



**Daf  
Hashavua**

14 September 2019  
Shabbat ends

14 Elul 5779  
London 8.05pm  
Jerusalem 7.23pm

Volume 31  
No. 54

## Ki Teitzei כִּי-תֵצֵא

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This week we read two haftarot: Ki Teitzei, followed by that of Re'eh

**In loving memory of Yisrael Shmuel ben Yirmaya Yehoshuah**



“When you harvest your vineyard, you shall not glean behind you; it shall be for the proselyte, the orphan and the widow. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, therefore I command you to do this thing” (Devarim 24:21-22).

# Sidrah Summary: Ki Teitzei

## 1st Aliya (Kohen) – Devarim 21:10-21

Ki Teitzei contains many mitzvot, a selection of which has been included here. It starts with the laws of the ‘female captive’ and her potential marriage to a soldier in battle. It then discusses the laws of a man who has two wives (this later became prohibited in normative rabbinic law). He has a firstborn son with the wife he does not love, and another son with his preferred spouse, but he must still give the firstborn rights to the son of the former, not to son of the latter. The laws of the ‘wayward and rebellious son’ are then detailed.

## 2nd Aliya (Levi) – 21:22-22:7

If one spots someone else’s animal wandering off the path, there is a mitzvah to look after it and return it to its owner; this applies to all lost objects. If one sees a fallen animal on the road, there is a mitzvah to help its owner pick it up. A man is not allowed to wear women’s clothing, nor is a woman allowed to wear men’s clothing. If one sees a bird’s nest with eggs in it, there is a mitzvah to send away the mother bird before taking the eggs (*shiluach ha’ken*).

## 3rd Aliya (Shlishi) – 22:8-23:7

When building a new house, one must erect a fence on the roof to prevent someone falling off (see p.3 article). One must not plant certain mixtures of seeds in one’s field or vineyard (*kilayim*), nor may one plough with an ox and donkey together, nor wear wool and linen together in the same garment (*sha’atnez*). If a man falsely accuses his wife of having had pre-marital relations, a heavy fine is levied against him. Whilst men from Ammon and Moab (extant in Biblical times) are allowed to convert to Judaism, they are only allowed to marry fellow converts.

**Question:** *What is the Hebrew term for the protective fence built on the roof? (22:8). Answer on pg.6.*

## 4th Aliya (Revi’i) – 23:8-24

A man who becomes accidentally impure must immerse himself in a mikveh. There is a mitzvah to look after an escaped slave, rather than returning him to his idolatrous master (see Ramban). The laws prohibiting the charging of interest on loans are mentioned. A vow made to bring an offering to the Temple must be kept within an allotted time.

## 5th Aliya (Chamishi) – 23:25-24:4

A labourer who is harvesting crops is allowed to eat from the crops whilst working, but cannot take any produce home. The laws of divorce are stated, including the prohibition of a man remarrying his ex-wife if she has had a relationship with another man in the meantime.

## 6th Aliya (Shishi) – 24:5-13

For the first year of marriage, the couple should prioritise spending time together; the husband is not to serve in the army (other than in a case of pressing national need). When lending money to a pauper, it is forbidden to hold onto security for the loan if this will cause the borrower discomfort.

## 7th Aliya (Shevi’i) – 24:14-25:19

An employer should pay a hired labourer on the day that the work is done. One must not display bias for or against a widow or a convert. Paupers are entitled to certain leftover crops from the harvest in the field and the vineyard. The mitzvah of *yibum* (levirate marriage) is detailed – if a man dies childless, a surviving brother should marry the widow, in the hope that they will have children to continue the deceased’s name. If the brother does not wish to marry the widow, he performs a ceremony called *chalitzah*. All weights and measures need to be honest and accurate. The sidrah ends with the verses that we also read before Purim, on Shabbat Zachor, entreating us to remember how Amalek attacked the Israelites after their departure from Egypt.

**Point to Consider:** *What type of vineyard produce must be left for paupers to take? (see Rashi to 24:21)*

## Haftarah

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the fourth of the ‘haftarot of consolation’ read after Tisha B’Av. Yeshaya calls out to Jerusalem to no longer be desolate and barren, but to break out into jubilant song, in celebration of God showing her eternal kindness and mercy. The haftarah of Re’eh (which was not read two weeks ago due to Shabbat Rosh Chodesh) is added in many communities, in which 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.



