

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

בס"ד

13 SEPTEMBER 2025 | 20 ELUL 5785

VOLUME 38 | #53

DAF HASHAVUA

כ"י תבוא | KI TAVO

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 8.08pm
Birmingham: 8.16pm
Bournemouth: 8.16pm
Cardiff: 8.22pm
Dublin: 8.35pm
Edinburgh: 8.28pm
Glasgow: 8.32pm
Hull: 8.16pm
Leeds: 8.17pm
Liverpool: 8.24pm
Manchester: 8.19pm
Nottingham: 8.16pm
Sheffield: 8.19pm
Southend: 8.03pm
Southport: 8.26pm
Jerusalem: 7.24pm



*"Your skies above you will be like
copper, and the earth below you
will be like iron"
(Devarim 28:23)*

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 26:1-11

Once the nation has come into the Land of Israel, there is a mitzvah for a produce-grower to take the first fruits of the new harvest and place them in a basket, before bringing them to a Kohen in the Temple (the mitzvah of *bikkurim*). After the Kohen takes the basket, the person who has brought the fruit reads out a text which recalls the initial descent to Egypt, the slavery and the redemption. It concludes with an expression of gratitude to God for the bounty of the Land.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 26:12-15

At the end of every third and sixth year of the seven year *shemittah* cycle, one has to make sure that all the tithes from the produce of the Land from the previous years have been given to their respective recipients. Once that has been organised, a text known as *viduy ma'aserot* is said, which declares one's careful commitment to the laws of tithing, followed by a prayer to God to bless the Land.

Point to Consider: *In what part of our liturgy is the final part of the viduy ma'aserot also said? (26:15)*

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 26:16-19

Moshe (Moses) encourages the people to keep the mitzvot and to view them every day as fresh and new (Rashi). This will elevate the nation to the status of being holy and distinguished.

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 27:1-10

Moshe tells the people that on the day they cross the Jordan, they should take stones, coat them with plaster and inscribe upon them the words of the Torah. They should erect these stones on Mount Eival, where they shall also build an altar and bring peace-offerings.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 27:11-28:5

After the nation enters the Land, they will come to Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival. Six of the tribes are to stand on one mountain, six on the other. The Levi'im will stand in between the mountains to call out the blessings and the curses, to which the people will respond "Amen" (Rashi).

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 28:6-69

This aliya opens with further blessings. If we follow God's will – our enemies will flee from us and other nations will be in awe of us. The sidra continues with the *tochacha*, the passage of retribution (which is recited in an undertone by the person reading from the Torah). If we do not listen to God and do not observe His mitzvot, the consequences will be grave. Verse after verse warns of petrifying suffering, including illness, plague, blindness, children being taken captive, being at the mercy of other peoples, and the nation becoming scattered over the Earth.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 29:1-8

Moshe reminds the people of their wondrous Exodus from Egypt, their miraculous survival in the desert for 40 years and their victories over the mighty kings Sichon and Og.

HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 60:1-22)

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the sixth of the 'seven haftarot of consolation' read after Tisha B'Av. The prophet relates a vision of the nations of the world coming to Zion and recognising God. Violence and pain will become memories of the past – "never again shall your sun set, nor shall your moon be withdrawn; for God will be an eternal light". These verses are included in the Memorial Prayer recited at cemeteries and shiva houses.



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This very day



RABBI SAM MILLUNCHICK

former Rabbi of
Belmont United
Synagogue

"On this day, Hashem, your God, commands you to follow all of these statutes and laws, and you shall guard and keep them with all of your heart and with all of your soul" (Devarim 26:16).

On this day? Was the Torah not given 40 years previously at Mount Sinai?

According to the Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194-1270), this verse signifies the end of what is termed by the commentators as *Ne'um HaMitzvot* or literally "Speech of the mitzvot". Over the last few *parashiyot*, Moshe (Moses) has been reviewing several different laws and customs with the new generation of *Am Yisrael*, the generation set to enter the Land of Israel. He

It is not enough to know the mitzvot; one must also apply them in one's life. They are meant to permeate not only our hearts — our minds — as the Ramban says, but also our souls — our bodies, our actions in this world.

is teaching them new laws and reinforcing old ones, preparing them for their ascent into the Land and for their coalescence into a nation, rather than just a people.

With this statement, Moshe is imploring the people to serve God with all their hearts and souls. We are familiar with these terms from the *Shema*: "And you shall love Hashem, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul..." (*Devarim* 6:5). In his commentary on that verse, the Ramban defines the terms heart and soul. Heart, he says, is the *mind*, the ability to think, whilst soul is the body, the *physical*.

