressed in the infamous 1939 White Paper, limited Jewish immigration into Palestine to no more than 75,000 over the next five years and only should certain defined economic conditions be fulfilled.

These caused significant anger. In May 1939, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Dr Yitzchak Herzog had dramatically ripped up a copy of the White Paper at a public meeting in Jerusalem, as an illustration of the struggle against British policy and the desperate plight of Europe's Jews. Yet the *coup de grace* was still

to come. During the Congress, news broke to shocked delegates of a hitherto unthinkable alliance between the Soviet Union and Germany, better known as the Molotov-Von Ribbentrop pact after each country's respective foreign minister.

Until now, these states had been implacable ideological foes and competitors. Their shock alliance paved the way for a German invasion of Poland, their mutual neighbour, by removing the threat of Soviet opposition, with dreadful implications for Polish Jewry. Britain and France had guaranteed Polish independence, and so were obliged to declare war on Germany should Poland be invaded, as they were to do on 3 September.

Britain was now fighting one of the deadliest enemies the Jewish people have known, whilst simultaneously restricting Jewish immigration into the Land of Israel, shutting the door to desperate Jews in mortal danger and frustrating Jewish national aspirations. Which way would Zionist policy turn faced with this dichotomy? The answer, as cited by Rabbi Goldstein, was attributed to David Ben Gurion, later to become Israel's first Prime Minister. His position was to fight the White Paper as if there was no war and to fight the war as if there was no White Paper – fighting alongside the British but opposing the White Paper and related policies. Ben Gurion, said Chief Rabbi Goldstein, "held the opposites together", an approach which Rabbi Goldstein would look to emulate in South Africa. Closing the Congress early so that delegates could travel post haste, Chaim Weizmann, later to be Israel's first president, declared with great emotion, "I have no prayer but this, that we will all meet again alive."

# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT EIKEV

23-24 AUGUST | 20 AV

## Unconditional Love



**SHIRA JACKSON**

US Educator

Do you have house rules in your family? Maybe everyone has to take their shoes off when they come in the house? Perhaps you have to talk kindly to each other. You may have a fixed bedtime that changes as you get older. What's the reason for all these rules and what are the consequences if you break them?

Parashat Eikev is the middle of a very long farewell speech that Moshe (Moses) gives to the Jewish people before he dies, that spans the whole book of Devarim. He recaps the time that he's led the

people, and he notes how well they've been looked after by God, with food falling from heaven, water following them round the desert and shoes that grew with them and never wore out. All this, despite the fact that the people did not 'behave.' They were always 'breaking the rules'! They served an idol straight after receiving the Torah, they were rude and rebellious in the way they spoke to God and about Him, and still He continually saved them from their enemies and looked after them.

Moshe asks the people, "What does God ask of you? Only this: ... to walk in His paths, to love Him, to serve Him with all your heart and soul, to keep His commandments and laws which I command you today, for your good" (Devarim 10: 12-13, paraphrased).

Moshe is making a very convincing argument, that as a nation, we have a special, unconditional connection with God. He reminds the people that since the time they received the rules, they actually haven't kept them well, yet God has looked after them regardless. Although we can't ever lose the relationship, he goes on to explain that if we do follow the rules, it will be to our benefit and we'll reap the rewards. As with your home rules, if you break them, your parents will still love you, but there are consequences... the floor gets muddy, people argue and you'll be overtired. The rules exist for your good, for your benefit, they're designed to make your life better. So too with God's rules, He'll love us unconditionally, but He's hoping we'll embrace them to make our life and the world around us even better.

## Eikev Letter Tiles

Rearrange the tiles to reveal 5 of the main topics in Parashat Eikev.

- 1** vot Rewa ing for keep rds the mitz
- 2** tabl f st nd s ets Seco one et o
- 3** to l Mitz ove vah God
- 4** wing Isra wit h mi oney lk a flo el i land nd h sa
- 5** nd p Seco of a arag Shem raph the

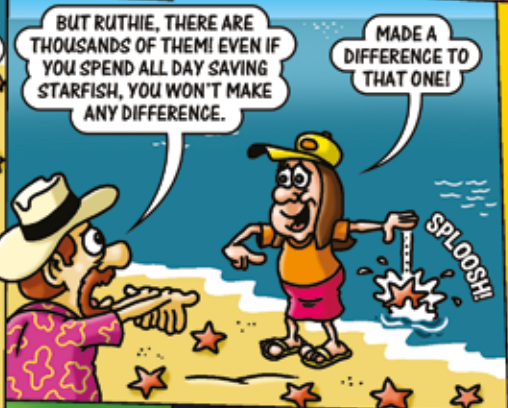
Answers: 1.Rewards for keeping the mitzvot 2.Second set of stone tablets 3.Mitzvah to love God 4.Israel is a land flowing with milk and honey 5.Second paragraph of the Shema



# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

EIKEV: SUPER STARI!

Based on a story by American educator and philosopher Loren Eiseley.



Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldwiler. Writer: Shira Chalk. Cartoonist: Paul Solomon.

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Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.