## United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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

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Available also via email US website [www.theus.org.uk](http://www.theus.org.uk) @United Synagogue

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## Help the Fall Guy!

by Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg, Woodford Forest United Synagogue



This week's sidrah teaches us that when a person builds a new house, they are obligated to make sure that there is a fence around the roof, to prevent the possibility of someone falling off.

This is, of course, common sense, neighbourly responsibility and not being negligent on one's own property, lest another person come to harm. It is an early example of Health and Safety legislation, long before it became fashionable and legally required.

However, this mitzvah goes further than mere practicality. The verse uses an interesting phrase: "*ki yipol hanofeil mimenu*" which literally means: "[make a fence around the roof] lest **somebody who falls** should fall off of it" (Devarim 22:8).

The implication seems to be that we are taking a safety measure to help someone who is anyway going to fall. If that person is somehow going to fall come what may, why should we have to take precautions?

Rashi (1040-1105), quoting the Talmud (Shabbat 32a), answers that even though this person is destined to have a calamity, and that such a destiny is Divinely ordained, one should still endeavour to avoid being the person who brings about the tragedy.

Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch (1808-1888) notes that this answer brings out an important philosophical point, that on the one hand an individual can be destined for a certain fate, yet that does not compromise the freedom of choice of others who may affect him/her with their actions: "in every good or bad thing that happens to a person two factors work in tandem – Divine decree, which depends on the merits or transgressions of that person, and the free will of the individual who carries out the action".

There is another, very powerful lesson that can be learned from the Talmud's statement. At times we may be tempted to take advantage of another person. Often the excuse is that they will not mind, or perhaps the victim brought it upon themselves. Children in the playground may pick on someone, feeling that the other child makes themselves a natural victim. Global powers may do the same thing on an international level. Unfortunately, there can be a perception that because someone has a weakness, there are grounds to take advantage of them.

The Torah is telling us here that this is not acceptable. Even if someone is anyway going to suffer, we must take precautions to help prevent their pain, rather than letting them fall victim to their own weakness. Not only are we commanded not to take advantage of that person, but we are actually commanded to help them.

As we approach the High Holidays, it is a good time to take stock and to ask ourselves if we have taken advantage of someone else. This week's sidrah gives us a powerful message to carry through into the year 5780: to help those who are not necessarily able to stop themselves from falling, making sure not only to prevent their falling, but to help them to stand firm. We hope that this will help us to be inscribed for a happy and sweet New Year.



# Marking 80 Years Since the Beginning of WW2 Part 1

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



Typically, it is the end of a conflict, rather than the beginning, which is commemorated. Yet the 80th anniversary of the commencement of WW2 warrants remembrance, as it ushered in one of the most

punishing and painful chapters in our long Jewish history – and that of the world. There is in fact a rabbinic source for marking the beginning of conflict – in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Talmud says: “The beginning point of tragedy is the most severe” (Taanit 29a). This means that the origins of cataclysm often lie in a sequence of early events which change the moral terrain and open the door for great catastrophe to ensue.

WW2 was an unutterably profound Jewish tragedy, the zenith of two millennia of anti-Semitic scapegoating. However, paradoxically, it also had elements of Jewish triumph. Even as the Nazis murdered 6 million of our innocent people, over 1.5 million Jews fought back, with many volunteering themselves into the forward phalanx of a disparate Allied force that eventually brought the rule of evil to its knees. A core of those battle-hardened fighting Jews and survivors became the backbone of the IDF and saw it victoriously through the War of Independence in 1948 – and subsequent conflicts – against all odds.

Through the experience of the war, Jews and Judaism would never be the same. Even as myriads of our people were slaughtered, unable to resist, other Jews on the Allied and Soviet sides fought back ferociously, thereby creating a new template of the fighting Maccabees. Spiritually, this is the origin of the military self-empowerment of the State of Israel and the guiding IDF doctrine of pre-emptive self-defence.

The tradition of Jewish soldiering is in fact rooted in the Torah and evidenced by the way in which the tribes of Israel were enumerated by Moshe based on eligibility for military service. The UK Jewish Military Association (JMA), which combines AJEX (The Association of Jewish Ex-Service Men and Women) for veterans, and AFJC (The Armed Forces Jewish Community) for those currently serving, is a proud expression of this ancient tradition of service and selflessness.

When God charged Avraham to leave his past behind and go forth to a new land and mission, the Torah says, “And you shall be a blessing” (Bereishit 12:2). Being a blessing to others through serving as a positive moral example is a theme that pulses through the rest of the Torah.