Just a few verses later in our *parasha*, we see a drastic change in tone. Moshe has finished his *Ne'um HaMitzvot*; now he informs the people about a ceremony to take place after their ascent to the Land, a set of *berachot* (blessings) and *klalot* (curses) known as the *Tochecha* (Rebuke) that they are to announce after entering Israel. The *klalot* are terrible indeed, but would only occur to the people if they abandon God and His ways.

Couched between these two monumental historical events, the *Neum HaMitzvot* on one hand and the *Tochecha* on the other, we can understand the timing and the message of our opening verse. Having just reviewed with *Am Yisrael* many of the *mitzvot* that

pertain to the Land of Israel — and indeed, many other main staples of Jewish tradition — and faced with the terrible curses that will befall the Jews if they do not heed God's word, Moshe implores them, "...Guard and keep them with all of your heart and with all of your soul".

Based on the Ramban's explanation, Moshe is telling *Am Yisrael* that it is not enough to know the *mitzvot*; one must also apply them in one's life. They are meant to permeate not only our hearts — our minds — as the Ramban says, but also our souls — our bodies, our actions in this world. Because Moshe understood that it is not enough to "be spiritual" in one's own mind; one must *act* Godly as well — "with all of your heart and with all of your soul".



When our uncles were imprisoned 400 years ago



RABBI Z. M. SALASNIK

Former Rabbi of
Bushey United
Synagogue

On Shabbat morning, 11th Elul 5385 (September 1625), officers of the Governor of Jerusalem arrested 15 rabbis in the local Ashkenazi and Sephardi synagogues. Most famous of these rabbis was Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, known as the Shelah, this being the abbreviation of the title of his book, *Shnei Luchot HaBrit*.

Rabbi Horowitz was from a family of rabbinic scholars prominent in Germany, Poland and Bohemia. Isaiah himself, born between 1555 and 1570, had spent his childhood and youth in Prague and in Polish *yeshivot*. After being a rabbi in Poland, he was rabbi of

Frankfurt in the early 1600s and in Prague from 1614 to 1621. After his first wife died, his children being independent adults, he and his second wife left for Jerusalem.

Why did he move? The Thirty Years War, between Protestant and Catholic states, began in 1618 and affected the Jews of Prague, who were expected to raise funds to support the war. But the uncertainties of 17th century Europe were not the catalyst for his move. He wished to live, study and write in Jerusalem. Specifically, Jerusalem. So he declined the offer to be rabbi of Safed (Tzefat).

Unfortunately, the Muslim-led Middle East was as dangerous as Christian Europe. Muhammad ibn Farukh, Governor of Jerusalem, charged exorbitant taxes. He targeted not only Jews but Muslims and Christians as well. While he was away on a

pilgrimage, his brother-in-law, Uthman Agha, imprisoned the 15 rabbis. Rabbi Horowitz and the others were released after nearly three weeks, on Rosh Hashanah, following the payment of a sizeable ransom. Some were tortured. They knew their release was not the end of their persecution and sought ways to escape. Eventually, Rabbi Horowitz reached Safed and Tiberias. He died in either 1626 or

1630 and was buried in Tiberias, close to the Rambam. While it is not unusual for the year of birth of a major rabbi of that era to be in question, it is unusual for the year of death to be in doubt. Record-keeping within the Ottoman Empire was less robust than in Europe.

In 1972, Rabbi Dr Eugene Newman of Golders Green United Synagogue published his book 'Life and Teachings of Isaiah Horowitz'. He analysed the different theories for the years of birth and death of Rabbi Horowitz and considered 1570 a more likely year for his birth and 1626 more likely for his death.

What of the tyrant ibn Farukh? His notoriety reached the Sultan in Constantinople, who deposed him. Nevertheless, his few years in power had placed the Jewish community in Jerusalem in major debt, some of which was replenished by donations from Jewish communities outside Israel. The Ashkenazi community declined.

And the title of this article? For my mother-in-law's paternal family, Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz was an uncle, brother of an ancestor, many generations ago. The chances are that many of you are blood relatives either of him or of one of the other imprisoned rabbis.

We are in challenging times. Jews have been killed, captured, targeted and discriminated against. Sometimes, we think of the victims as distant. Recent events have, sadly, reminded us that but for a difference in place and/or time, we could have been the victims.



