

רֵאָה RE'EH



In loving memory of Harav Yitzhak Yoel ben Shlomo Halevi

Volume 32 | #47

15 August 2020
25 Av 5780

Shabbat ends:

London 9.16pm
Sheffield 9.33pm
Glasgow 9.53pm
Edinburgh 9.51pm
Birmingham 9.26pm
Jerusalem 8.01pm

Shabbat

Mevarechim

**Rosh Chodesh Ellul
is next Thursday
and Friday**

Please look regularly at the social media and websites of the US, Tribe and your community for ongoing updates relating to Coronavirus as well as educational programming and community support.

You do not need to sign into Facebook to access the US Facebook page. The US Coronavirus Helpline is on 020 8343 5696.

May God bless us and the whole world.

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Daf Hashnavua

"You shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor and to your destitute"
(Devarim 15:11)



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ראה

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4th Sidra in:

דברים

Devarim

By Numbers:

126 verses

1,932 words

7,442 letters

Headlines:

**Avoiding things
which distance
you from God**



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

Produced by US Living & Learning
together with the Rabbinical Council of
the United Synagogue

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Re'eh

by Rabbi Yossi Schwei, Luton United Synagogue



A tale is told about two people stranded on a desert island with one cigarette. One of them gives it to the other, exclaiming, "My life comes first!"

This witticism is based on the ruling that if two people are in a desert with one bottle of water, only enough to save one, the owner of the water should keep it for himself as "Your own life comes first". This is based on the verse (Vayikra 25:36) "Your brother shall live with you." The Talmud (Bava Metzia 62a) explains that you must make sure your brother lives, but only with you, denoting that your life comes first.

Parshat Re'eh dwells on the importance of tzedakah (charity). People may say "I don't have enough money to make ends meet; how can I give tzedakah?" It is important to note that your life comes first only in a scenario where you wouldn't survive if you shared; personal luxuries do not come before someone else's necessities. Rabbi Meir Shapiro (1887-1933, Poland), the founder of the Daf Yomi study programme, used to fundraise for the Chachmei Lublin yeshiva. It is told that on one occasion, a person who was usually very generous stated that his financial situation would not allow him to

In loving memory of Chaya Rachel bat Moshe Ben-tzion

Sidra Summary

1st Aliya (Kohen) – Devarim 11:26-12:10

Moshe 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.

However, a person who does not give up luxuries at all so that only charitable causes lose out, is worthy of “separation.”

donate that particular time.

“If so,” replied Rabbi Meir, “I need to separate myself from you!”

The person asked, “What is the connection between separation and charity?”

Rabbi Meir clarified this statement, based on his interpretation on the Mishna (Gittin 9:10).

There are three different attitudes people may have during challenging times. The particularly righteous person will cut back on personal luxuries and maintain his contributions. Another person, perhaps less righteous, will spend less on his personal needs and give less to charity. However, a person who does not give up luxuries at all so that only charitable causes lose out, is worthy of “separation”.

This idea is also hinted at in the Torah (Bereishit, 18:19) “And they will keep God’s way, doing charity and justice” The connection between charity and justice is, that before you give charity you should



make a personal judgement and ask yourself, “am I cutting back sufficiently on extravagances in order to give charity adequately?”

I would like to share with you a story I witnessed as a child, which takes this to a further level.

One day during Mincha prayers, I saw something unusual. There is a Chassidic custom to wear a gartel (belt) for davening. My father, of blessed memory, was wearing his tie around his waist, instead of his gartel!

At first I thought that he had left his gartel at home. However, when someone returned the gartel to him, I realised that he had lent it to somebody else. I asked my father, “Why didn’t you lend him your tie and use your gartel yourself?”

He explained, “Helping another is a Biblical commandment. Wearing a gartel is a custom. Shouldn’t I be more particular with helping another...?”

When we give tzedakah, we attract God’s tzedakah, so to speak, for a good and sweet New Year. May we merit the ultimate redemption with Mashiach, as the Talmud says (Bava Batra 10a) “Great is charity, for it hastens the Redemption.”

3rd Aliya (Shlishi) – 12:29-13:19

When the Israelites come into the Land, they must resist following the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites. 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'i) – 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 the 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),

1066 and some of that

by Simon Goulden,
Education Consultant to the United Synagogue



The consensus amongst historians is that there is no evidence that there were any Jews living in London, or indeed,

England, during what has been called the Dark Ages. We do think that the Jewish community in London may have arrived together with William the Conqueror in 1066, as Jews were often literate, financially numerate and had connections with communities on mainland Europe.

Jews certainly came to London in 1096 as refugees from Rouen after a massacre occurred there at the start of the First Crusade. The Jews in London lived in what we would today designate a ghetto. This was in 'Old Jewry', an area which still exists today in the City of London. Interestingly, those Jews were some of the first people since Roman times to live in stone houses. Sadly, the stone houses were a necessity rather than a luxury, since wooden houses were not safe enough against the ever-present chance of an anti-Semitic riot. In 1189/90, for example, a wave of persecution resulted in the deaths

of about 30 Jews. This persecution may have occurred when a group of loyal Jews, having been forbidden (perhaps for their own safety) to attend King Richard I's coronation in Westminster Abbey, are alleged to have stood outside and offered the traditional brachah on seeing a monarch (p. 782 in the green siddur).

