

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

בס"ד

16 AUGUST 2025 | 22 AV 5785

VOLUME 38 | #49

DAF HASHAVUA

עֵקֶב | EIKEV

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 9.14pm
Birmingham: 9.24pm
Bournemouth: 9.22pm
Cardiff: 9.29pm
Dublin: 9.45pm
Edinburgh: 9.48pm
Glasgow: 9.51pm
Hull: 9.29pm
Leeds: 9.28pm
Liverpool: 9.36pm
Manchester: 9.31pm
Nottingham: 9.28pm
Sheffield: 9.31pm
Southend: 9.09pm
Southport: 9.39pm
Jerusalem: 8.00pm



"God is bringing you to a good Land... a Land of wheat, barley, grapevines, figs and pomegranates; a Land of oil-producing olives and honey-producing dates" (Devarim 8:7-8)

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 7:12-8:10
Moshe (Moses) 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'I) – 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'I) – 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 (Isaiah), this is the second of the seven 'haftarat 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".



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"Be as careful with a minor mitzvah as a major one..."

(Pirkei Avot 2:1)



**RABBI JASON
KLEIMAN**

Pinner United
Synagogue

The title of this week's *sidra*, *Eikev*, is rendered by Rashi (1040-1105) as "heel", conveying the idea that *mitzvot* which one usually 'steps on' (i.e. treats as "light" precepts) should be observed with the same care as those considered to be 'weightier' and more serious.

The obvious question here is why someone would subjectively decide that some of God's *mitzvot* are less important than others. The answer may be due to a possible misapplication of the principle *middah k'negged middah*, measure for measure – the more dramatic God's involvement with us and our history, the more seriously we take our obligations.

A good example of this phenomenon is the level of engagement across the Jewish world with Pesach and Yom Kippur. The magnitude of the Exodus and the impact of God's forgiveness of the Jewish people on Yom Kippur after the sin of the Golden Calf are far more dramatic than everyday experiences. More people have a *Seder*, refrain

from *chametz* and fast on Yom Kippur than engage with other Jewish observances, even though the precepts of Pesach and Yom Kippur are far more arduous than many other *mitzvot*, such as *Birkat Hamazon*, Grace After Meals, one of the *mitzvot* in this week's *sidra*.

With regard to this *mitzvah* of *Birkat Hamazon*, the Talmud asks (*Berachot* 21a): "From where is the Torah law to recite *Birkat Hamazon* derived?" It answers with a familiar quote: "And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord, your God" (*Devarim* 8:10).

Given this biblical obligation of reciting *Birkat Hamazon* after food, why is there not one to make a blessing *before* eating?¹

The highly instructive answer to this question reveals a key intention to the *mitzvah* of *Birkat Hamazon*.

Who is not going to appreciate God when you can clearly experience Him providing the answer to your plight in a time of need, be it freedom following slavery, forgiveness after transgression or food in your moment of hunger? The real issue is whether or not we feel a sense of gratitude to God when our needs have been fulfilled?

Birkat Hamazon is intended to correct our tendency to move

away from God when we are in a state of satisfaction, once our needs are filled. The danger is that we can become too self-assured and overconfident in our own powers, even haughty. As the Torah says: "Lest you eat and be satisfied... and forget the Lord your God" (ibid. vv.12-14). To recite *Birkat Hamazon* is to remind ourselves that it is "He who gave you strength to make wealth" (ibid. v.18).

In reality, we are always dependent on God, but there is a danger we can lose that appreciation when we do not feel in need, such as after a hearty meal. Something as seemingly 'light' and mundane as regularly acknowledging that God is the Source of our nourishment will cure us of a selective appreciation of God's *mitzvot* and remind us that all His precepts carry the weightiest of blessings.



¹ The obligation to say *berachot* before eating is a later rabbinic mitzvah

Celebrating Israel's Medical Achievements



LAURIE MAURER

US Education

On 20th August 1920, the Jewish Medical Association of Palestine published its first medical journal, *Ha-Refuah*. In the 105 years since, Israel has become a global healthcare leader. According to the 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index, Israel ranks 6th in healthcare out of 167 countries. The UK is 34th, the US is 69th.

