

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

בס"ד

9 AUGUST 2025 | 15 AV 5785

VOLUME 38 | #48

DAF HASHAVUA

ואתחנן | VAETCHANAN
דוּ פֶּן

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 9.29pm
Birmingham: 9.40pm
Bournemouth: 9.37pm
Cardiff: 9.45pm
Dublin: 10.01pm
Edinburgh: 10.07pm
Glasgow: 10.11pm
Hull: 9.47pm
Leeds: 9.45pm
Liverpool: 9.54pm
Manchester: 9.48pm
Nottingham: 9.45pm
Sheffield: 9.48pm
Southend: 9.25pm
Southport: 9.56pm
Jerusalem: 8.08pm

Shabbat Nachamu

Tu B'Av is this Shabbat

*"And write them on the
doorposts of your house
and upon your gates"
(Devarim 6:9)*



Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 3:23-4:4

Moshe (Moses) recalls that after defeating Sichon and Og in battle (see Devarim 2:31-3:11), he prayed to be allowed to enter the Land of Cana'an (see Rashi). God refused Moshe's request, allowing him only to see the Land from afar. Moshe tells the people to observe the mitzvot, which will allow them to inherit the Land and he reminds them of the punishments they witnessed when the nation strayed after the idol of Pe'or (see Bemidbar 25:3).

Point to Consider: *What is an example of the prohibition of "not adding to the words" of the Torah? (see Rashi to 4:2)*

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 4:5-40

Moshe tells the people that studying Torah and keeping the mitzvot will raise their stature in the eyes of the other nations. He warns them not to forget the historic revelation at Mount Sinai, in which God Himself spoke the Ten Commandments from the midst of the fire. Moshe adds that they must not make any idols, and warns them against worshipping the sun, the moon or the stars. He warns them that failure to heed this will result in exile from the Land. However, God will never abandon His nation; they will always be able to return to Him.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 4:41-49

Moshe sets aside three cities to the east of the Jordan River. These cities are to provide refuge for a person who has killed accidentally and is fleeing from the relatives of the deceased.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 5:1-18

Moshe again stresses that the people stood "face to face" with God at the time of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Moshe recalls the Ten Commandments:

1. Faith in God's existence
2. Prohibition of idol worship

3. Prohibition of taking God's Name in vain
4. Remembering Shabbat to keep it holy and refraining from 'melacha' (creative labours)
5. Honouring one's parents
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false testimony
10. You shall not covet what others have

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 5:19-6:3

Moshe recalls that the heads of the tribes and the elders asked him to relay God's commandments to them; they feared they would die if they continued to hear the commandments directly from God. God agreed to their request.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 6:4-25

The paragraph of *Shema Yisrael* is stated, in which the Jewish people are enjoined to believe in the Oneness of God, to love Him, to teach Torah, to wear tefilin and to affix mezuzot to their doorposts. Moshe warns the people not to allow the material attractions of the Land to cause them to neglect their service of God, nor to test Him like they did in the desert.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 7:1-11

When the Israelites come into the Land of Cana'an, they will successfully overcome seven great and mighty nations. Moshe warns them not to enter into a covenant with these nations, nor to intermarry with them. Israel is God's chosen nation, whom He lovingly brought out of Egypt.

HAFTARAH NACHAMU (YESHAYA 40:1-26)

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the first of the seven 'haftarat of consolation' read after Tisha B'Av. It starts with God's instruction to the prophets to "Comfort, comfort My people" (*Nachamu, nachamu, ami*) and goes on to prophesy that God will return to Jerusalem and bring an end to the exile.



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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The final ascent: Moshe's greatest pleasure



**RABBI DOVI
LEBRETT**

Shenley United
Jewish Community

From the glinting peaks of Mount Hermon to the scorching salt flats of the Dead Sea, the Land of Israel is breathtaking in its beauty. More importantly, it is the only place on earth where many of the Torah's most sacred mitzvot can be fulfilled.

And yet, in this week's *parasha*, we meet a moment of painful pathos. God tells Moshe (Moses): "Go up to the summit... and look out over the land" (Devarim 3:27). Look, but do not enter. See, but do not experience.

After decades of selfless leadership Moshe is stopped just short of his destination. He may glimpse the land he has devoted his life to reaching, but he may not step foot upon it. Why withhold this final reward? And why is Moshe told to look at the very place he will never enter?

Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) offers a beautiful

interpretation (Devarim 34:1), which we might bring to life with the following parable:

Picture a father who has recently been diagnosed with a condition that forbids him from eating anything sweet. Ice cream, once his favourite indulgence, is now off-limits, forever. One blazing summer afternoon, he takes his children to the local ice cream shop anyway. He buys them their favourite treats: chocolate fudge with rainbow sprinkles, vanilla with a caramel swirl, strawberry stacked high in a cone.

