In memory of all those brutally murdered in the war on Israel, including the fallen soldiers of the IDF

בס"ד

24 MAY 2025 | 26 IYAR 5785

VOLUME 38 | #36

DAF HASHAVUA

בְּהַר-בְּחֻקֹּתַי | BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 9.59pm
Birmingham 10.12pm
Bournemouth 10.08pm
Cardiff 10.19pm
Dublin 10.37pm
Edinburgh 10.50pm
Glasgow 10.58pm
Hull 10.28pm
Leeds 10.22pm
Liverpool 10.33pm
Manchester 10.27pm
Nottingham 10.22pm
Sheffield 10.28pm
Southend 9.55pm
Southport 10.37pm
Jerusalem 8.17pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

Yom Yerushalayim is on Monday

Rosh Chodesh Sivan is on Wednesday

The United Synagogue

"For six years you may sow your field... but the seventh year is a Sabbath to God"
(Vayikra 25:3-4)

SIDRA BREAKDOWN

בְּהַר-בְּחֻקֹּתַי
BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI

9th & 10th Sidrot in:
וַיִּקְרָא
VAYIKRA

By Numbers:
135 VERSES
1,750 WORDS
6,809 LETTERS

Headlines:
SHEMITTAH, BLESSINGS AND CURSES

BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI:
Artscroll p696
Hertz p531
Soncino p764

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p1179
Hertz p551
Soncino p789

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – VAYIKRA 25:1-18
God instructs Moshe to tell the nation about the mitzvot of *Shemittah*. Every seventh year, the Land is 'rested' and no agricultural work is permitted. In addition, after seven cycles of seven years, the 50th year is designated as the *Yovel* (Jubilee) year. As well as the Land again being left fallow, servants go free and certain types of ancestral properties return to their original owners.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 25:19-28
God promises that people will not go hungry if they observe *Shemittah* – He will provide sufficient produce in the sixth year. As a reward for keeping *Shemittah*, God will also allow the nation to stay in the Land and not be exiled.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 25:29-38
In certain walled cities, a seller has the right to re-purchase a house in the first year after its sale. This does not apply in non-walled cities. There are 48 Levite cities in Israel; the laws pertaining to its fields and houses differ from other cities. One is forbidden to lend money with interest.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 25:39-26:9
After someone becomes a servant in an attempt to escape from his poverty, his owner is not allowed to burden him with unnecessary or overly taxing work. His relatives have a duty to try to release him from his servitude by buying out the rest of his contract from his owner. We are reminded to avoid idol worship, keep Shabbat and revere the Temple.
Point to Consider: *What is the connection between Shemittah and the subsequent passages? (see Rashi to 26:1)*

Parashat Bechukotai opens with the promise that if we keep God's laws, the Land will give plenty of produce and we will not suffer any physical threat from enemies.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 26:10-46
This *aliya* opens with further blessings if we follow God's will – a huge abundance of crops and a tangible sense of God's presence amongst us. However, it then continues with the *tochacha*, the passage of retribution. If we do not listen to God's commandments and do not observe the mitzvot, the consequences will be grave. Five series of punishments are listed. These include: being captured by enemies, the Land being unproductive, livestock being destroyed, famine, hunger and being chased from the Land but finding no comfort on foreign soils. Eventually however, God will remember His covenant with the forefathers and will never fully reject Israel.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 27:1-15
One is able to make a vow pledging to give one's monetary value or the monetary value of someone else, to the Temple. These gifts are referred to as *erechin* ('valuations'). The amount is based on a list of fixed values depending on age and gender. After designating an animal to be brought as an offering, one is not allowed to try to switch its status to another animal.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 27:16-34
The Torah details how to 'redeem' a house or field, as first discussed in the 3rd and 4th *aliyot*. A firstborn animal is dedicated from birth to be a Temple offering. Certain types of agricultural tithes can be redeemed if an additional fifth of the original value is added.
This is the closing part of the book of Vayikra. We stand for the final verse and after it recite: "*chazak, chazak ve'nitchazek*", a phrase asking for continued strength for our study of the Torah.