Those Jews who serve their people and country – whether in the UK, Israel or elsewhere – model the blessing of Avraham, by personifying values, standards, faith and valour; they serve as role models to many young Jews. Furthermore, they reinforce an acute sense of history, which instils vigilance in the face of ongoing existential threats to Jews and wider society. By marking 80 years since the dark clouds of 1939, we show solidarity for the victims – and we also muster respect for the victors.



# The History of Jewish Philosophy: Part 5 – To Philosophise or not to Philosophise

by Rabbi Chaim Burman, US Rabbinic Fellow



So far in this series we have focused on some of the great Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages. To one extent or another, these thinkers were optimistic that through coherent logical thinking, one can discover important truths about God, the universe and the correct way to live one's life.

However, philosophical speculation was not embraced by everyone. A particularly well-known example of this was the *herem* (ban) that was issued in 1305 by Rabbi Shlomo ibn Adret (known as the Rashba 1235-1310) against learning Greek philosophy. The Rashba, based in Barcelona, was an influential rabbinic figure in the Jewish world. Jews from all over Spain and Southern France corresponded with him when they had questions about matters of law or belief. His ban was signed by numerous other authorities and forbade the study of natural philosophy or theology that was rooted in the Greek intellectual tradition. This was an important moment in the history of Jewish philosophy.

What was the background of the ban? How did the Rashba and his co-signatories countenance the fact that just over one century previously, the great Rambam (Maimonides 1135-1204), whom they held in great esteem, was well versed in philosophy? In the 19th century, Jewish historians portrayed this issue as an ideological battle between rationalists and traditionalists. Is this an accurate analysis?

From the sources that we have about this issue, a more nuanced picture emerges. Some thinkers of the period had drawn on the precedent of the Rambam and adapted his thinking in a manner which went much further than the Rambam himself would have been willing to go. For example, the French philosopher Levi ben Avraham (c.1240-1315) asserted that some of the key Torah narratives were mere allegories of

philosophical truths that had been established by Plato and Aristotle. He claimed to find precedence for this opinion from the Rambam noting that there are some references in the Torah that should be treated as allegory, such as anthropomorphisms of God.

Thinkers like Levi ben Avraham were well grounded in Greek philosophy and were eager to synthesise the Torah's narrative with popular concepts of Greek philosophy. It was not long until the great Torah figures of Avraham and Sarah were described as mere representations of form and matter; the battle between the four kings and the five kings in parashat Lech Lecha was deemed to be a conflict between the four elements and the five senses; the twelve tribes were the twelve signs of the zodiac.

It was in this context that the Rashba felt compelled to recommend the restriction of the study of philosophy, since it was being dangerously misused. If anything can be shown to be allegorical, then the historical foundation of the Torah, its miracles and its legislation are undermined. The great miracles of the Exodus or the mitzvot of tefillin and mezuzah could be misrepresented to merely symbolise a higher truth. In fact, the Rashba did not ban philosophy outright, rather he wrote that it should only be studied by students over the age of 25, once they had reached intellectual maturity and a working familiarity with the most important Jewish texts, just as the Rambam himself had done.



Rashba's synagogue, Barcelona (now a museum)

## The History of Jewish Philosophy: Part 5 *(continued from page 5)*

The Rashba also expressed concern that those who were too preoccupied with philosophical speculation frequently neglected the more basic Jewish practices, such as regular prayer and tefillin. We see, therefore, that rejection of philosophy needed to be seen in context.

It is fascinating to consider the Rashba's halachic position on appropriate reading material on Shabbat. Whereas the Rambam was of the opinion that on Shabbat one should only study the Tanach (Hebrew Bible), the Talmud and its commentaries, in an ironic reversal, it was actually the Rashba who held that it is permitted to read about other worldly wisdoms even on Shabbat. Seen in this light, his reservations about philosophy were clearly not an outright rejection of rational deliberation.

Elsewhere in his writings, the Rashba shows a familiarity with certain salient features of Greek philosophy, such as the “agent intellect” and refers to them in his commentaries on the *Aggadah* (homiletic sections of the Talmud). He is even ready to make allegorical interpretations of Biblical and Talmudic narratives, whilst emphasising that such interpretations do not detract from the literal meaning of the text.

As he writes in one place, philosophical speculation has its place in Torah study, but before focusing on those areas, one needs to acquire a solid knowledge of the Jewish textual canon and a sensitivity to tradition. The Rambam had such knowledge and sensitivity, as did other great Jewish philosophers, but it was clearly not for everyone.

