

8 AUGUST 2026 | 25 AV 5786

VOLUME 39 | #49

# DAF HASHAVUA

## רֵאָה | RE'EH

### SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 9.31pm  
Birmingham: 9.42pm  
Bournemouth: 9.39pm  
Cardiff: 9.47pm  
Dublin: 10.04pm  
Edinburgh: 10.10pm  
Glasgow: 10.14pm  
Hull: 9.50pm  
Leeds: 9.48pm  
Liverpool: 9.57pm  
Manchester: 9.51pm  
Nottingham: 9.47pm  
Sheffield: 9.51pm  
Southend: 9.27pm  
Southport: 10.00pm  
Jerusalem: 8.09pm

**Shabbat Mevarechim**

**Rosh Chodesh Elul is on  
Thursday and Friday**

SIDRA  
BREAKDOWN

רֵאָה  
RE'EH

4th Sidra in:  
דְּבָרִים  
DEVARIM

By Numbers:  
126 VERSES  
1,932 WORDS  
7,442 LETTERS

Headlines:  
AVOIDING THINGS  
WHICH DISTANCE  
YOU FROM GOD

RE'EH:  
Artsroll p.998  
Hertz p.799  
Koren Sacks p.1223  
Soncino p.1055

HAFTARAH:  
Artsroll p.1199  
Hertz p.818  
Koren Sacks p.1607  
Soncino p.1076

SIDRA SUMMARY

**1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – DEVARIM 11:26-12:10**  
Moshe (Moses) tells the nation to “see” that they have the choice between “a blessing and a curse”, which will be determined by whether or not they hearken to God’s commandments. After entering the Land, the nation will come to Mount Gerizim and to Mount Eival, where various blessings and curses (respectively) will be pronounced in the presence of the entire nation (see *Devarim* 21:11-26). Moshe instructs the Israelites to destroy the idols and altars that they will find in the Land.

**2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 12:11-28**  
Moshe relates the prohibition to erect and offer sacrifices on private altars. However, one may slaughter and eat kosher (unconsecrated) meat anywhere that one desires, though it is prohibited to consume the blood. Keeping to the general directives that Moshe has outlined will guarantee prosperity for generations to come.

**3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 12:29-13:19**  
When the Israelites come into the Land, they must resist following the idolatrous practices of the Cana’anites. One is not allowed to add to nor subtract from any mitzvah, such as taking five (instead of four) species on Succot (Rashi). A false prophet who tries to turn the nation away from God should be rejected and is subject to capital punishment. The same applies to someone who tries secretly to entice others to worship idols. Moshe details the severe punishment for a city whose inhabitants turn to idolatry.

**4TH ALIYA (REVI) – 14:1-21**  
There is a prohibition against cutting one’s skin or making a bald patch on one’s head as a sign of mourning over a lost relative, which was an ancient Emorite custom (Rashi). Some of the laws of kashrut are listed. Only an animal with completely split hooves and which chews the cud is kosher. Therefore, animals like the camel and pig, which

have only one of these characteristics, are forbidden. Fish are only kosher if they have both fins and scales. The Torah lists forbidden birds by name. It is prohibited to mix meat and milk.

**5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 14:22-29**  
There is a mitzvah to tithe produce grown in the Land of Israel, including *ma’aser sheni*, the ‘second tithe’, which is taken to Jerusalem to eat. However, one who is unable to carry the produce can redeem its value, add an extra fifth, then take the money to Jerusalem to purchase and consume food there.

**6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 15:1-18**  
Every seventh year is *shemita* (the sabbatical year), whose agricultural laws were detailed in *parashat Behar* (*Vayikra* 25:1-24). Existing loans are cancelled, yet the Torah warns against withholding a loan from a pauper before the *shemita* year out of fear that it will not be paid back in time. A Jewish servant works for six years, after which he can go free. When he leaves, his master must give him significant farewell gifts.

