

18 JULY 2026 | 4 AV 5786

VOLUME 39 | #46

DAF HASHAVUA

דברים | DEVARIM

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 10.09pm
 Birmingham: 10.22pm
 Bournemouth: 10.18pm
 Cardiff: 10.28pm
 Dublin: 10.46pm
 Edinburgh: 11.00pm
 Glasgow: 11.07pm
 Hull: 10.37pm
 Leeds: 10.31pm
 Liverpool: 10.42pm
 Manchester: 10.36pm
 Nottingham: 10.32pm
 Sheffield: 10.37pm
 Southend: 10.05pm
 Southport: 10.46pm
 Jerusalem: 8.26pm

Shabbat Chazon

Tisha B'Av

Begins on Wednesday in London: 9.03pm
 and in Jerusalem: 7.47pm
 Fast ends on Thursday in London: 9.55pm
 and in Jerusalem: 8.12pm

(For times in other cities, please contact your local community)



"Hashem, your God, has multiplied you: today you are as numerous as the stars of the heavens"
(Devarim 1:10)

דְּבָרִים
DEVARIM

1st Sidra in:
דְּבָרִים
DEVARIM

By Numbers:
105 VERSES
1,548 WORDS
5,972 LETTERS

Headlines:
**BEGINNING OF
MOSHE'S FINAL
SPEECHES**

DEVARIM:
Artscroll p.938
Hertz p.735
Koren Sacks p.1135
Soncino p.989

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1195
Hertz p.750
Koren Sacks p.1595
Soncino p.1004

SIDRA SUMMARY

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 1:1-10

In the 40th year after leaving Egypt, towards the end of his life, Moshe (Moses) gathers the nation together and rebukes them, alluding to the many places where they made mistakes since leaving Egypt (Rashi). Moshe recalls the time spent at Mount Sinai after receiving the Torah, and that the nation could have gone from Sinai straight into the Land of Cana'an. At that stage, Moshe realised that he needed assistance to lead such a big nation.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 1:11-21

Moshe therefore told the people to appoint judges over sub-groups of 1000, 100, 50 and 10 men. He told those judges to be fair and brave in their work, and that any dispute too difficult to resolve should be brought to Moshe himself.

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 1:22-38

Moshe recalls the sin of the spies. The people had approached Moshe 38 years earlier, wanting to send a mission to inspect the Land. Moshe agreed and selected 12 leading men, one from each tribe. Upon their return, Yehoshua and Calev spoke positively, but the other spies persuaded the people that going into the Land was impossible, due to the giants and the strongly fortified cities. Moshe's attempts to reassure the people of God's protection when they would enter the Land were rejected. God then decreed that the generation who had accepted the negative report of the ten spies would die in the wilderness and not enter the Land.

Point to Consider: *Why did Moshe agree to sending spies, if he would later rebuke them for the mission? (see Rashi to 1:23)*

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 1:39-2:1

Those aged under 20 at the time of the sin of the spies would be allowed to enter the Land. Despite Moshe's discouragement, some of the people then attempted to enter the Land, despite Moshe's warning that God would not now allow them to

enter. They refused to listen and were brutally crushed by the Emorites. The nation wept and then turned back towards the Sea of Reeds.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 2:2-30

Moshe then recalls that 38 years later, the Israelites turned northwards and passed by the descendants of Esav in Seir, making sure not to start a war with them, nor to take any provisions without payment. The nation then headed towards the Moabite desert. God instructed Moshe not to start a conflict with Moab. Conversely, on their march towards the Land, God instructed them to pass through the land of Sichon, the king of Cheshbon, albeit this might lead to a war.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 2:31-3:14

Sichon came out to wage war. The Israelites destroyed him and his nation, taking his entire land, with the exception of Ammon. The nation then successfully defeated the other Emorite king, the mighty Og, king of Bashan, conquering his territory.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 3:15-3:22

Moshe apportioned the land taken from Sichon and Og to the tribes of Gad and Reuven and some of the tribe of Menashe (as detailed in parashat Matot – see Bemidbar 32). However, the men of these tribes were still required to enter the Land of Cana'an to fight with the rest of the nation. Moshe told his successor Yehoshua that just as God had helped them to defeat Sichon and Og, so too He would help them in their conquest of the Land.

HAFTARAH CHAZON (YESHAYA 1:1-27)

This haftarah, taken from the beginning of Yeshaya (Isaiah), is the third of the three 'haftarat of tribulation' and is always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av. The prophet relates God's rebuke of the nation for rebelling against Him and bringing animal offerings without actually addressing their sinful ways. The verses of rebuke are traditionally read to the tune of *Megillat Eicha* (Lamentations), which is recited on Tisha B'Av. Yet the haftarah ends with the hopeful message that Zion "will be redeemed with justice".