To the mainly illiterate and Old English-speaking mob surrounding them, this may have sounded like a magic spell and the rest, as they say, is history. According to some accounts, Richard did try to save the Jews but to little avail.

In further riots in 1264, the London mob killed about 500 Jews. As the

... in mediaeval London there was a building dedicated to housing converted Jews, the Domus Conversorum...

population of London may have been no more than about 20,000 at this time, the significance can easily be imagined as, in today's terms, it would have been, perhaps, the equivalent to 15,000 members of the current London Jewish community being murdered. Less than thirty years later, in 1290, all Jews were expelled from England by Edward I, the edict being signed on Tisha B'Av; surely no coincidence. Yet, just a generation later, there is evidence that Jews were trying to return! We even know that an expert Jewish doctor in France was sought to treat Dick Whittington's wife (yes, he really did exist).

Furthermore, in mediaeval London there was a building dedicated to housing converted Jews, the Domus Conversorum, so there must have been Jews living in London to convert. By Elizabethan times in particular, there may have been a small group of 'secret Jews' or converted Jews living in London, as well as other port towns in England, such as Bristol. Some historians suggest that Italian Jews might have been the musicians who brought the 'new-fangled' violin to Tudor courts. Certainly, Queen Elizabeth's personal physician, Rodrigo Lopez, was a 'secret Jew' and there is evidence that King Henry VIII used an imported Jewish lawyer to advise on his divorce settlements.

Despite the success of some individuals, our early history in England was not a happy one.

In memory of Yisrael Shmuel ben Yirmaya Yehoshuah

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'i) – 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

VJ DAY Reflections

by Rabbi (Major) Reuben Livingstone CF LLM, Senior Jewish Chaplain to HM Armed Forces and Chaplain to AJEX



There was much joy and celebration around the world on August 15th 1945 when President Harry S. Truman

declared the day as Victory in Japan (VJ) Day, at a White House press conference. He announced that the Japanese Government had agreed to unconditional surrender (although they would not sign the final document until the 2nd of September). VJ Day is hugely significant in that it marks the true conclusion of World War II and the six long years of bitter conflict, destruction and horror. President Truman's words on VJ Day capture poignantly this sense of finality along with a number of deeply spiritual sentiments:

"To all of us there comes first a sense of gratitude to Almighty God who sustained us and our Allies in the dark days of grave danger, who made us to grow from weakness into the strongest fighting force in history, and who has now seen us overcome the forces of tyranny that sought to destroy

His civilization... Our first thoughts, of course, thoughts of gratefulness and deep obligation, go out to loved ones who have been killed or maimed in this terrible war. On land and sea and in the air... men and women have given their lives so that this day of ultimate victory might come and assure the survival of a civilized world. No victory can make good their loss... Only the knowledge that the victory which these sacrifices have made possible will be wisely used can give them any comfort."

During the first few months of 2020 and through lockdown, there have been several commemorative milestones including the seventy-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and other concentration camps; and the ending of the war in Europe (VE Day). These occasions have been a mixture of poignant remembrance for those who perished and of thanksgiving that the tragedy eventually came to a decisive end.

However, as we approach VJ Day, there is a vital detail regarding Japan and its treatment of Jews that we

ought not forget. Despite being allies, the Japanese refused to go along with Nazi demands for a 'final solution'. In late January 1942, even as the Nazi leadership met at Wannsee to accelerate the mechanisms of the Final Solution, Tokyo's policy was, as one of their diplomats said, "to go easy toward the Jews." For the duration of the war, the Japanese held to this more even-handed policy in the areas they occupied and treated the Jews no differently than other national or neutral groups. This is to their credit and an often overlooked feature of VJ Day that distinguishes it sharply from VE Day and the terrible shadow of the Holocaust.

Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter (1847-1905), in his book *Sefat Emet*, speaks of the Talmudic concept known as 'hatzala purta' ('minor salvation') which exhorts us to identify the positive even in a sea of negatives. He makes the point that sometimes a tragedy will be absolute; on other occasions, however, there will be strands of 'minor salvation' which need to be identified and cherished.

So, even as we mark the conclusion of the greatest war of the modern era and the decimation it inflicted on the Jewish people, let us, in the words of President Truman, use that knowledge 'wisely' to remember that, for all their aggression and against the odds, the Japanese never descended into the ultimate barbarism of the Nazis, and that saved Jewish lives. For that we can be grateful even as we celebrate VJ Day.

In memory of Yehuda ben Yaakov HaCohen

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

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the third of the seven 'haftarot 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.

Judaism and Art part 5

‘Beyond Spacetime’

by Rabbi David Lister, Edgware United Synagogue



In this article, we will attempt to glimpse the natural world from a supernatural perspective.

The famous four-letter name of God, which is a conflation of haya, hoveh and yihyeh (was, is and will be) indicates that God is outside time. We refer to this every time we sing Adon Olam: “V’hu haya v’hu hoveh v’hu yihyeh b’tif’ara” – “He was and He is and He shall be glorious for evermore”, as translated by Rabbi Sacks.