He cannot eat the ice cream himself. But as he watches his children's eyes light up, hears their infectious laughter and giggles, sees the trails of melting ice cream running down their fingers, it is not disappointment he feels. Their happiness becomes his own. In their pleasure, he experiences a much deeper sweetness – one tasted not on the tongue, but in the heart.

This, Ramban suggests, is why God showed Moshe the Land of Israel. Though Moshe knew he would not enter it, he saw the hills and valleys, the vineyards and olive

groves, and knew his people, the Jewish people, would soon enjoy the spirituality and beauty of the Holy Land. These were the people he had loved fiercely – through all their doubts and complaints, their triumphs and many missteps. Just seeing the goodness that awaited them gave him deep and genuine joy, infinitely greater than the individual pain of being denied entry himself.

We have just come together on another *Tisha B'Av*, commemorating the day our *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple) was destroyed. Our sages teach us that this tragic loss was rooted in *Sinat Chinam*, baseless hatred, when prejudice and bias distort our vision and turn a fellow Jew into an enemy and stranger. In this week's *parasha*, Moshe exemplifies the opposite: a profound, selfless love for another Jew so powerful that he could find the deepest joy in their success, despite his personal pain.

May we learn to love so deeply that another's joy becomes our own, and may we soon merit days when all of us rejoice together – in unity and in peace.



In loving memory of Devorah bat Avraham z"l

VJ Day



BEN VOS

US Head of
Community
Development

Japan surrendered to the Allies on 15 August 1945. In the West since 1944, the Jewish Brigade had fought the Germans under a Star of David flag. In the Pacific though, Jews served without the possibility of a Jewish military identity.

This was the ideal for Anglo-Jewish establishment members such as Basil Henriques and Major Sir Brunel Cohen. The decades-long anti-Zionist struggle of these patriotic heroes of the Great War and great community servants continued with the 'Jewish Fellowship', established in 1944. The Fellowship wanted Jews to be considered solely a 'religious community and not a politico-national group' and were certainly opposed to Jews finding fellowship in Jewish military units. They maintained this attitude despite the continuing anguish of Jews imprisoned and scattered across Europe. An organised group of Displaced Persons at Bergen Belsen cried out that: "On this great day of victory over Japan... we can no longer tolerate... being prevented from returning to an honest and productive life [in a Jewish national home in the land of Israel]."

Against Japan, Britain had Jews who served, were celebrated, and died as Britons only. Their service was as courageous and as costly as ever. Walter Forster of Anglo-

Egyptian Oilfields Ltd. was the son of the President of the Leeds *Chevra Kadisha*, and won fame depriving, by sabotage, Japanese use of Burmese oilfields. Private Jack Berner from Salford was captured in Singapore in 1942 and lost almost 5st after years of Japanese captivity in Thailand. Private Maurice Hyman of Sevington Road, Hendon, died in a Singapore Hospital. The award of the Military Medal to Lance Corporal Leslie Coussins, who had attended the Glasgow Talmud Torah, merited the front page of the Jewish Chronicle: "Through thick jungle, the men advanced, spraying the enemy with automatic fire. On reaching the enemy machine-gun post, Coussins ran out of ammunition, but he charged the gunner and clubbed him to death with the butt of his gun."

The British Army in 1945 did not provide kosher rations to Jewish soldiers. So, a few weeks before the Japanese surrender, it was with American civilian-funded supplies that Corporal Berenbaum of Cheetham, Privates Birnbaum and Cashefsky of London and Private Glasser of Liverpool, celebrated Pesach in a paddy-field in Burma. Matzah, wine and candles were delivered to their division by parachute.¹ At 11pm, after the Seder "under a bush", the four British soldiers set out on an 18-mile march to continue

chasing the Japanese out of Burma.

After VJ Day, secret Shabbat services in the Japanese camps were replaced by open Jewish practice. In September, the 23,000 Jews cooped up in the Shanghai ghetto could restart their lives in situ, or sail for the West. But whether these were Baghdadi Jews who had prospered in China for many years, students of the Mir Yeshiva, or German refugees, there would be no continuity with the past. Some Jews laid down their arms with VJ Day. But for the Jewish people as a whole, VJ Day began that short, tumultuous period which would redraw the Jewish relationship with temporal power, culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel. Shortly after, the Jewish Fellowship would disband.



VJ celebrations in London. Courtesy of www.iwm.org.uk

¹ Paid for by the National Jewish Welfare Board (USA)

Reflections at a *Chuppah*: Marriage and the MEP



ARIELLA JOY

Marriage
Enhancement
Programme (MEP)
Manager

I was recently at the *chuppah* (Jewish wedding ceremony) of a couple in their mid-thirties. The bride, beautiful and elegant in white, was slowly and regally walking down the aisle. When her soon-to-be husband saw her coming towards him, his eyes lit up with anticipation.