## An Introduction to South American Jewry Part 4: The Jewish Settlement in North America

by Dayan Elimelech Vanzetta, Rabbinical and Halachic Administrator for US Burial, Lecturer for US in the City



The first Jewish settlement in what became the United States was in the Dutch colony New Amsterdam, which was later renamed New York City. Refugees from Recife, northeastern Brazil, were

the first significant group of Jews to come to New York, in September 1654. Portugal had just reconquered Recife from the Dutch, causing the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish residents to promptly flee. Most went to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, from where they originated. Others went to places in the Caribbean, such as St. Thomas, Jamaica, Surinam and Curacao, where they founded Sephardic congregations. A mere 23 headed for New Amsterdam instead.

Those pioneering Jewish residents established the venerable Shearith Israel, a Spanish & Portuguese congregation, with links to the Bevis Marks Synagogue in London, which served as the only congregation in New York for approximately 170 years, offering a full communal infrastructure. Shearith Israel remains a thriving synagogue, still in daily use, now located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.



Answer: *makeh*

Creating  
your  
Community



YOUNGUS

SAVE THE DATE



UNITED  
**YOUNG US**  
FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER  
@ STANMORE

With guest speaker  
**Ari Schonbrun, Survivor of 9/11**

Hear the inspirational and motivational story of Ari Schonbrun and how surviving 9/11 changed his life.

**8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

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@ Stanmore and Canons Park United Synagogue  
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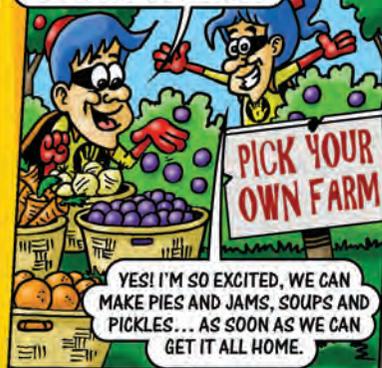
# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

KI TEITZEL: GOOD PICKINGS!

LOOK AT ALL THIS AMAZING STUFF - WE'VE SPENT ALL DAY PICKING!

ARGH! WE'RE NEVER GOING TO GET EVERYTHING IN!

YOU'RE RIGHT DAN, WE PROBABLY WON'T GET IT ALL IN. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, WE DON'T ACTUALLY NEED IT ALL! WE HAVE LOADS HERE AND I'M SURE THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO WOULD ENJOY IT.



YES! I'M SO EXCITED, WE CAN MAKE PIES AND JAMS, SOUPS AND PICKLES... AS SOON AS WE CAN GET IT ALL HOME.



WE PASSED A HOMELESS MAN ON THE WAY IN, MAYBE HE WOULD LIKE SOME?

HOW ABOUT WE LEAVE IT OVER HERE WITH A NOTE SAYING, 'PLEASE HELP YOURSELF'?

EXCELLENT IDEA, AND JUST THE RIGHT WEEK TOO! THE PARASHA THIS WEEK TALKS ABOUT SOME OF THE MITZVOT CONNECTED TO PICKING YOUR CROPS. THESE MITZVOT MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE IS TAKEN CARE OF IN A DIGNIFIED WAY.

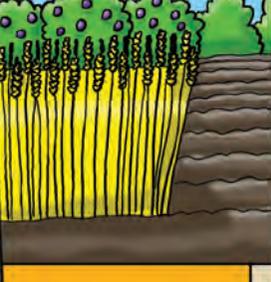
**Leket** - any ears of corn that fall to the ground during harvest don't get picked up. Instead, we leave them for others to gather.



**Shikcha** - if one or two bundles of wheat (or trees for picking) were forgotten, we don't go back and retrieve them, rather we leave them for others to enjoy.

**Pe'ah** - we leave a corner of the field untouched for those in need to come and help themselves.

WOW! THAT'S SO THOUGHTFUL, TO ALLOW OTHERS TO COLLECT WHAT THEY NEED WITHOUT HAVING TO ASK OR BEG. THE TORAH GIVES US GREAT IDEAS OF HOW TO PROVIDE FOR EVERYONE IN A SENSITIVE WAY. I'M GOING TO TRY THIS ONE!



Page Editor: Rabbi Nicky Goldmeier Writer: Shira Chaik Cartoonist: Paul Solomonov



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