HAFTARAH (YIRMIYAHU 16:19-17:14)
The prophet Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) admonishes the people for worshipping idols, forecasts the downfall of those who turn their hearts away from God and encourages those who trust in Him.

To sponsor Daf Hashavua, scan this QR code or go to **www.theus.org.uk/daf-hashavua-sponsorship**

For any comments or questions, contact **education@theus.org.uk**

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
Rebbetzen Nechama Davis
Laurie Maurer
Jennifer Dorling
Tatiana von Beelen

www.theus.org.uk

Honesty and Faith

RABBI JASON KLEIMAN

Pinner United Synagogue

Al tonu ish et achiv – "Do not cheat one another" (Vayikra 25:14)

Ve'lo tonu ish et amito – And you shall not cheat your fellow…" (ibid. v.17)

In the first of this week's double sidra of Behar-Bechukotai, the Torah twice refers to the prohibition against cheating one's fellow, emphasising that all interpersonal relationships must be based on honesty. Where the issues of money and business are concerned, there is a danger that cheating can be all too common, which is why Jewish law has specific rules relating to buying and selling.

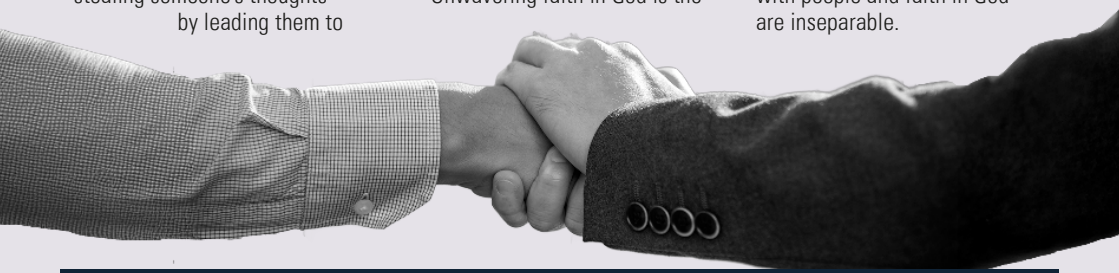
It is not only in relation to financial matters that the Torah condemns cheating. Any act that attempts to tease, mislead or make a fool out of someone in any way is included in this prohibition. This is known in Jewish law as *Genevat Da'at* – stealing someone's thoughts by leading them to believe an untruth. For example, this would include a situation in which someone is invited to a *simcha* by a host who is fully aware that the recipient of the invitation cannot attend the celebration. Only if the host knows that the person invited would be insulted not to receive an invitation and that they are truly welcome at the *simcha* would the host's gesture be considered genuine.

When the Torah condemns the act of speaking in a deceitful way, it adds the words "and you shall fear your God" (ibid.). Yet no such words follow from the prohibition against cheating in financial dealings (ibid. v.14). From this, Maharsha (Rabbi Shmuel Eidels, 1555-1631) derives that verbal deceit is even more serious than cheating in financial matters (on *Talmud Bavli, Bava Metzia* 58b).

The rationale for this emphasis is that financial cheating can be discovered after an investigation of accounts. However, the intent to deceive another cannot be proven; only God knows. Such deception therefore shows a lack of faith and fear in God because of a misguided belief that the deception will be undetected.

Unwavering faith in God is the fundamental lesson of the *Shemittah* year, dealt with earlier on in the sidra. God declares that in the sixth year the land will bring forth three years' worth of produce prior to the seventh, in which the soil will lie fallow. By the natural laws of agriculture, the most plentiful crops should be produced immediately after the fallow period, when the soil is still fresh and rich in minerals. Yet God's blessing is effective when the earth is usually most impoverished, at the end of the planting cycle in the sixth year. This teaches that a person only earns God's blessings through faith and obedience to His laws; to cheat is to lack faith. Only by conducting all interpersonal relationships according to God's rules of truth and integrity is a person worthy of blessing. For the Jew, honesty in dealings with people and faith in God are inseparable.