We also occasionally identify God as Hamakom, “the Place”. So, for instance, in the blessing for a mourner, we say, “Hamakom yenachem etchem” – “May God (literally “the Place”) comfort you.” God is so called because He created the notion and the physical reality of empty space: He is the place in which the universe exists, but He is not bound by space Himself.

We all have occasional, fleeting access to this transcendent existence. We possess a soul breathed into us by God (Bereishit 2:7) which means that there is something Godly in us. An intense spiritual experience, tapping into the soul’s energy, can lift us beyond spacetime.

At Pesach, for instance, we are transported back in time to when the Exodus happened. As the Hagadah says, “In every generation a person is obliged to see themselves as if they personally left Egypt.”

Ezekiel’s famous vision went much further. He reported seeing the angels panoscopically, from all sides simultaneously:

“As for their faces, they had the

face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle. . . . They turned not when they went” (Ezekiel 1:10,12).

In his book *Jewish Meditation*, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (1934–1983, United States) suggests that Picasso may have been trying to express supra-spatial vision in his cubist art, where he portrays things from different angles simultaneously.

In Picasso’s *Violin and Grapes*, for instance, different views of a violin are jumbled together so that all of them are visible simultaneously. This gives us an inkling of what things look like when viewed from different angles at the same time. The grapes in the corner of the picture provide a contrast with their softer, rounded shape. But there too, Picasso plays with the surface which they lie on, showing it from different perspectives and superimposed on itself.

There have also been attempts to depict existence beyond time, where different stages of an event are shown simultaneously.

Marcel Duchamp’s *Sad Young Man on a Train* is hardly recognisable as such because Duchamp wanted to depict the figure moving both forwards and sideways with the train. When we look behind the central figure and see it multiplied in the background, we see it as it was a second earlier: we are effectively looking back in time. The time it takes for the figure to lurch sideways is also presented to us all at once, since we see the figure at various stages within its movement to right and left.



Marcel Duchamp, *Sad Young Man on a Train*, 1911



Picasso, *Violin and Grapes*, 1912

**We possess a soul
breathed into us by
God (Bereishit 2:7)
which means that
there is something
Godly in us.**

We are so trapped inside time and space that we might find it difficult to relate to these pictures. But they do at least remind us that there exists an otherworldly reality beyond space and time. This is the realm of God, the realm of the soul – the realm of real life.

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THE TRIBE SCRIBE

RE'EH: WOW! WHAT A LOT OF MONEY!

Dan and Dina have been earning some extra money, helping around the house, cleaning, polishing and hoovering.

LOOK DINA, I FEEL RICH, DON'T YOU?

YES, WE'VE MADE SUCH A LOT OF MONEY HELPING AROUND THE HOUSE.

YOU KNOW WHAT DAN, I'M GOING TO GO OVER AND PUT SOME MONEY IN TO THOSE CHARITY BOXES. HOW ABOUT YOU?

NO WAY! I SPENT A LONG TIME AND A LOT OF EFFORT CLEANING THE HOUSE FOR MUM AND DAD. THIS IS MY MONEY AND I'M GOING TO SPEND IT!

NO DAN, THE **TORAH** IS SAYING, THAT IF PEOPLE ARE IN REAL NEED OF SOME MONEY AND YOU DON'T GIVE THEM ANY, IT IS LIKE CLOSING YOUR HAND.

I REALLY CAN'T WAIT TO GO AND SPEND ALL THIS MONEY.

NEITHER CAN I!

COME ON DAN, PLEASE!

PLEASE YOUNG MAN, THESE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE HUNGRY AND YOUR MONEY WILL GIVE THEM WARM FOOD AND CLOTHES.

OH NO! I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I HAD SPARE CHANGE AND I WANTED TO KEEP IT FOR MYSELF, EVEN THOUGH I HAVE FOOD AND CLOTHES! I'M GOING TO FIND THOSE PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM SOME OF MY MONEY.

WAIT, PLEASE STOP. I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.

DID YOU SEE THOSE PEOPLE DAN, COLLECTING MONEY FOR CHILDREN LIKE US, BUT WHO CANNOT AFFORD FOOD, LET ALONE TOYS?

YES I DID, BUT I THINK I WANT TO USE ALL MY MONEY TO BUY TOYS FOR MYSELF.

THOSE PEOPLE ASKED YOU FOR SOME CHARITY MONEY. JUST A BIT OF CHANGE FROM YOUR POCKET! DON'T YOU KNOW DAN, THAT THE **TORAH** TEACHES US NOT TO CLOSE OUR HAND AGAINST OUR FELLOW WHO IS IN NEED AND THOSE PEOPLE NEEDED THE MONEY!

BUT I DIDN'T CLOSE MY HAND. I DIDN'T EVEN OPEN IT!

THANK YOU, KIND SIR.

I FELT REALLY GOOD EARNING THAT MONEY THIS MORNING, BUT I FEEL EVEN BETTER NOW THAT I'VE GIVEN SOME TO CHARITY!!



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