The grave of the Shelah HaKadosh



Reward the body

BY: **REBBETZEN SHULI LISS**

Highgate Synagogue

Little Jonny tidies his room for the first time without being asked. His mum gives him a sticker or, better yet, a treat. Why?

In 1930, B.F. Skinner, an American psychologist and behaviourist, developed the concept of “operant conditioning”, which explores how behaviour is shaped by rewards and punishments.

One of his famous experiments involved placing rats in a device now called a Skinner Box (developed around 1938). When the rat pressed a lever, it received a food pellet. Over time, the rat learned to press the lever more frequently, showing how positive reinforcement can effectively shape and change behaviour. Parents over the years have seen how positive reinforcement encourages a child to repeat good behaviour.

The interesting thing is that we are not so different from little Jonny. Yes, we may be older and (hopefully) more mature, but, deep down, we are still human beings made of body and soul, trying to grow in a world full of distractions and resistance. And just like with children, if we want to build new habits, we need to

create opportunities for positive reinforcement.

Rabbi E. Dessler (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, published posthumously from 1965-1997) explains that although the soul naturally longs for growth and truth, the body resists change – it prefers comfort and routine. Real growth happens when we learn how to **involve the body in the process**. That does not mean letting it lead, but rather recognising that when we reward the body for cooperating with our spiritual goals, we align both parts of ourselves.

Let's say you have taken on two small commitments:

1. Reading a short Torah idea daily.
2. Doing one small action tied to your personal growth area (e.g. patience, speech, honesty).

It might feel insignificant. You might wonder if it is really doing anything. Rabbi Lawrence Kelemen, who led a character development group I was part of (see part 1 of this series), told us to track our progress and reward

the body. We had to fill out a simple chart to measure our daily reading and actions. We did not mark with a cross if we missed a day, we just wrote a tick if we did our work.

I will be honest - I really struggled with this one. I resisted. I did not want to give myself a reward. It felt so childish. I felt that I did not need a chart and iced coffee to feel good about reading a paragraph, but when I did listen to the advice given, I was surprised to find it helped. Maybe it is a favourite drink. An accessory you like. Some gadget you have been longing for. Our body feels good when we are kind to it.

We are quick to notice what we did wrong – what we forgot, where we slipped. But that does not build momentum. What builds momentum is noticing what went right and reinforcing it. As with all spiritual growth – it is never all or nothing. If I read one more time this week than last week, then change is happening. Hopefully our body and soul will notice it.

What builds momentum is noticing what went right and reinforcing it. As with all spiritual growth – it is never all or nothing.





Yoshiyahu: in life and death

Sefer Melachim (Kings) II: Chapter 23



**PNINA
SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and
US Educator

In our last chapter, we met Yoshiyahu (Josiah), the boy king who became the last righteous king of the southern kingdom of Yehuda (Judah). In fact, at the end of his reign, he is described as the most righteous king: “there was no king like him who turned to God with all his heart, soul and might” (*II Melachim* 23:25). These words are the same ones we say twice daily in the *Shema*, showing us how Yoshiyahu really did serve God in the most ideal way.

Yoshiyahu carries out a comprehensive purging of the idolatrous practices rampant throughout the kingdom. He also destroys all the *bamot*, the backyard, private altars that are dedicated to God, but became forbidden when the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple) was built. This is something that has plagued the people since the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*, and, finally, Yoshiyahu acts against it.

Yoshiyahu also travels north to remove the idolatry in Bet El and Shomron. He attempts to unite the Jews still living in the Shomron with the Jews

of the kingdom of Yehuda by inviting them to celebrate Pesach together in Jerusalem. The *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible) tells us that “there had not been a Pesach celebration like that since the time when the *Shofetim* (Judges) ruled” (ibid. v.22). Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235) explains that the unity of the north and south, along with the attack on idolatry, connects us to the time of Shmuel (Samuel) the prophet at the end of the period of the *Shofetim*.

Despite Yoshiyahu’s impressive record, God declares that the punishment of exile will still come to the people of Yehuda. This is due to the sins of the previous wicked kings. This may sound unfair, especially when Yoshiyahu is praised so highly in our chapters. However, there are many *midrashim* that explain that, whilst he tried his best, the people still secretly continued to practice idolatry. He failed to significantly impact society, resulting in harsh punishment.