**7TH ALIYA (SHEVI) – 15:19-16:17**  
One is not allowed to work a first born male animal from the flock or herd; rather it must be brought as an offering and its meat then consumed by its owner. The nation is to celebrate Pesach in the ‘spring month’. Some laws of the festival and the special Pesach offering are listed. Shavuot comes after the seven-week counting of the Omer. Succot is celebrated at the time of year when crops are gathered in from the threshing floors and vineyards. On each of these three festivals, one has to bring special festive offerings to the Temple.  
**Point to Consider:** Which feature of the Jewish calendar ensures that Pesach will always be in the spring? (16:1)

**HAFTARAH (ISAIAH 54:11-55:5)**  
Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the third of the seven ‘haftarat of consolation’ read after Tisha B’Av. Yeshaya prophesies about a messianic future in which “all of God’s children will be His students” and the Jews will be protected from any harm.



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# SEEING AND GIVING: TZEDAKAH IN PARASHAT RE'EH

BY: **DANIELLA NEIFELD**

Community Participation Manager, United Synagogue

*Parashat Re'eh* places *tzedakah*, charity, at the heart of Jewish life. "You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor, to your needy in your land" (*Devarim* 15:11). The Torah's language is striking. It does not simply command giving. It calls on us to open ourselves, both physically and emotionally.

This sense of urgency is deepened by a powerful teaching in the Talmud. Rabbi Yehuda teaches that "great is charity, for it brings the Redemption (*Geula*) closer," linking *tzedakah* directly to *Geula*. He then describes a chain of strength in the world: mountains overcome by iron, iron by fire, fire by water, and so on, until death appears to be the ultimate force. Yet even death, he concludes, is not absolute: "charity saves a person from death."

The message is both inspiring and demanding. *Tzedakah* is not simply a social good or a moral virtue. It is one of the most powerful forces in existence. It can transform reality, tip the balance between life and death, and bring redemption closer.

But what enables a person to give in this way?

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993), in his essay *Community*, offers a profound insight. Genuine giving begins long before the act itself. It begins with recognition. To give, one must first see the other as part of one's

world, part of one's community.

This reflects the parasha's opening word: *Re'eh*, "see". Before we are told to give, we are told to notice, to recognise the person before us not as a stranger, but as "your brother".

In practice, this can be the hardest step. It is easier to give when the need is visible or when we are asked. Harder is the sensitivity to notice quieter needs: the person who cannot afford community life, the individual on the margins, or the family struggling unseen.

Perhaps this is why the Torah warns: "do not harden your heart" and "do not close your hand". A closed hand often begins with a closed heart, and a closed heart with a failure to see.

If *tzedakah*, as the Talmud teaches, can overcome even death, then its power lies in something deeply human: recognising another person as belonging to us. When we truly see each other, giving becomes a natural expression of connection.

*Tzedakah* is therefore not only about relieving need. It is about building community and

**“ *Tzedakah* is not simply a social good or a moral virtue. It is one of the most powerful forces in existence.**

strengthening responsibility. Through that shared sense of belonging, we move one step closer to redemption.

In practical terms, this challenges us to ask who we may be overlooking and how we might widen our circle of concern. It invites small but meaningful steps: checking in on someone quietly, supporting communal funds, or creating spaces where people feel seen. Each act of *tzedakah*, however modest, affirms that no one stands outside our shared story. And in recognising one another, we help bring about a more compassionate and connected world. May our ability to see others clearly lead us to give generously and help bring redemption.



# ELUL REFLECTIONS

## PART ONE

BY: **REBBETZEN VICKI BELOVSKI**

Formerly Rebbetzen at Golders Green United Synagogue

Whenever *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, the start of the month prior to Rosh Hashanah, falls in the secular calendar, even if it is the middle of the summer holidays like this year, it brings a special feel with it. Someone once said to me, "I can smell Elul in the air," and I know what they mean. Whether it is thoughts of honey cake and Yomtov get-togethers, the spine-chilling sound of the shofar presaging the awe we feel on Rosh Hashanah, or getting up early to recite *selichot* (prayers of repentance), as we begin Elul, there is a tangible sense of anticipation for the *Yamim Noraim* (High Holy Days).

We can trace this back to the Torah, soon after the Exodus from Egypt, where we find that the 40-day period of the month of Elul plus the first ten days of Tishrei, taking us through Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Repentance and up to Yom Kippur, are seen as a significant single unit. Following the sin of the Golden Calf, when Moshe smashed the first set of tablets containing the Ten Commandments, he ascended Mount Sinai for a second time, to plead for forgiveness for the Jewish people. God agreed and told Moshe to carve two new tablets of stone, upon which He would engrave the Commandments. Moshe went up the mountain for the third time

on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, returning 40 days later, on Yom Kippur, with the second set of Ten Commandments. So we can see that this period, from a very early stage of development of the Jewish people, was perceived as a time for renewing our close relationship with God.