The bride, intelligent, warm and witty, spent many years looking for her Prince Charming. The groom, kind, caring and creative, with a fantastic sense of humour - the ultimate 'people person' - had been waiting for this moment for so long.

Under the *chuppah*, the words '*Harei at mekudeshet li* – Behold you are consecrated to me' are said by the groom as he puts the ring on his bride's finger. The bride becomes holy and set aside for him as his wife to the exclusion of all other women, as they set out together on the journey of life, their souls bound together and united as one.

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (1934-1983) explains that the full phrase commencing with the words '*harei at mekudeshet li*' contains 32 Hebrew letters, which are the numerical equivalent of the word

lev, heart. The groom quite literally gives his heart to his bride.

From the very first date until the moment a couple stands together under the *chuppah*, there can be many ups and downs and obstacles to navigate. It is a process to ascertain whether two different personalities, each with their own distinct upbringing and expectations, can create shared experiences and enjoy each other's company, to see if they are destined to join their lives together as one.

Once a couple becomes engaged, there is a shift in their relationship, from 'me' to 'we'. They begin to navigate important life decisions together and move into their future as a couple.

Invitations, venues, photographers, wedding lists, seating plans, a flat, furniture, menus; there are many wedding details requiring time and attention!

In addition, there is tremendous depth of meaning to the *chuppah* ceremony and Jewish marriage itself. This is where the United Synagogue's MEP - Marriage Enhancement Programme - comes in. Our tutors are 'spiritual wedding planners', explaining every

step of the *chuppah*, the *mikvah* experience and many other aspects of a Jewish marriage.

MEP offers fully-trained, warm and friendly tutors to meet with the couple as they prepare for their wedding and their marriage. This is a great opportunity for the couple to connect to the many hidden treasures that Jewish marriage has to offer. It is a time to step back from the intensity of the wedding plans and focus on the beauty, depth and potential of a Jewish marriage.

One recent bride said, 'I didn't realise how much I needed the MEP lessons until we started - my tutor really helped me understand so much of the Jewish laws and customs around marriage and make them meaningful and relevant to modern life. The tutors made my husband and I both feel comfortable and confident to go into this new stage of life with the knowledge and tools to work towards a successful marriage'.

For more information about the services available through the MEP, please contact mep@theus.org.uk.



In loving memory of David Yochanan ben Moshe z"l

Tehillim (Psalm) 117: God in the wider world



**RABBI MICHAEL
LAITNER**

US Director of
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.

Infamously, the journalist Alastair Campbell, when serving as Director of Communications in Tony Blair's Labour Government, is reputed to have declared "we don't do God", when asked about Tony Blair's faith.

Despite this assertion, Tony Blair is a person of faith with sincere respect for Judaism. He enjoyed a deep friendship with Rabbi Sacks zt"l, with whom he spent many hours discussing such matters. This demonstrates central messages of Tehillim 117, the shortest chapter in the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible), which is also recited in the *Hallel* prayers and "brings God into the room". Rabbi Sacks translated the psalm as follows:

"Praise the Lord, all nations, acclaim him, all you peoples; for His loving-kindness to us is strong, and the Lord's faithfulness is everlasting. Halleluyah!"

Who recites this psalm?

The Talmudic sage Rabbi

Yishmael ben Rabbi Yossi (*Pesachim* 118b) understands our psalm to be addressed to both Jews and non-Jews, so that both should recite it. Since all peoples should praise God for the kindness He has shown them – a monotheistic imperative – then, how much more so should this apply to the Jewish people, given the even greater kindness that God has shown to us, "for His loving-kindness to us is strong."

What are these kindnesses?

One perspective, provided by Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, c. 1085-1174) in his commentary to that passage, is that God's creation and ongoing sustenance of the world is a kindness for all peoples. Since they benefit from this, they must praise and acclaim God. By doing so, they declare their awareness and acceptance of God's sovereignty. The Jewish people, who benefit from even greater kindness, should express even greater thanks.

Contrastingly, Rashbam's grandfather, Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105), teaches a more focused understanding. The thanks to be given, by both Jews and non-Jews, is for the great miracles and kindnesses which God has performed and continues to perform for the Jewish people.

By doing so, all peoples not only thank God, but also acknowledge

His loving-kindness towards the Jewish people and, by extension, the benefits that God's kindnesses for the Jewish people can bring to the wider world.

How so? When the Jewish people act in a way that shares the kindness we receive from God, through the *chesed* (kindness) we perform outside of our own ambit, God is also praised and thanked more widely than just by Jews. One particularly moving example of this was shared by Kemi Ogunlana, a Nigerian refugee and former guest at the US Asylum Seeker Drop-In Centre, run by the US Chesed team.