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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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LOST IN TRANSLATION: IT WASN'T 'GOD' WHO CREATED THE WORLD!

BY: **RABBANIT HANNAH ABRAMS**

Director of The Chief Rabbi's Shalem Fellowship

An eager student once called the great Torah scholar and teacher, Nechama Leibowitz. She was excited to tell her how much she loved learning her books every week on the *parasha*. After hearing the student's thick American accent, Nechama Leibowitz asked her if she read them in the original Hebrew, or in English translation. The student admitted that she read them in English, whereupon Nechama Leibowitz cried, "Don't you understand?! It was not 'God' who created the world – it was '*Elokim*'!"

Rabbi Sacks zt"l talks about how the inherent mistranslations from one language to another are usually due to differences in worldviews and philosophy. For example, Greek culture understood the seeking of knowledge in visual terms, whereas the Torah speaks in terms of listening and hearing – *Shema Yisrael*, Listen Israel. The idea of knowledge was entirely different, leading to many potential misunderstandings. Therefore, it is still regarded as a great tragedy that the Torah was first translated into Greek in the days of Ptolemy II by the 70 elders (the Septuagint). This day is regarded by the Talmud as equivalent to the day that the Jews created the Golden Calf, the worship of which was the greatest possible betrayal of God and His covenant. We mourn this event, among others, on the fast day of *Asara b'Tevet*.

Yet all of this becomes difficult to understand when you read the

beginning of this week's *parasha* through the eyes of Rashi (1040-1105), who tells us that when it says that Moshe began to explain the Torah, it means that he translated it into 70 languages! What was the problem and tragedy of translating it into Greek, if Moshe had already translated it into the 70 languages of the world?!

Some commentaries try to address this problem by saying that Rashi did not really mean 70 languages, rather he meant 70 facets of Torah, 70 explanations of each verse of Torah. But the Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, 1902-1994) confronts this problem head-on and has a beautiful answer to teach us about both the positives and negatives involved in translation.

He asks, how can it be that the day the Torah was translated to Greek was like the day the Golden Calf was created? Translation is not an inherently bad thing! Moshe did it with the full permission of God!

Looking carefully at the Talmud's comparison, he notices that it compares the translation not to the worship of the Golden Calf, but to the making of the Golden Calf. The problem with making the Golden Calf was the **potential** for sin and tragedy. The worshipping came later; there

was always the option of repentance and change.

So too when it comes to translation. There is huge potential for misunderstanding and misuse of the Torah, but there is also huge potential for enhancing understanding and giving access to so many people who would never be able to benefit from the Torah's wisdom without a translation. Moshe's goal at the end of his life was to ensure that every one of the Jewish people understood the Torah. May we continue to spread the light of the Torah to all of the Jewish people in our time, and to those in the wider world who need these messages more than ever before.



A Polygot Bible from 1517, including Hebrew, Latin, Greek and Aramaic



TISHA B'AV: DAWN OF DEFIANCE

BY: **RABBI MOSHE CHAIM LISTER**

Barnet Synagogue

The First Crusade of 1095 devolved into widespread violence against Europe's Jewish communities. Speyer, Worms and Mainz, the vibrant core of early Ashkenazi Jewry were brutally attacked as Crusaders, unwilling to wait until reaching the Holy Land, sought to "avenge their saviour" on Europe's Jews. On 3 May 1096, Speyer became the first target when an ambush was planned for Jews attending synagogue on Shabbat morning. This event was to be the beginning of the Rhineland Pogroms, a series of massacres against these three communities, recalled on Tisha B'Av in the *Kinnah* (poetic lament) "*Mi Yiten Rosh Mayim*".

There is a detail from the attack on the community of Speyer that moves me when reading this *Kinnah*. It is reported that the Jewish community received advanced warning of the attack that Shabbat. Knowing this, they could have easily cited safety concerns and cancelled the service. However, they opted to go ahead with the Shabbat morning service but hold it earlier; by the time the mob arrived at the synagogue the community had already prayed and returned home. Every year I find myself wondering how they would have felt praying in a synagogue they knew may be destroyed in just a few hours. Who locked up after the service that morning? As the key turned in the lock, did they say

a silent goodbye? Did they realise that this could be the final act of the last *Shacharit* in Speyer? I find this powerful every year, but I feel it bears a vital message nearly a thousand years later for the Jews of the United Kingdom. Once again, we are under attack - stabbings, synagogue burnings and targeted violence have returned to Jewish streets. Even as we mourn past tragedies this Tisha B'Av we know there may be those plotting new ones against us.