This relationship is frequently epitomised during Elul with the first part of a verse from *Shir Hashirim* (Song of Songs, 6:3): "*Ani l'dodi, v'dodi li...* I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine..." The first letters of these words in the original Hebrew spell out Elul (אֱלּוּל), hence the connection and the regular appearance on wedding invitations at this time of year. Although *Shir Hashirim* is written as a love poem between two people, many commentators interpret it as a parable for the relationship between God and the Jewish people.

But there is another verse, earlier in *Shir Hashirim*, which is the reflection of this: "*Dodi li, v'ani lo...* My Beloved is mine and I am His" (2:16), which perhaps encapsulates the Elul relationship better, although without the cute acronym. We are told that during the month of Elul, God, as it were, makes the effort to reach out to us, to make Himself more easily accessible, in order to give us the opportunity to reconnect.

**“... as we begin Elul, there is a tangible sense of anticipation for the Yamim Noraim (High Holy Days).”**

This is often expressed as “The King is in the field”, a reference to a parable originally told by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1813), the founder of Chabad, who related the story of a king who normally resides in a palace, inaccessible to the common people, behind layers of servants, bureaucrats and court etiquette. However, sometimes the king goes out to the fields, and then he welcomes everyone equally, however humble or awkward. Rabbi Schneur Zalman explains that during Elul, God is “in the field”, eagerly awaiting our approach. “*Dodi li, v'ani lo...*”

To be continued.

## 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'.*

# RE'EH: CHARITY AND THE LAND

The principle of *tzedakah* (charity) appears twice in this *parasha*, both times linking the obligation to care for the poor to the Land of Israel: "If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers in any of your gates in the Land that Hashem, your God, is giving you..." (*Devarim* 15:7), and again, "You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to the poor and needy in your Land" (v.11).

From these verses, our Sages derive a clear order of priority

in giving: one's relatives come before others and the poor of one's own city take precedence over those of another (*Sifri*; Rashi to 15:7). With regard to the Land, they further teach that "the poor of your Land take precedence over the poor elsewhere" (*Sifri*; Ibn Ezra to v.11).

This principle is also codified in Jewish law in the *Shulchan Aruch* (Rema, *Yoreh Deah* 251:3).

“ Our Sages derive a clear order of priority in giving: one's relatives come before others and the poor of one's own city take precedence over those of another.

– *Sifri*; Rashi to 15:7

## 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 **FRUM** mean:

1. Place of origin? | 2. Pious? | 3. Lining of stomach?

The term originates from the Yiddish, meaning "pious" or "devout". In its purist sense, it refers not merely to someone who observes *halacha* and is punctilious in their religious practice, but to a person of integrity and exemplary moral character. This reminds us that Judaism has never measured religiosity solely based on external observance. A person can be meticulous in ritual while falling short in their treatment of others. Ramban (1194-1270) coined the phrase "a degenerate

with the Torah's permission" to warn against this. The ideal of being *frum* encompasses both our relationship with God and our relationships with fellow human beings. Therefore, being *frum* describes someone whose Torah values shape their complete character.

The opposite of *frum* is *frei*, which literally means "free", and refers to someone whose lifestyle appears to be totally devoid of any religious observance.

In contemporary vocabulary,

*frum* is often employed as shorthand to describe those who live a strictly orthodox life, possibly eschewing certain aspects of engagement in the modern world, to protect themselves in remaining faithful to Judaism. They are focused on devoting time to learning Torah and keeping mitzvot to the highest standards.

Becoming *frummer* describes a person's efforts to grow in their level of Jewish knowledge and observance. Viewed in this way, it can be a communal aspiration.

E  
F  
G

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# THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT RE'EH

7-8 AUGUST | 25 AV

## MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE



BY: **YECHIEL  
EPSTEIN**

Tribe gap year  
student

All day, every day, we are making choices. From deciding whether to get out of bed when the alarm rings, to what we wear, how we speak to others, and how we spend our time, our lives are made up of countless decisions. While this ability to choose is one of God's greatest gifts, it can also leave us feeling mentally exhausted. Psychologists call this *decision fatigue* — the feeling of being drained after making decision after decision throughout the day.