Recently, Kemi spoke at Hendon Synagogue alongside Peter Summerfield BEM, a Holocaust survivor, about the changing experiences of refugees. Her descriptions of her visits to the Drop-In Centre, their transformative impact and her appreciation of this were an application of what we learn from Rashi about our psalm.

In a video tribute on 6 December 2020 to mark the *shloshim* of Rabbi Sacks, Tony Blair referred to Rabbi Sacks as "my rabbi" and expressed his admiration for Judaism and how Rabbi Sacks taught him "why it was important to have faith and why faith is central to human progress."¹ Tony Blair certainly does "do God" and demonstrates the power of Tehillim 117 by doing so.

¹ www.rabbisacks.org/videos/tony-blairs-message-the-shloshim-tribute

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VA'ETCHANAN

8-9 AUGUST | 15 AV

Leading the way



**ELI
SCHLAGMAN**

Tribe Operations
Manager

The parasha of Va'etchanan recounts Moshe's (Moses) final instructions to the Jewish people as they prepared to enter the Land of Israel. As the ultimate leader, Moshe dedicated his final moments to guiding and preparing the next generation, emphasising the importance of leadership in shaping the future of the Jewish people. This resonates deeply with our mission at Tribe.

This summer, Tribe ran programmes in 5 different locations across the UK and overseas, successfully engaging over 400 participants, thanks to the hard work of our dedicated leaders. Emulating, in their own way, the dedication Moshe showed his people, these

individuals committed themselves to delivering impactful and enjoyable Jewish experiences for all involved. Their leadership on the ground is central to the positive outcomes we see.

For many young people, Tribe camp offers their first deep engagement with Jewish life, and our leaders are instrumental in creating a welcoming and positive environment. Like Moshe, our leaders guide and inspire our young people throughout the summer. For returning participants, the leaders help keep that connection to Judaism strong. They're there to support and guide, just like Moshe did for the Jewish people in the desert. By getting to know each person and their needs, they provide individualised education and care, much like Moshe's tailored guidance to the tribes. This is key to the programme's success.

A primary measure of our success

is the positive impact felt by our participants, inspiring them to return each year to continue their Jewish journey. This outcome is directly linked to the enthusiasm, guidance and positive role-modelling provided by our leaders.

Va'etchanan highlights the crucial role of Moshe as a leader in preparing the community for the future, even as he himself would not enter the Land. Similarly, our Tribe leaders invest significant time and energy in providing formative Jewish experiences that will guide our participants as they develop their Jewish identities. Their dedication, mirroring Moshe's selfless commitment, is a key factor in the programme's lasting impact.

We thank our leaders for their hard work and dedication this summer and of course our fantastic participants who are the Tribe leaders of the future!

Shabbat Shalom.

I Spy!

See how many of each of the items mentioned in this week's parasha you can find amongst the sweets.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1.  | ? | 6.  | ? |
| 2.  | ? | 7.  | ? |
| 3.  | ? | 8.  | ? |
| 4.  | ? | 9.  | ? |
| 5.  | ? | 10.  | ? |





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

VA'ETCHANAN: SHABBAT SHUTDOWN!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** FEATURES THE **TEN COMMANDMENTS** — INCLUDING THE GIFT OF **SHABBAT**. GET READY FOR A TRUE STORY FROM **ISRAEL** THAT SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF **SHABBAT**...



YES, I HAVE THE SPARE KEY. ERM, SLIGHT PROBLEM. I'M IN **ASHKELON** — 1.5HRS AWAY!



BUT THE SUN WAITS FOR NO ONE.

OK, **SHABBAT** IS OVER. TIME TO SEE WHAT THE DAMAGE IS.



IT'S FRIDAY AFTERNOON AND GROCERY STORE OWNER, **MEIR SHUA**, IS READY TO LOCK UP AND SPEND A RELAXING **SHABBAT** WITH HIS FAMILY. EXCEPT FOR ONE TINY PROBLEM.



WHERE'S THAT KEY? IT WAS RIGHT HERE!



GOD, I'M LEAVING THIS ONE TO YOU!



So...

The Grocery **סופר התחנה**



OPEN STORE, OPEN STREET, OPEN OPPORTUNITY... FOR THOUSANDS OF PASSERSBY!

The Grocery **סופר התחנה**



WOAH! EVERYTHING IS EXACTLY AS I LEFT IT BEFORE **SHABBAT**! NOTHING WAS STOLEN! WHAT'S MORE, NEIGHBOURS NOTICED THE OPEN STORE, SO THEY MOVED A LARGE DUSTBIN TO BLOCK THE ENTRANCE.

OPEN STORE, OPEN STREET... BUT CLOSED CASE! THANK YOU **GOD**, FOR **SHABBAT** AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL!



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.