How, then, do we respond? It is tempting, perhaps even instinctive, to withdraw - to dim the visibility of our Jewish identity, hoping that if we recede into the background, we will be left alone. But this was not the path of the Jews of Speyer. Even in the face of looming danger, hatred was not permitted to dictate their lives or extinguish Jewish practice. With care, responsibility and courage they found a way to ensure Judaism could continue to flourish. As we feel the pain of Jewish suffering once again this Tisha B'Av, we cannot be guaranteed that Jewish hatred will disappear in the year ahead. But what we can do, as those Jews in Speyer did nearly a thousand years ago, is refuse to simply go home, give up and disappear. That day in Speyer brought tragedy and loss. But that morning did not dawn on a community hiding behind closed doors, hoping to go unnoticed. It dawned on Jews who rose and

“ Let us draw strength from the Jews of Speyer. Let us respond as they did, not with retreat but with steadfast resolve, and meet the darkness of antisemitism with a new dawn of unwavering Jewish commitment, resilience and faith.

went to synagogue, aware of the danger they faced but determined to keep the flame of Judaism alive. Tragically, it is now our turn to shoulder this mission. As our enemies loom large once again, let us draw strength from the Jews of Speyer. Let us respond as they did, not with retreat but with steadfast resolve, and meet the darkness of antisemitism with a new dawn of unwavering Jewish commitment, resilience and faith.

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

DEVARIM: THE 'KINDNESS' OF THE LAND TOWARDS ITS NEIGHBOURS

The spiritual greatness of the Holy Land radiates even beyond its borders. Before giving his final instructions, Moshe commanded the people: "Turn and journey and come to the mountain of the Emori... and the Lebanon until the great river, the river Perat (Euphrates)" (*Devarim* 1:7). Rashi explains that the Euphrates is called 'the great river' because of its proximity to the Land of Israel. He cites a popular proverb: A king's servant is a king; attach

yourself to a person of stature and people will bow to you.

Moreover, the neighbouring countries sought to be connected to the Land, even if only in name. This helps to explain a later, seemingly ambiguous verse: "The Sidonians will call Hermon 'Siryon' and the Amorites will call it 'Senir'" (*Devarim* 3:9).

And in another place it says: "Until Mount Si'on, which is Hermon" (*Devarim* 4:48). So the mountain has four names! Why does the Torah use them all? To praise to the Land of Israel, which four kingdoms took pride in, all wanting to name it after themselves (Rashi).

“ The spiritual greatness of the Holy Land radiates even beyond its borders. ”

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

Does **CHILLUL HASHEM** mean:

- 1.** Praising God? | **2.** The profanation of God's Name? | **3.** The holiness of God?

Chillul Hashem is the transgression of profaning or desecrating God's name.

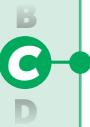
Rambam teaches that we all have a mitzvah of *Kiddush Hashem* – to sanctify God's Name, as it says: "And I shall be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel" (*Vayikra* 22:32). The verse continues with a warning: "And they shall not desecrate My holy Name."

Rambam defines *Chillul Hashem* as the deliberate transgression of any mitzvah,

without coercion, in a spirit of derision or to arouse divine anger. If committed publicly, in the presence of at least ten Jews, it is considered a *Chillul Hashem*.

Additionally, a person may cause a *Chillul Hashem* depending on their standing, if their behaviour is inconsistent with what others would expect of them. For example, someone known for their good deeds who acts in a way that appears wrong (even if it is technically permitted) may still cause a *Chillul Hashem*.

Ramchal in *Mesilat Yesharim* adds that we must be extremely careful with God's honour in all we do. Unlike other transgressions, there is no difference whether *Chillul Hashem* is committed knowingly or inadvertently, as the outcome is the same (*Pirkei Avot*). The *Orchot Tzadikim* explains that this is so serious because others learn from our behaviour. Conversely, when our conduct influences others to strengthen their observance, this is a *Kiddush Hashem*.





BIRKAT HAYAM HAGADOL – TRANSFORM YOUR HOLIDAY INTO A MITZVAH!

BY: **RABBI SHAUL KHALILI**

KLBD Rabbinical representative

For many of us, summer is synonymous with a visit to the seaside – whether along the coasts of the UK, elsewhere in Europe, or further abroad. There is something uniquely calming about walking along the shore, listening to the rhythm of the waves, or even taking a refreshing dip in the sea. It is a simple pleasure that many eagerly anticipate.