*Parashat Re'eh* opens with a powerful reminder that can help us navigate this challenge:

**"See, I place before you today a blessing and a curse."**

At first glance, this seems like a simple statement about reward and punishment. But perhaps there is a deeper message. God presents us with the reality that life is full of choices, yet He also makes clear which path leads to blessing. The Torah does not leave us guessing what is right and what is wrong. We still possess free choice, but we are also given clear guidance on how to use it.

So much of our mental energy is spent weighing options, worrying whether we are making the right decision. While we still face many everyday choices, the

Torah reminds us that our most important decisions have already been mapped out for us. When we build our lives around Torah values, many decisions become less about "What do I feel like doing?" and more about "What does God want from me?"

Decision fatigue comes from constantly having to invent our own path. The Torah offers us something different — a direction that has already been charted. Our task is not to create a new moral compass each day, but to follow the one God has already given us. Every day we are presented with choices. The question is not whether we will choose, but whether we will recognise that God has already shown us where blessing is found.

## 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.

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

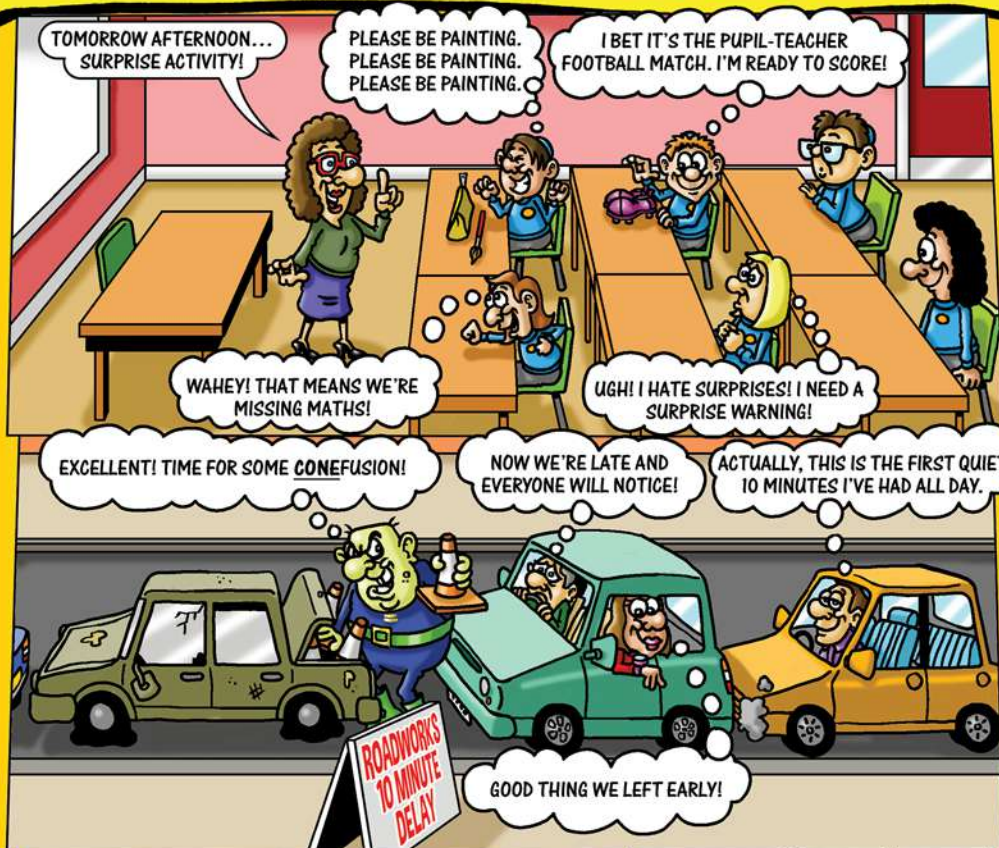
TODAY  
DEVARIM  
CORRECT  
CHOICE  
CURSE  
DECISION  
COMMANDMENT  
BLESSING  
RE'EH  
FATIGUE





# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

RE'EH: SURPRISE, SURPRISE!



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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.