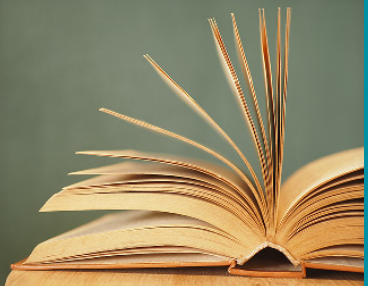
Only by conducting all interpersonal relationships according to God's rules of truth and integrity is a person worthy of blessing.



In loving memory of Yisrael Shmuel ben Yirmiya Yehoshua z"l

Bringing God into the Room

Part 6: The Night Watchman



SHIRA JACKSON

US Education

In this series, we focus on the meanings and relevance of our prayers and how they offer us opportunities to connect with God at any time, not just during formal services.

Psalm 121, for centuries a prayer recited in times of danger, has a familiar, almost comforting tune in British Jewry, especially evocative of the prayers recited during the long years of World War Two. It is on page 510 in the blue/green siddur.

If you were not already familiar with it before October 7th, you have probably come across it regularly since. It is our 'go-to' Psalm in times of trouble, tracing back conceptually to Jacob's prayers when fleeing from Esau (Bereishit ch. 28). It eloquently formulates that feeling of utter despair, when our only hope is to rely on a miracle to save us.

"A song of ascents. I lift my eyes up to the hills; from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot stumble; He who guards you does not slumber.

See: the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps…

I often think back to a Poland trip I went on some years ago. We had visited the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Umschlagplatz, where Jews were gathered to await deportation to Treblinka. As we stood overlooking a mass grave at Majdanek, a survivor told her story and then our group recited Psalm 121 together. Even though I had said it many times before, in that moment, the phrase "the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps," leapt out at me.

I had always understood that line to be a reference to His power, but it dawned on me: perhaps it is an insight into how God might experience human life in words we can understand. Never sleeping is a form of torture. Humans need sleep in order to function, to restore our energy, allowing one day to end and another to begin. Imagine never being able to start again; how would it feel if your whole life were one long day?

Not only that, but God is outside of time and space. He is not confined to being in one place at one time. All those experiences so far on that trip now converged for me as I found myself thinking about them from God's perspective. He was present at every deportation, every murder at every camp, simultaneously in the Blitz in London and on the SS St Louis. Not only those six years; imagine seeing our slavery in Egypt, the destruction of both our Temples, crusades, inquisitions, pogroms, expulsions, the Holocaust and October 7th all happening in the same exact moment.

We say He is our Guardian, and I imagine He must be screaming in pain at everything that has happened to us, His children.

In that same moment, however, He is also experiencing all the joy in the world. Every triumph of Jewish history, how we have illuminated the world as a light unto the nations, and every *simcha* ever held. Being outside of time offers a unique perspective which might complete the puzzle of life.

During our most challenging times, that is when we look heavenward and realise it is the only place our help comes from. Even when hidden under the guise of politics and the military, our help is ultimately from God. He is not asleep, He is hearing and sharing our pain, whilst orchestrating those better times soon to come that He alone can already envisage.

During our most challenging times, that is when we look heavenward and realise it is the only place our help comes from. Even when hidden under the guise of politics and the military, our help is ultimately from God.

In loving memory of Yaacov ben Shmuel z"l

Yom Yerushalayim: The First Flag to Fly Over the Western Wall

RABBI GIDEON SYLVESTER

US Israel Rabbi

In some ways, it is the Cinderella of our calendar, celebrated by some, but ignored by most. Yet, Yom Yerushalayim is an important day. It marks Israel's astonishing victory in the Six Day War of 1967 when Israeli soldiers recaptured the Old City of Jerusalem; restoring the Western Wall and the Temple Mount to the Jewish people.

