

DAF HASHAVUA

פִּי תְּבוּאָה | KI TAVO

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 8.43pm
Birmingham: 8.52pm
Bournemouth: 8.52pm
Cardiff: 8.59pm
Dublin: 9.13pm
Edinburgh: 9.11pm
Glasgow: 9.15pm
Hull: 8.56pm
Leeds: 8.55pm
Liverpool: 9.04pm
Manchester: 8.58pm
Nottingham: 8.55pm
Sheffield: 8.58pm
Southend: 8.39pm
Southport: 9.06pm
Jerusalem: 7.45pm

כִּי־תָבֹא
KI TAVO

7th Sidra in:
דְּבָרִים
DEVARIM

By Numbers:
122 VERSES
1,747 WORDS
6,811 LETTERS

Headlines:
OBLIGATION TO
TAKE FIRST FRUITS
TO THE TEMPLE;
BLESSINGS &
CURSES

KI TAVO:
Artscroll p.1068
Hertz p.859
Koren Sacks p.1323
Soncino p.1117

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1201
Hertz p.874
Koren Sacks p.1615
Soncino p.1134

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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United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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HOW THE MITZVAH OF VIDUI MA'ASER PROVIDES THE MODEL FOR TZEDAKAH

BY: **RABBI JASON KLEIMAN**

Pinner United Synagogue

Ki Tavo opens with the Jewish farmer's obligation to bring *Bikkurim*, annual gifts of the first ripened produce from the Seven Species, fruits and grain (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates) for which the land of Israel is particularly praised.

The Torah describes how these "First Fruits" were given to the *Kohen*, accompanied by a declaration of history and thanks, charting the incredible Jewish journey from the degradation of Egyptian slavery to the joy of now being in Israel, the land of milk and honey, and the bringing of its fruits before God.

The sidra then moves on to provide the words of another declaration, *Vidui Ma'aser*, this time detailing the process of tithing over a three-year cycle that provided for those sections of society who were the landless in Israel, including the Levites and the poor.

The culmination of this tithing cycle required the giver to make the following set of formal



statements confirming that procedures had been undertaken properly (See *Devarim* 26:14):

"I have not partaken of the tithe while in mourning", a declaration of how the giver's tithing obligations had been carried out only in a context of joy rather than sorrow.

"I have not consumed any of the tithe whilst in a state of ritual impurity", an assurance that the contributions were in no way undesirable cast offs that had become contaminated but were of the best quality.

"I did not give any of it for the dead", a statement about the importance of giving to causes that sustain life, and a lesson about not waiting until after death to bequeath funds to charity.

"I have obeyed the voice of Hashem my God" — "by bringing the second tithe to the Chosen Abode".

"I have accomplished all that You have commanded me" (*ibid.*) — "by rejoicing and enabling others to rejoice" (*Sifrei Devarim* 303).

This series of statements concludes with a prayer asking God to look down from His heavenly abode and bless His people and His land (See verse 15). The Hebrew word used here for "look down" is *hashkifa*, which is usually followed by something bad, such as a punishment (*Shemot Rabbah* 41:1). This is the

“Tzedakah is not only a matter concerning the causes we support and the amounts we contribute. It is also about our attitudes toward giving, the way that we give and respect for the dignity of those in need.

one exception, in the context of giving tithes with joy. On this occasion the word *hashkifa* denotes blessing and gladness, prompting the *Midrash* to declare: "How great is the power of gifts to the poor that it transforms the Divine attribute of anger into mercy" (*ibid.*). Based on this *Midrash*, the *Unetane Tokef* prayer of the High Holy Days declares that not only prayer and repentance, but also *tzedakah*, charity, avert the stern decree.

These declarations reflect the values of a generous society in which none of the beneficiaries were forced to seek out the wealthy to collect their gifts. The portion of tithes reminds us that *tzedakah* is not only a matter concerning the causes we support and the amounts we contribute. It is also about our attitudes toward giving, the way that we give and respect for the dignity of those in need.



ELUL REFLECTIONS

PART FOUR

BY: **REBBETZEN VICKI BELOVSKI**

Formerly Rebbetzen at Golders Green United Synagogue

Over the last three weeks, we have talked about repairing our relationship with God, through recognising who we are and where our place in the Jewish people is, and through striving to become closer to Him. One way in which we can do that, particularly at this time of year, is through *teshuvah* – repentance.

Elul is very much a time for introspection and repentance, reaching a peak on Yom Kippur, but it is sometimes hard to know what to do or how to do it. One of the more enigmatic early Chassidic masters (and one of my favourites!), Reb Zushe of Anipoli (1718-1800), created an acronym which he felt showed the path towards understanding *teshuvah*. He said that each of the five letters in the Hebrew word *teshuvah* (תשובה) stands for a different verse, representing a different part of *teshuvah*:

Tav stands for *Tamim tiheyeh im Hashem Elokecha* – Trust the Lord, your God, with simple faith (*Devarim* 18:13).

Shin is *Shiviti Hashem l'negdi tamid* – I have placed God before me at all times (*Tehillim*/Psalms 16:8).

Vav represents *V'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha* – Love your neighbour as yourself (*Vayikra* 19:8).

Beit stands for *B'chol d'racheicha da'eihu* – Know Him in all your ways (*Mishlei*/Proverbs 3:6).

And finally, **Heh** is for (*v'*) *Hatznea lechet im Elokecha* – Walk humbly with your God (*Micha* 6:8).

