



Daf Hashavua

31 August 2019
Shabbat ends

30 Av 5779
London 8.38pm
Jerusalem 7.42pm

Volume 31
No. 52

Re'eh ראה

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Shabbat is Rosh Chodesh Elul

Mazal Tov to Stephen (Saadya) Epstein, son of Rabbi Daniel & Ilana Epstein on his marriage to Addi Weiss, daughter of Oded and Romina Weiss of Great Neck, New York



“This you may eat of everything that is in the water: anything that has fins and scales you may eat. And anything that does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean to you” (Devarim 14:9-10).

Sidrah Summary: Re'eh

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.

Question: *How does the Torah phrase what one should do with the blood of a slaughtered kosher animal? (12:24) Answer on pg.6.*

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 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'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 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)*

Maftir

The reading for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is taken from parashat Pinchas and details the additional Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh offerings in the Temple.

Haftarah

The special haftarah for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh is the last chapter of the Book of Yeshaya (Isaiah). The world is God’s “throne and footstool”. Trying to appease God with insincere offerings will be punished, yet one who is truly “zealous regarding God’s word” will be rewarded. Those who love and are loyal to Jerusalem will enjoy the messianic future, in which they will rejoice in the rebuilt city.



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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Change Management: You Choose the Time and Place!

by Rabbi Daniel Epstein, Cockfosters & N. Southgate United Synagogue



According to research from McKinsey & Co. (2016), change management programmes have a 70% failure rate. If changing the culture of a single organisation is so unlikely to succeed, imagine trying

to implement a change programme for an entire nation!

Yet this is a strong theme of the Book of Devarim in general, and of parashat Re'eh in particular. In four separate speeches recorded in this Book, delivered by Moshe during his last five weeks of life, he sets out the ground rules for the next stage of the journey of the Children of Israel – entry into, conquering of and settling the Land of Canaan.

According to Rabbi Menachem Leibtag, of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Moshe's speech in parashat Re'eh has two broad themes. The first theme can be termed “negative influences” and the second theme “the place that God will choose”, which is a term used in verse 12:5.

The negative influences include the commandments of:

1. Not being tempted to follow the false gods in the Land of Canaan (Devarim 12:29-31)
2. Not following false prophets (13:2-6)
3. Not following after spiritually wayward family members (13:7-12)
4. Punishing an entire city that goes astray (13:13-19)

Rabbi Leibtag notes that these influences come, respectively, from society at large, our leaders, our family and our locality. The nature of this list indicates that temptation comes in many forms and from many different sources.

The second set – “the place that God will choose” – establishes a different tone:

1. Establishing the Temple as the “national centre” (12:1-19)
2. Eating the "second tithe" (there) in years 1,2,4 & 5 of the seven-year agricultural cycle (14:22-27)
3. Bringing 'first born' animals to offer in that "chosen place" (15:19-23)
4. Celebrating the three pilgrimage festivals in that “chosen place” (16:1-17)

There was a fundamental question that the Israelites needed to address when managing the change from life in the desert to life in the Land. What would the nature of their society in the new Land be? How would the fledgling nation combat the temptations and customs of their neighbours, and maintain their covenant with God?

The Torah sets out the successful formula by giving the proactive initiative to set a point in time and space to serve God – “in the place that God will choose”. The Beit Hamikdash would be that focal point. Yet how would they invoke the desire to come to that place? By establishing the right spiritual direction, freeing themselves from the “negative influences” that could derail them from their Divine mission as a nation.



The Month of Elul

by Rabbi Geoffrey L. Shisler, former Rabbi of New West End Synagogue



Elul is the last month of the year counting from Tishrei, or the sixth counting from Nisan. The name Elul comes from an Akkadian word meaning ‘harvest’. It is mentioned in the Tanach

(Hebrew Bible) only once, in the Book of Nechemiah where it says: “So the wall (of the Temple) was completed on 25th Elul” (6:15).

The zodiacal sign for Elul is Virgo. This is because Elul is the month that is specifically reserved for repentance and this sign represents innocence. Indeed the verse in Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah 31:20) encourages the nation to repent using this metaphor: “Return, (i.e. repent) O maiden of Israel, return to these, your cities”.