Here are some of Israel's most remarkable medical innovations:

- **ReWalk Robotics:** Dr. Amir Goffer, a quadriplegic, founded this company in 2001. They developed an exoskeleton that enables users to stand, walk and climb stairs.
 - **PillCam:** Capsule endoscopy has been researched by Israelis since the 1980s. PillCam was approved for use by the US FDA in 2001. These tiny devices record images of the digestive tract, offering a less invasive alternative to colonoscopies.
 - **Copaxone:** This multiple sclerosis drug, invented in Israel and US FDA-approved in 1996, reduces relapse frequency and improves quality of life for patients.
 - **IceCure's Cryoablation:** This minimally-invasive treatment
- freezes tumours, reducing surgery and recovery time with fewer complications. On 9th June 2025, the company received a notice of patent allowance from the US FDA and is anticipating approval for early-stage breast cancer use.
 - **Flexible (NIR) Stent:** Developed by Tel Aviv-based Medinol in 1996, this life-saving device for hearts has evolved over generations. The upcoming loNIR version promises revolutionary improvements.
 - **Emergency Bandage:** Also known as the Israeli bandage, this first-aid tool, invented in 1998, is used globally by militaries and Special Forces to stop traumatic bleeding.
 - **OrCam MyEye:** A portable camera device that helps the visually impaired by reading text and identifying objects through audio feedback.
 - **CorNeat's Artificial Cornea:** Designed to replace damaged corneas in under an hour, this innovation is in human trials, with a broader rollout expected by 2027.
 - **MeMed Test:** This diagnostic tool distinguishes between bacterial and viral infections in just 15 minutes.
 - **Sniffphone:** Developed by the Haifa Technion's Prof. Hossam Haick, this device plugs into smartphones and detects diseases like cancer through breath analysis.

Israeli scientists Aaron Ciechanover and Avram Hershko were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2004 for helping understand how faulty proteins are broken down by the body. This has helped further research into diseases like cervical cancer and cystic fibrosis.

Since the beginning of the war on 7th October 2023, the Israeli healthcare system has had to deal with many new and challenging injuries, which have forced it to adapt. By doing so, it has made further strides in many fields, including rehabilitation. At Sheba Medical Centre in Tel Aviv, for example, there is now an Immersive Rehabilitation Room, where they have videogame-like workouts and AI generated scenarios, which help the injured to gain mobility and to function once they leave hospital. Using AI as well as robotics has meant quicker surgery times and more precision in very complex procedures, as well as in treatment for PTSD and trauma.

In this week's *parasha*, Moshe tells us, 'God will ward off all sickness from you' (*Devarim* 7:15). He also talks about how wonderful the Land of Israel is, how it is filled with abundant materials, a land where you 'will lack nothing' (*ibid.* 8:9). We are warned though, to remember where this all comes from. It is God Who allows the plants to grow, it is God Who allows our beloved Land of Israel to lead the world in medical advancement, and of course, it is God Who ultimately heals.

Blessings for all occasions



**RABBI LUIS
HERSZAFT**

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Hampstead Garden
Suburb Synagogue

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.

Studies show that the average person checks their mobile phone more than 100 times a day, scrolling through news, social media and countless notifications. Often, we find ourselves connecting to things that, in truth, do not deeply matter. But imagine if those hundred daily actions were dedicated to something more meaningful. What if we aimed to say one hundred *berachot*, blessings, each day?

Imagine if those hundred daily actions were dedicated to something more meaningful. What if we aimed to say one hundred *berachot*, blessings, each day?

The Talmud in *Berachot* 43b teaches:

"Rabbi Meir would say: 'A person is obligated to recite one hundred blessings every day, as it is stated in the verse: "And now, Israel, what [ma] does Hashem, your God, require of you?" (Devarim 10:12)"

Rashi (1040-1105) explains that Rabbi Meir reads the verse as though it said *meah*, meaning one hundred, instead of *ma*, meaning what. The Rabbinic commentaries on the Talmud known as Tosafot (c. 11th–13th centuries) offer another explanation, suggesting that the verse hints at this obligation because it contains one hundred letters. Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, in the *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 46), adds that during the reign of King David, a deadly plague was claiming one hundred lives each day. In response, David instituted the daily practice of reciting one hundred blessings, and the plague miraculously ceased.