Did you know that you can perform a unique mitzvah while on holiday?

The *Mishnah* (*Berachot* 9:2) teaches that, upon seeing natural wonders such as the sea, one recites the blessing: “*Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-heinu Melech ha’olam, oseh ma’aseh bereishit*” - “Blessed is the One who performs the works of Creation.” Rabbi Joseph Karo (1488–1575) codifies this ruling in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 228:1) stating that this blessing should be recited upon visiting a new shore, or every 30 days if revisiting the same place. In practical terms, this means that every visit to the seafront can become a moment of spiritual

awareness and connection.

My wife and I were privileged to begin our rabbinical careers in the sunlit city of Torremolinos, on Spain’s Costa del Sol. Our work brought us into contact with many visitors, among them a considerable number of tourists from Britain.

Given our proximity to Gibraltar, we maintained a close connection with the Jewish community there. Members of the Gibraltar community would often tell us that the Rock of Gibraltar presents an especially distinctive setting for fulfilling the mitzvah of *Birkat Hayam*.

The abovementioned *Mishnah* continues: “*Rabbi Yehudah says: one who sees the Great Sea (Hayam Hagadol) recites: ‘Baruch... she’asah et hayam hagadol!’ - ‘Blessed... who made the Great Sea.’*”

But what exactly is meant by the “Great Sea”?

This question has been the subject of considerable debate. Rabbi Ovadia of Bertinoro (1445–1515), in his commentary on this *Mishnah*, identifies it as the Atlantic Ocean. In contrast, Rabbi Joseph Karo (1488–1575) understands it to refer to the Mediterranean Sea, termed “great” because of its closeness to the Land of Israel.

Herein lies the unique significance of Gibraltar. From the Rock, on a clear day, one can view the Strait of Gibraltar in its entirety, gaze across the African coastline, and observe the meeting



A view from the Rock of Gibraltar. The African coastline can be seen on a clear day.

point of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. It is, perhaps, one of the rare locations where one could – potentially – fulfil this blessing according to all interpretations.

However, as is often the case, matters are not entirely straightforward. Rabbi Baruch ben Isaac of Worms (1140–1211), in his *Sefer HaTerumah*, discusses the “Great Sea” in the context of the laws of Shabbat. There, he describes it as the sea surrounding the land of “Inglatira” (or *Angleterre* in French, i.e. England), seemingly referring to the Atlantic Ocean – perhaps even specifically to its northern reaches.

Given these differing views, most rabbinic authorities conclude that in practice, one should recite the more general blessing – “*oseh ma’aseh bereishit*” – upon seeing any sea.

Even so, the message remains powerful. A simple walk along the beach need not be just a moment of relaxation; it can also become an encounter with creation, an opportunity to pause, reflect and express gratitude. In this way, a holiday experience can be elevated into a meaningful mitzvah.



The strait of Gibraltar, where the Atlantic and the Mediterranean meet.

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES



BY: **TAMARA COLEMAN**

Tribe gap year student

Parashat Devarim is the beginning of a new *sefer* (book) of the Torah, and it sets the stage for everything that follows. Much of *Sefer Devarim* is a retelling of earlier events that the Jewish people experienced – but this time, they are told from Moshe's (Moses) perspective rather than directly from God.

The perspective Moshe gives on the past 38 years in the

desert – when the Jewish people were journeying from slavery to freedom, both physically and spiritually – is very different from the more straightforward way these events were originally presented. Moshe speaks more personally and openly. He is not afraid to challenge or even criticise the people, pushing them to reflect on their actions and take responsibility for their choices.

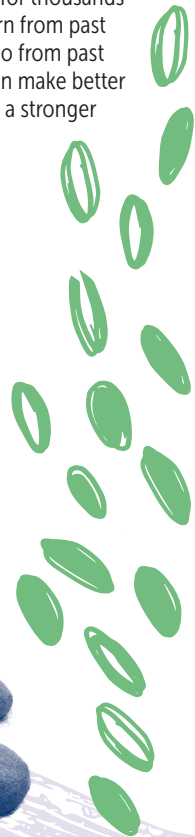
A key part of the *parasha* is the story of the spies who were sent to explore the Land of Israel. When they returned, most of them gave a negative report, and the people chose to believe them instead of the minority who spoke

positively. This led to fear, lack of trust, and ultimately serious consequences. Moshe retells this story to remind the new generation of what went wrong and to encourage them not to repeat the same mistakes.