The build up to the war was terrifying. The Arab states threatened a second Holocaust and it looked like they might bring it about. Against all odds, Israel survived and there was euphoria as Israelis returned to the sites of our Biblical heritage: Bethlehem, Hebron, and Jerusalem.

Many maintained that Israel's miraculous victory took us to the brink of messianic times. The Jewish people were returning home from the four corners of the earth to create a centre for world peace and compassion, which would culminate in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

It turns out that the road to redemption is longer, but our situation remains remarkable. I feel it every day, as I glance up at the street sign on my way to prayer. My road – Yad Mordechai – commemorates Mordechai Anielewicz, the man who led starving Jews from the basements and the sewers of the Warsaw Ghetto to fight against the Nazis. As I recall their courageous struggle, I realise how far we have advanced in such a short time. From the horrors of the Holocaust, Jews can now live and pray safely in Jerusalem's streets in a sovereign Jewish state.

My mind then travels the short distance from my home to the narrow alleyways of the Old City through which our soldiers raced to liberate the Temple Mount and the Western Wall. No one dreamt that Israel would recover these holy sites, so no one thought of bringing a flag to fly there. Searching for a solution; the soldiers made their way to the home of Albert and Pauline Rose: the sole remaining residents of Mount Zion. The couple did not have a flag, but Pauline was an artist. She took a bedsheet from her cupboard, and a stick from her garden. Then, squeezing out some blue paint from a tube, she improvised a flag which the soldiers hoisted over David's Tower. It was not perfect, but its message was immense.

The Roses were friends of my grandparents. I remember visiting their home on Mount Zion and hearing Albert narrate the story with pride. Perhaps it is a good metaphor for our current situation. We have suffered terribly over the last year-and-a-half, our dreams are not yet fully fulfilled and like that flag, our country is not yet perfect. But Israel has raised its banner for the Jewish destiny. So, on Yom Yerushalayim, I will stand on Yad Mordechai Street celebrating our flourishing city and giving thanks to God for the privilege of living here.

In loving memory of Malka bat Peretz z"l

Amatziah's Civil War

Sefer Melachim (Kings) II: Chapter 14

PNINA SAVERY

Ma'ayan and US Educator

Amatziah, son of Yo'ash, reigns as king of the southern kingdom of Yehuda for 29 years. Like his father, he is described as a righteous king. However, we are told that he was not as righteous as King David: he does not put a stop to people illicitly sacrificing on their own private altars.

Amatziah first firmly establishes his reign and then executes those who assassinated his father.

Amatziah is also victorious in battle against Edom, conquering a place called Sela, which means 'rock.' The Jewish-Roman historian Josephus explained that this refers to Petra, the ancient city in present-day Jordan. However, other Biblical commentators give alternative suggestions as to its location. Regardless of its exact geographic position, this was an important victory as it opened trade routes to the south.

Following this, Amatziah wages war against the northern kingdom of Israel. No explanation is given as to why he decides to start a civil war. The parallel account in *Divrei HaYamim* (Chronicles) is more detailed. There, we are told that Amatziah initially hires 100,000 soldiers from Israel to join him in battle against Edom. However, a prophet tells him not to use them and Amatziah orders them to go back home. Angry at their dismissal, the soldiers attack towns and villages in Yehuda, killing 3,000 people. Outraged, and despite being outnumbered, Amatziah declares war against Israel.

Yeho'ash, the king of Israel, wins a decisive victory against Amatziah and enters the streets of Jerusalem. He captures valuables from the Temple treasury and the royal palace. In addition, Yeho'ash captures King Amatziah and members of his family.

Soon after, Yeho'ash dies and is succeeded by his son Yerovam. Amatziah returns to Yehuda and we are told that he lives for another fifteen years. Amatziah is assassinated and the people crown his son Azariah king of Yehuda.

Amatziah is another king who shows a lot of promise yet falls short of the mark. Like his father, he begins as a righteous king but increasingly turns to idolatry, makes bad judgements in battle and is assassinated by his own people.