But why is saying *berachot* so significant?

The Talmud (*Berachot* 35a) teaches that the entire world belongs to God. A person who benefits from the world without first making a blessing is compared to someone who takes from what belongs to God without permission. Rabbi Shimshon Pincus (1944-2001) offers the following analogy. Imagine a person who goes to

the supermarket to buy bread and other foods; naturally, they must pay for them. But suppose the same person comes to the shopkeeper's home for a meal and eats exactly the same food. There, they do not pay a penny. So it is with *berachot*. God has His 'business', which is the universe. Anything we want in life lies within the domain of God's 'shop', and it must be paid for. However, if a person cultivates a loving relationship with God, it is as though they are invited to dine at the shopkeeper's home. And when you are eating at someone's table as a cherished guest, you do not receive a bill. This bond and closeness are achieved through making a *beracha*.

At its simplest level, a *beracha* is a way of saying please and thank you to God for the pleasures and experiences He has granted us. Yet *berachot* also serve a deeper purpose: they cultivate awareness of God in our daily lives. Whether we are eating a meal, enjoying a pleasant fragrance or witnessing a beautiful sight, blessings transform the ordinary into the sacred, adding meaning and depth to every moment.

In our next article, we will explore the different types of *berachot* and how each one helps us build a deeper connection with God and a greater appreciation of the world around us.

Chizkiyahu's illness

Sefer Melachim (Kings) II: Chapter 20



**PNINA
SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and
US Educator

Our previous chapter ended with the miraculous salvation of Jerusalem from the Assyrians. This chapter discusses two events that happen during the siege.

Firstly, Chizkiyahu (Hezekiah) is gravely ill. The prophet Yeshayahu (Isaiah) announces that he will soon die. Chizkiyahu turns his face to the wall and prays to God, recounting his many good deeds. He cries as he asks God to spare him. Immediately, the prophet announces that God will heal Chizkiyahu and give him another 15 years to live, during which he will have a child to succeed him.

Chizkiyahu asks for a sign from God to prove that he will heal. Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235) explains that Chizkiyahu is concerned that Yeshayahu is merely comforting him after seeing his distress. He does not believe that the decree has truly been overturned. Using an ancient sundial, a miracle is performed, in which a lengthening afternoon shadow recedes. This reassures Chizkiyahu that he will indeed be healed.

This story teaches us the power of heartfelt prayer, no matter how desperate the situation. Even though Chizkiyahu had been told that he would soon die, his prayer had the power to reverse the decree.

Secondly, while he is unwell, Chizkiyahu is sent a gift by the Babylonian king. Chizkiyahu responds by giving the Babylonian messengers a guided tour of his palace, including his treasury. In fact, the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible) records that "there was nothing that Chizkiyahu did not show them in his palace and in all his realm" (*Melachim* 20:13).

God responds with anger. The prophet tells Chizkiyahu that destruction will come to Jerusalem after his death; all his wealth will be carried off to Babylon, along with his descendants. Surprisingly, this is the one time that Chizkiyahu does not respond to a negative prophecy with prayer. Instead, he comforts himself that it will not happen in his own lifetime.

This puzzling story is our final encounter with Chizkiyahu, a righteous king, and it is important to put it into its wider context. Chizkiyahu reigns for 29 years, and, during his illness, he is granted an extra 15 years to live. This means that his illness occurs in the fourteenth year of

his reign, during the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. In fact, Rashi (1040-1105) and Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel (1437-1508) both state that Chizkiyahu became ill only three days before the defeat of the Assyrian army. This means that the Babylonian delegation arrives while Jerusalem is in grave danger. It is strange that the Jewish king is showing off his wealth at this difficult time.