On a simple level, these are all quite familiar verses and concepts. They represent a mixture of horizontal/person-to-person relationships and vertical/person-to-God relationships. Walking humbly with God could even be considered to be a combination of both – when our sense of self-worth is not defined by outward trappings but by a secure understanding of who we are, then we can walk with God humbly, confident that He is also walking with us.

The mystics suggest that each verse represents another level towards unlocking the soul, so as to cast off whatever is holding us back, for example, past sins, and growing towards complete union with the divine.

The acronym can also be understood as describing different paths towards *teshuvah*. In the same way that every person is different and carries out a different job, whether studying, earning a living, caring for their family or a combination of several roles, each person has a preferred spiritual path. Some people might find it easy to always acknowledge the presence of God in their lives, but struggle with loving their neighbour. Others might thrive on interpersonal

“ May this Elul prove to be an opportunity to grow closer to God, improve our relationships with other people and enhance our self-knowledge.

relationships, emulating God in the kind and gentle way that they deal with others, while still tussling with the idea that He is really there and involved in our lives.

By exploring these paths, both those that come naturally and those that do not, we can try to improve our relationships with other people and with God and work towards meaningful *teshuvah*.

May this Elul prove to be an opportunity to grow closer to God, improve our relationships with other people and enhance our self-knowledge, so that when Rosh Hashanah arrives we are fully prepared to accept God as King and begin a healthy and fulfilling New Year.



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'.

KI TAVO: PRAYERS FOR THE LAND

The Torah prescribes three key prayers, two of them in this *parasha*, all of which refer extensively to the Land of Israel: "You shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord your God, for the good Land..." (*Devarim* 8:10). Accordingly, the Sages, in establishing Grace after Meals, instituted special blessings for the Land and for Jerusalem (*Berachot* 44b). The obligation to thank God for "the good Land" applies after every meal, wherever one may be (Ramban).

Similarly, the bringing of

the first fruits to Jerusalem is accompanied by an expression of gratitude: "I declare today... that I have come to the Land..." and "He brought us to this place and gave us this Land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (*Devarim* 26:3,9).

So too, the confession over tithes concludes with a prayer: "Look down from Your holy dwelling, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the Land that You have given us" (*ibid.* 26:15).

Indeed, expressing

gratitude for the Land was the very first mitzvah incumbent upon the Jewish people upon reaching their destination – the building of an altar to give thanks to God for bringing them to the Land (Ibn Ezra).

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 **ISSUR** mean:

1. An ancient coin? | 2. A prohibition? | 3. A permit?

Issur means "a prohibition" and refers to something that is forbidden according to Jewish law. The root of the word means "to bind" or "restrict" and reflects the fact that it is a limiting or restrictive ruling. When something is prohibited, it is called *assur*, whereas the opposite is known as *mutar* – permitted. A permissive ruling is known as a *heter*.

There is a distinction between an *Issur d'Oreita*, a Torah prohibition, which is an action or item that is

forbidden according to Torah law, and an *Issur d'Rabbanan*, a rabbinic prohibition instituted for safeguarding or broader observance. Therefore, something might be permitted according to the Torah but still *assur* – rabbinically forbidden. Whilst in general stricter observance is required to avoid transgressing Torah law, our Sages sometimes imposed more severe penalties to deter the contravention of a rabbinic ruling.

Examples of *Issurei d'Oreita* are eating non-kosher food or lighting a fire on Shabbat and an example of an *Issur d'Rabbanan* is *muktza*, objects that cannot be moved on Shabbat.

In certain circumstances, our Sages use the phrase *patur aval assur* – "exempt but forbidden." This means that, although a person is not allowed to do a particular action, if they did it, they would not be liable to a penalty.

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THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT KI TAVO

28-29 AUGUST | 16 ELUL

"TODAY"



BY: **YOSEF KANTER**

Tribe gap year student

In this week's *parasha*, Moshe (Moses) and the Levi'im say: "Pay attention and listen, O Israel! This day, you have become a nation to the Lord your God". (*Devarim* 27:9). What does it mean that on 'this day' they became a nation?

Rashi quoting the Talmud (*Berachot* 62b) explains that the verse comes to tell us that 'On each day it should appear to you as though it were "today" that you have entered the covenant with God'. Each day is a new opportunity to do mitzvot, and it

is as important as the first day we accepted the Torah.

However, a question raised by Rabbi YY Jacobson still stands. Why does it take until now for Moshe to describe the Jews as an *am*, a nation? Over 100 years before this, Pharaoh had already given the Jews the title of *Am Bnei Yisrael*, the nation of the Children of Israel. Furthermore, we are told in our very *parasha* (*Devarim* 26:5) that we became a nation in Egypt. Why then does Moshe tell us that it was on 'this day'?

Rabbi YY Jacobson explains that when *Bnei Yisrael* are defined as a nation by Pharaoh, it is the hatred that Pharaoh has towards the people that binds them together; it is pure antisemitism.

However, what binds us as a people, says Moshe, is not that Pharaoh hates you but that God loves you and chose you as His ambassadors. This is why Moshe says it is 'today' that we became a nation, and not when the Pharaoh of each generation makes us the target of their hatred.

It is the new opportunity to serve God that we get each day that defines us as a nation. It is only after the Jews had received the Torah and consolidated that knowledge during the years in the desert that they could understand what it means to be a nation. We should therefore strive 'today' to realise the true glue that binds us as a nation, and not be defined by the hatred of others.

Trivia for Ki Tavo

1. How many curses are there in this week's *parasha*?
2. Which two mountains were the blessings and curses given on?
3. What mitzvah are the people commanded to do when they get to Israel?





THE TRIBE SCRIBE

KI TAVO: GREEN TO BLUE!



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