Various allusions are noted in the four letters that spell the word ‘Elul’ – *aleph, lamed, vav, lamed* (אלול). Probably the best-known allusion is that ‘Elul’ is an acronym for the phrase אני לדודי ודודי לי, meaning “I am for my beloved and my beloved is for me”, which forms part of a verse in Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs 6:3). This hints at the reciprocal love that God and Israel have for one another. That love is especially relevant during this month, when we turn towards God in repentance and He stretches out His hand to

receive us. Each of the four words of this phrase concludes with the letter *yud* (י), whose numerical value is 10. This alludes to the 40 days of repentance that we have from 1 Elul until Yom Kippur, on 10 Tishri.

In Megillat Esther, we find a verse encouraging sending gifts: “from one person to another and donations to the poor” (Megillat Esther 9:22). The initial letters of this phrase (ומתנות לאביונים איש לרעהו) also spell out Elul. This indicates that during Elul we should increase our efforts to give charity, since charity is one means by which we avert harsh decrees (as we declare in the High Holiday prayers).

One of the customs of Elul is to have *tefillin* and *mezuzot* examined (should they be due a check) to make sure that no defects have occurred in them.

Events that took place during Elul include the first day of Creation (25th); Noach sending out the raven from the Ark (10th); the birth of the Ramban (Nachmanides, 1194); the publishing of the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law, 1555); the first Zionist Congress in Basle (1st, 1897); and the death of Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, known as the Ben Ish Chai (1909).



Jewish Contemporary Ethics Part 40: Medical Ethics 2 – Saving Others I: Ending One Life to Save Another

by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman, New West End Synagogue



The previous article discussed the importance of saving life in Jewish law. The sanctity of life has additional, far-reaching implications for other areas of Jewish medical ethics. The Mishnah states that “one may not set aside

one person's life for that of another” (Ohalot 7:6). This means that one may not proactively accelerate the death of one patient to save the life of another, even the first patient is terminally ill and may die imminently.

The only time that one may actively carry out an extra-judicial killing in Jewish law is when the life of one person is threatened by the life of another. This is known as the law of the *rodef* (pursuer) and allows pre-emptive lethal action to be taken against belligerents or other mortal threats (Talmud Sanhedrin 73a). In medical ethics, one application of this principle is in a case where a foetus threatens the life of its mother. While the foetus clearly has no intent to harm and does not have any choice in the matter, if there is a clear threat to the mother's life the pregnancy must be terminated. The Rambam (Maimonides 1135-1204) writes that this is true even in the advanced stages of pregnancy.

Some later rabbinic authorities, including Rabbi Yisrael Meir Mizrahi (d. 1727) and Rabbi Mordechai Leib Winkler (d. 1932) also permit abortion in cases where the mental health of the mother may be severely affected by the continuation of the pregnancy and subsequent birth. This may be considered akin to a threat to the mother's life. Later authorities, such as Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Weisz (d. 1989) and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (d. 1986) also accept that severe mental illness may well constitute a threat to life.

While one cannot judge one life as more important than another to actively bring about the death of a patient to save someone deemed to be more worthy, there are many medical situations where difficult choices must be made, especially in cases where there are limited resources available. This is known as triage. Rabbi Yosef ben Meir Teomim (d. 1793) writes that clinicians should prioritise patients whose lives are in definite danger over patients whose medical condition constitutes a possible threat. Similarly, resources must be used to save as many people as possible, or in cases such as a transplant, offer the most likely benefit for the longest possible time. Some authorities allow prioritising the use of an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for patients who are more likely to survive. For example, Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg (d. 2006) rules that one may withhold an ICU bed from a patient with a low life expectancy if there is a need to urgently accommodate a curable patient.

However, as we noted in the last article, every case is complex, nuanced and unique. Any personal questions about medical ethics should be posed to a rabbinic authority, alongside the professional medical treatment which a patient receives. These articles should not serve as authoritative in practical law.



An Introduction to South American Jewry Part 3: The First Synagogue and Organized Community in the Americas

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



Kahal Zur Israel (צור ישראל), meaning "the congregation of the Rock of Israel" is located in Recife, Brazil. It was the first Jewish congregation in the New World and was established by Spanish and Portuguese

Jews who had initially taken refuge in the Netherlands, fleeing forced conversion. They were joined by New Christians (Jews forced to convert to Christianity by the King of Portugal and the Inquisition) who were already living in the colony.

The Dutch took control of this part of north eastern Brazil in 1635, allowing Jews religious freedom. From 1636 to 1654, the synagogue functioned on the site of houses no. 197 and 203, on a street that is now called Rua do Bom Jesus, but was formerly called Rua dos Judeus, meaning 'Street of the Jews'. It served a community of approximately 1,450 Jews.