Sadly, Yoshiyahu dies in Megiddo, fighting against the Egyptian army. Under Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptians travelled through Israel to wage war against the rising superpower, Babylonia. Yoshiyahu chooses to confront Pharaoh Necho, even though the Egyptians explicitly state that they have no intentions

of aggression towards him (see *II Divrei HaYamim* 35:21). It is hard to understand why Yoshiyahu makes this choice, against the advice of the prophets. Different approaches are shared by the commentators.¹

Yoshiyahu’s son, Yeho’achaz, is crowned in his place. A wicked king, he reigns for only three months before the Egyptians imprison him, placing a different royal prince on the throne. Called Elyakim, the Egyptians change his name to Yehoyakim as a sign of their power over the people of Yehuda.

Yehoyakim reigns for eleven years, which is a relatively long time considering all the turbulence going on. He is forced to pay Egypt a heavy tax to keep the peace, which he levies on the people. He is described as a wicked king.

The death of Yoshiyahu is a tragic end to the final good period of the kingdom of Yehuda before the eventual *Churban* (destruction) that looms before us.

There was no king like him who turned to God with all his heart, soul and might”
(II Melachim 23:25)

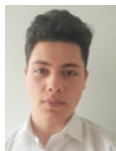
¹ See Alex Israel, *II Kings: In a Whirlwind* pp.341-346 for a further discussion of this.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT KI TAVO

12-13 SEPTEMBER | 20 ELUL

A heart of gratitude



**AVI
STEINBERG**

Tribe Madrich

In *Parashat Ki Tavo*, in the book of *Devarim*, the Jewish people prepare to live in the Land of Israel. Moshe (Moses) gives clear guidance to show thankfulness for God's many gifts. One special commandment is the law of *Bikkurim*, which instructs the Jewish people to bring the first fruits of their harvest to the Temple. This simple act reminds them that every good thing comes from God and encourages a heart of gratitude.

After the mitzvah of *Bikkurim*, the Torah explains that following God's rules brings blessings and that ignoring them brings warnings. The blessings promise a life filled with peace, success and a strong community. The warnings, although they sound harsh, teach that every action has a consequence. They remind us that blessings require responsibility, and our choices affect both our lives and the lives of others.

A common question that arises from this parasha is: How do these blessings and warnings help guide our daily actions?

The lessons in *Ki Tavo* show us that every gift from God comes with a duty. When we enjoy any blessing – such as good health,

learning or support from friends and family – we must remember to use these gifts wisely. We should share our wealth, treat others with care, and work together to build a better community. The warnings remind us that neglecting our duties or acting selfishly can lead to difficulties. They teach us to be mindful in our daily choices, knowing that even small actions can have big effects. In this way, *Ki Tavo* encourages us to live with gratitude and care, ensuring that our actions make the world a kinder place.

By embracing these teachings, we build a strong, caring community that honours God's gifts.

Shabbat Shalom!

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.

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

ARK
BIKKURIM
BLESSINGS
CURSES
DEVARIM
GERIZIM
ISRAEL
MOSHE
SHEMITTAH
TITHE





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

KI TAVO: ALL IN!

THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** TALKS ABOUT THE **MITZVAH** OF BEING IN THE LAND OF **ISRAEL**.

A **MITZVAH** OF BEING? THAT'S AWESOME! I THOUGHT **MITZVOT** WERE ABOUT DOING.

I LOVE THIS **MITZVAH** OF BEING IN THE LAND OF **ISRAEL**. EVERY FEW STEPS IS ANOTHER **MITZVAH**! I'M NOT FLYING TODAY - I'M COUNTING MY STEPS!

WELL, MANY **MITZVOT** ARE ABOUT DOING, BUT **MITZVOT** CAN BE ABOUT BEING TOO!

NOT ONLY DO WE GAIN GIANT **MITZVAH** MILEAGE EVERY TIME WE'RE IN **ISRAEL**, BUT **RABBI ROSNER** EXPLAINS THAT THE **TORAH** IS HINTING AT SOMETHING DEEPER - OUR STATE OF BEING.

YOU MIGHT BE A **MULTITASKING** MAVEN DINA, BUT I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE DOING ANY OF THEM WELL!

WHENEVER WE'RE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING, WE SHOULD BE TOTALLY PRESENT IN IT.

IF OUR MIND IS ON SOMETHING ELSE, WE'RE MISSING OUT! MANY **MITZVOT** HAVE A **BERACHA** (BLESSING) FIRST TO HELP US GET IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND BEFORE WE START.

KI TAVO REMINDS US TO BE FULLY PRESENT IN THE MOMENT. OFTEN YOUR PRESENCE IS THE BEST PRESENT YOU CAN GIVE SOMEONE!

LET'S TRY AND BE ALL IN AND GIVE EACH **MITZVAH** 100%!

100%



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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.