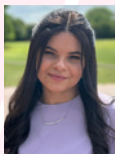
Rabbi Alex Israel (Alon Shvut, Israel) explains that the Babylonians were trying to lead an alliance against the Assyrians, and had come to Jerusalem to gauge Chizkiyahu's willingness to join in. The prophet is angered by Chizkiyahu's willingness to do so, as demonstrated by him showing off his wealth.¹ Yeshayahu always encourages the kings to maintain political neutrality and to simply trust in God.

Generally characterised by sincere devotion and strong faith in God, even Chizkiyahu struggles at times to maintain the correct balance between *hishtadlut* (human initiative) and faith in God.

This chapter ends with an allusion to the *Mei Shiloach*, the water tunnel in the City of David, Jerusalem, constructed under the orders of Chizkiyahu. Many of us have enjoyed wading through these waters.

¹ Alex Israel, *Kings II*, p.309-318.

One step back, two steps forward



CHANI
DAVILA

Youth Director,
Stanmore

In *Parashat Eikev*, Moshe (Moses) delivers a sobering historical review to Bnei Yisrael, the Israelites, as they prepare to enter the Land of Israel. He revisits painful national failures, most notably, the sin of the Golden Calf:

“Remember, do not forget, how you provoked Hashem, your God, to anger in the wilderness...”
(Devarim 9:7).

Why dredge up these memories just as the people stand on the threshold of triumph? Moshe’s purpose is not to shame, but to shape: to instil humility,

responsibility and awareness. He teaches that progress cannot come through forgetting, but through honest reckoning.

This lesson is not just something Moshe preaches, it is something he *lives*. When God first appears to him at the burning bush and commands him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moshe protests:

“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Shemot 3:11).

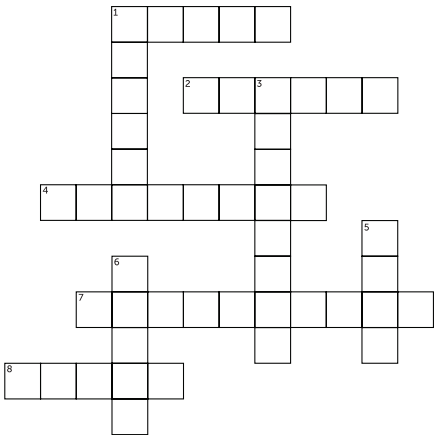
Perhaps part of Moshe’s reluctance stems not only from humility, but from a deeper uncertainty tied to his past. Years earlier, he had killed an Egyptian taskmaster and fled the land in fear. Though his act may have come from a place of justice and compassion for the Israelite slave being beaten, it led to his exile. Could it be that

this unresolved history contributed to his feeling of unworthiness? It’s possible that Moshe’s past weighed heavily on him and this is why he doubted his suitability to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt.

This internal struggle became an important part of Moshe’s leadership journey. The message is clear: confronting one’s past is not a liability, it’s a prerequisite for greatness. Moshe models the kind of leader who moves forward not by erasing his past, but by integrating it into his mission. So too, in our parasha, he invites the Israelites to do the same, to remember the past in order to learn and grow from it.

As we read *Eikev*, we are also invited to face our missteps with honesty, and to build a future that learns from where we have been, rather than avoiding it.

Parasha Crossword



Across:

- 1. The food the Jews ate in the desert
- 2. The Shema paragraph in this week’s parasha
- 4. What Moshe urges the people to do with their history
- 7. A sin that Moshe reminds the Jewish people about
- 8. This week’s parasha

Down:

- 1. The well in the desert was in the merit of this person
- 3. A promise between God and the Jewish people
- 5. & 6. Israel is described as a land flowing with these



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GO **FIGURE!**

Delicious Dates! Did you know that the '**Land flowing with milk and honey**' is talking about date honey or silan? No buzzing needed! Date honey appears throughout the **Jewish** calendar: eaten on **Rosh Hashanah**, used by some communities for **Charoset** on **Pesach** and you'll find date palms used for the **Lulav** (palm) branch on **Succot**.



THAT'S A LOT OF **DATES!**

Bring on the Barley! Barley was animal food in **Temple** times - but don't judge a stalk by its cover! The **Omer** offering was barley; the first grain to ripen in the spring and the start of the **Omer** count.



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