Isaac Aboab da Fonseca (or Isaak Aboab Foonseca, 1605-1693) served as the rabbi of the community from 1642. He was born in the Portuguese town of Castro Daire as Simão da Fonseca. His parents were 'Conversos', Jews who had been forcibly converted to Christianity. Although the family had ostensibly converted, the anti-Semitic locals remained very suspicious of them. When Isaac was seven, the family moved to Amsterdam. As soon as they arrived, the family "reconverted" back to Judaism, and Isaac was given a full Jewish education. Together with Manasseh ben Israel (who was to play a pivotal role in the resettlement of Jews in England), he was given lessons by the scholar Isaac Uziel (a famous Spanish physician, poet and grammarian, d. 1622).

Aboab de Fonseca was a rabbi, scholar, kabbalist and writer. In 1656, back in the Netherlands, he was one of several elders within the Portuguese-Israelite community who excommunicated the well-known Jewish-Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). Spinoza was one of the early thinkers of the Enlightenment. He was excommunicated for heretical statements that he made concerning the nature of God.

The original synagogue building survived until the early 20th century, when it was torn down. The site was identified by an archaeological excavation, which was also able to locate the place where the *mikveh* (ritual bath) had been built. In 2001 the decision was made to create a Jewish museum in the two-story house, which is today popular amongst tourists from all over the world. The site symbolises the long Jewish history in the country and sometimes the museum houses weddings, as well as bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah celebrations.



Answer: "You shall pour it onto the ground like water"

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Daf Hashavua

10 September 2018 1 Tishrei 5779
Candles for Second Night Rosh Hashanah should be lit after 8.15pm. Rosh Hashanah ends in London on Tuesday night at 8.12pm

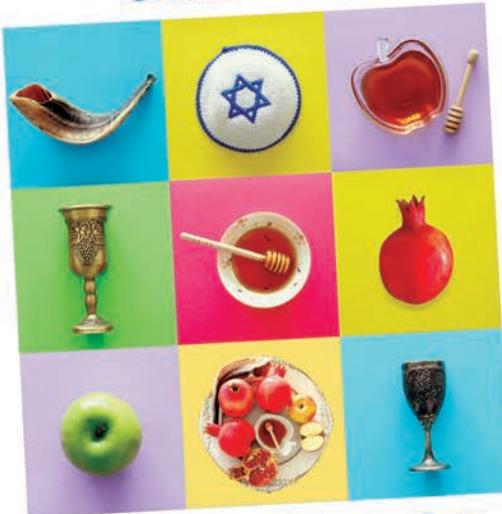
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No. 1

Rosh Hashanah ראש השנה

The Fast of Gedaliah is on Wednesday, starting at 4.47am and ending at 8.04pm

In loving memory of Susi and Freddie Bradfield
Sara Gitel bat Mordechai Menachem ז"ל and Yaacov ben Zvi ז"ל

Shana Tova



From The US & the Daf Hashavua Team

Treasuring In
by Chief Rabbi Ep



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THE TRIBE SCRIBE

RE'EH: CHARITY CHALLENGE!



THIS WEEK'S PARASHA TALKS ABOUT THE MITZVAH OF TZEDAKAH - CHARITY. THE RAMBAM - MAIMONIDES (12TH CENTURY, SPAIN) DESCRIBES 8 LEVELS OF GIVING CHARITY - EACH ONE HIGHER THAN THE NEXT.



JOIN US WE WORKOUT OUR CHARITY-GIVING MUSCLES, THROUGH RAMBAM'S 8 LEVELS.

1. Giving charity reluctantly.



2. Happily giving charity but giving less than one should.



3. Giving charity, but only when asked.



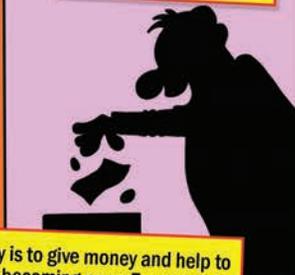
4. Giving charity without being asked, giving directly to the poor.



5. A person leaves a donation in a certain place, but walks away without knowing who received the benefit. The poor person knows the giver.



6. Giving charity secretly. The giver knows who has benefited, but the poor person does not.



7. Contributing anonymously to a charity fund which is then distributed to the poor.



8. The highest level of charity is to give money and help to prevent another person from becoming poor. For example: teaching a person a trade, finding them a job, lending money to start a business, teaching them to fish.



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