As modern Jews, we can learn an important lesson from this. We all face challenges, and it's not always easy to have faith in God. But our history shows us that faith and trust have helped our people survive and grow for thousands of years. If we learn from past mistakes - and also from past successes - we can make better choices and build a stronger future.

Finish these sentences:

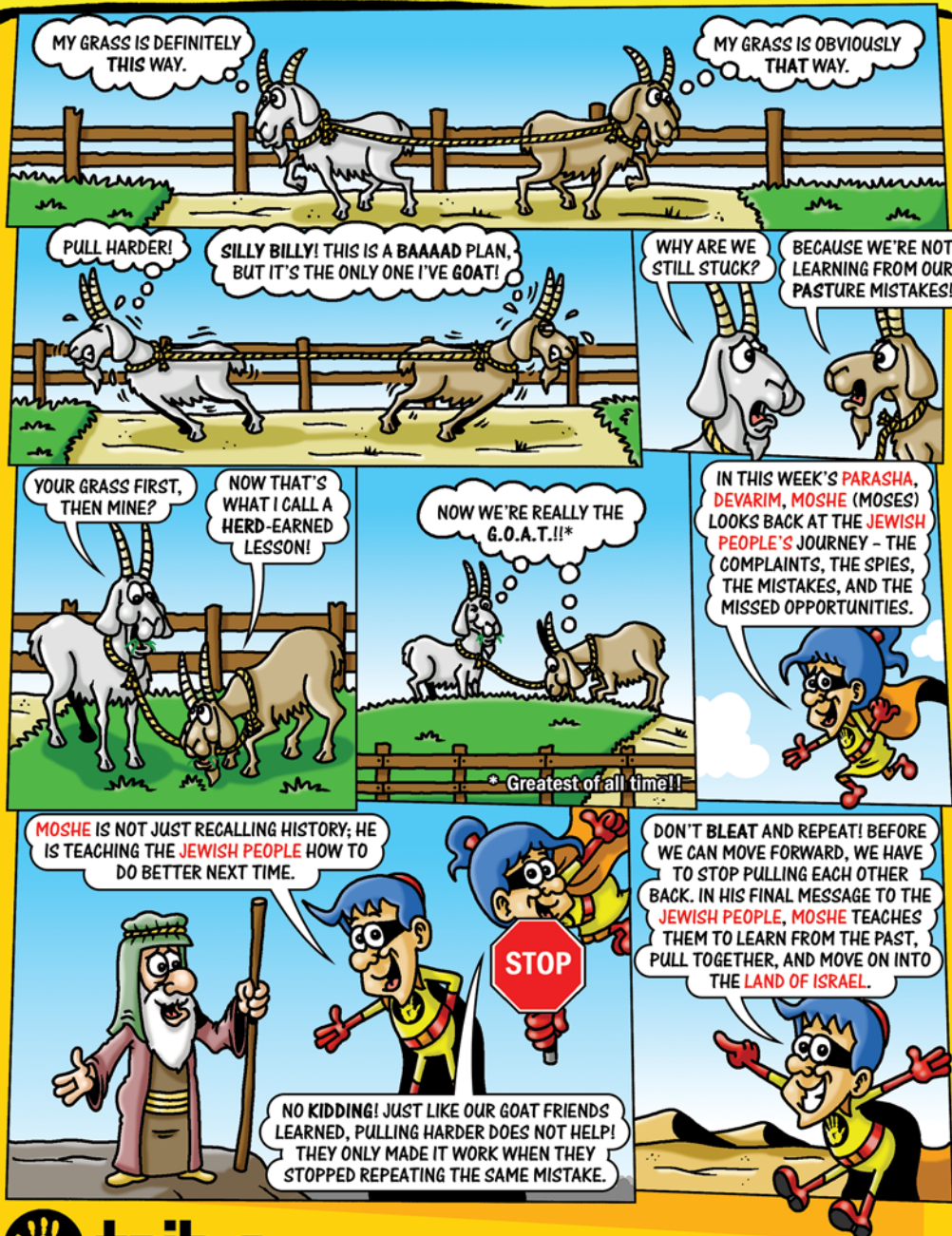
- One thing I can learn from Moshe in this *parasha* is...
- When everyone around me thinks one way, I can...
- One lesson from the story of the spies is...
- If I had been there, I think I would have...
- One message I would give to my friends about this *parasha* is...
- Being a leader means...
- Courage is when...
- The Jewish people could have acted differently by...
- A positive way to look at a difficult situation is...





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

DEVARIM: NO KIDDING!



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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.