Conversely, Yerovam, the new king of Israel, is a wicked king who reigns for forty-one years. Despite being wicked, he succeeds at expanding and strengthening the borders of Israel. This was foretold by a prophet called Yonah ben Amitai, whose story we traditionally read on Yom Kippur, although this specific prophecy is not referred to there. The *Tanach* explains that God allowed Yerovam to be successful at bringing security to his kingdom, not because he merited it, but because the people did. God saw that "Israel's suffering was very severe" and He did not want to "erase the name of Israel from under the heavens" (*II Melachim* 14:26-27).

In fact, Yerovam's reign is one of great prosperity, stability and security, although not righteousness. Aside from the sins of idolatry mentioned in *Melachim*, the prophet Amos, who lived at this time, criticizes the generation for their severe lack of social justice. Despite their wealth, they oppress the poor.

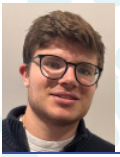
The kingdom of Yehuda simultaneously enjoys similar stability and prosperity, as we will see in the next chapter.

Amatziah is another king who shows a lot of promise yet falls short of the mark.

In loving memory of Avraham ben Yehoshua z"l

THE TRIBE WEEKLY
PARASHAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI 23-24 MAY | 26 IYAR

How to Make Rules Fair



JOJO SUGARMAN
Youth Director, South Hampstead

Parashat Behar introduces a remarkable economic innovation: the Jubilee Year (*Yovel*). When the Jewish people entered the land, they each received a portion. Some would inevitably struggle over the years and lose their land, but every fiftieth year, the Torah commands: "In this Jubilee year, each of you shall return to his holding" (Vayikra 25:13). No land sale was permanent - families always had the chance to reset.

This fundamentally changed property sales. Since land was only sold for a temporary period, its price changed depending on how close they were to the Jubilee year. The Torah explains this in three verses (vv. 14-16):

"When you sell property to your neighbour, or buy from them, do not wrong one another."

"Base the price on the years since the Jubilee; charge only for the remaining years."

"The more years left, the higher the price; the fewer years left, the lower the price."

The question is: what does the third verse teach us that we didn't already know from the second? After all, if we're told to charge only for the remaining years, it seems obvious that the price should be lower as we approach the Jubilee. The answer is: yes - we could deduce this from the second verse. But the inclusion of the third verse teaches us something important about exploitation. Not everyone has the knowledge or resources to navigate the system fairly. Without the third verse, some might not have fully understood that they could ask for a higher price when selling their property just after a Jubilee year.

In today's world, so many financial rules and regulations are confusing and difficult to understand. What would be the harm, just like God does here, in adding an extra line and clearly explaining how to navigate the system?

Parasha Wordsearch

Find these words in the grid. The words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

X	D	Y	I	O	Q	S	D	P	V	W	P
D	E	G	W	X	L	V	I	N	Y	I	Q
H	B	G	E	Y	R	Z	J	N	A	F	V
B	T	U	L	K	T	J	F	O	A	L	C
A	V	H	E	R	N	R	G	W	X	I	R
J	B	P	Q	D	C	N	E	N	Q	K	A
Z	Y	D	M	R	G	G	G	P	R	D	G
P	P	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	O	R	N
S	G	F	I	E	L	D	S	G	X	R	P
G	V	H	L	Y	O	V	E	L	S	A	P
S	L	A	V	E	R	Y	C	E	G	P	Z
H	A	T	T	I	M	E	H	S	M	H	Z

SHEMITTAH
YOVEL
LAND
SLAVERY
FREEDOM
PROPERTY
DEBT
REDEEM
SINAI
FIELDS

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BEHAR - BECHUKOTAI: HONESTY ON TRACK!

Rabbi Yehuda Zev Segal, The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva (1910-1993) was an outstanding leader, well known for his integrity and love of people.

Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Writer: Shira Chalk Cartoonist: Paul Solomons

tribe
www.tribeuk.com

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.