HADAR Children & Families
VOLUME 7 ISSUE 47

DEVASH

עֵקֶב EIKEV

Because learning Torah is sweet

DEVARIM
VA'ETHANAN
EIKEV
RE'EH
SHOFTIM
KI TEITZEI
KI TAVO
NITZAVIM
VAYEILEKH
HA'AZINU
VEZOT HA-BERAKHAH

ט"ז - כ"ב אָב תשפ"ה August 10-16, 2025

מָה בְּפָרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Moshe asks Benei Yisrael to follow the mitzvot, and to remember all the ways God has cared for them in the wilderness. If they do this, they will be blessed and the land will produce plenty of food.
- But abundance can become a problem. When life feels comfortable, a person might imagine that they alone are responsible for their success. Be careful of this kind of thinking! In fact, we are always dependent on God.
- One way to keep this lesson in mind is by thanking God after eating.
- Moshe retells the story of how Benei Yisrael rebelled in the wilderness, when they worshiped a golden עֵגֶל (eigel, calf). Moshe stood up for the people. He prayed to God to remember the promise to Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov.
- If Benei Yisrael fear, love, and stick to God, then rain will come at the right time in Eretz Yisrael. But if they fail, then there won't be enough rain. This is where we get the second paragraph of Shema!



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Devarim 10:12

And now, Israel, what does God your Lord **ask of you?** Only this: to fear God your Lord, to walk in God's paths, to love God, and to serve God your Lord with all your heart and soul.

דברים י:יב

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ **שֹׁאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ** כִּי אִם לְיִרְאָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וְלַעֲבֹד אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ:

God commands us to do and think and feel things all the time. But we're not usually **asked**; we're usually just **told**. Why is this list introduced as things that God is **asking** us?

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are **bugged** by something unusual in the Torah text

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 33b

R. Hanina said: Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except for fear of Heaven. We know this because it is stated in our pasuk: "And now, Israel, what does God your Lord ask of you? Only this: to fear..."

תלמוד בבלי ברכות דף לג עמוד ב

וְאָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: הַכֹּל בִּידֵי שָׁמַיִם, חוּץ מִיִּרְאַת שָׁמַיִם. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ שׁוֹאֵל מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אִם לְיִרְאָה."

"Everything is in the hands of Heaven" means that God controls a lot for us. For example, how tall we are, what kinds of talents we're born with, or whether we're born into a family with a lot of money or not.

But, R. Hanina points out, if God controlled whether we feared God, then would that be real? Fearing God needs to come from inside your heart; it can't be forced! This is why God can only **ask** us to figure this out ourselves.

Pretty please???

Ok!

- Have you ever had a day when things weren't going your way, and you felt really out of control? Sometimes, the only thing we can control is our own attitude - like choosing to be happy and have fun even if something happened we didn't like. But that's not easy! What would you tell someone to help them have a good attitude even if they're not having a good day? What has helped you do that in the past?



Send us your thoughts or questions from learning the parashah. We'll write back to you, and some will get published in future issues of Devash!

Write to us at devash@hadar.org



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

R. Hanina taught about יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם (yirat shamayim, fear of heaven). There are lots of different kinds of יִרְאָה (yir'ah). The Hebrew word can be translated in two different ways:

FEAR	AWE
The feeling you have when faced with something scary or dangerous	The feeling you have when faced with something huge and amazing

When we think about God, both of these feelings can make sense. And this can play out in different ways:



= יִרְאַת חֵטְא
fear of sin
(yirat heit)

= יִרְאַת עֹנֶשׁ
fear of punishment
(yirat onesh)

Both of these are about fear: You're afraid of doing something wrong or being punished for it.



= יִרְאַת הָרוֹמְמוּת
awe of greatness
(yirat he-romemut)

= הָאֵ-ל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא
God the Almighty the Great the Powerful the Awesome (ha-El ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-nora)

Both of these are about seeing how amazing and wondrous God is, like the feeling of seeing great things in creation (like mountains) or God's miracles.

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פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Devarim 11:22

If you faithfully keep this Mitzvah that I (God) command you, loving God your Lord, walking in God's ways, **and sticking to God...**

דברים יא:כב

כִּי אִם שָׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת כָּל הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשֹׂתָהּ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו **וּלְדָבְקָה בוֹ**:

The last words are a source for the concept of דְּבֵקוּת (deveikut), which describes being so close to God, it's like you're stuck to God.

But what does it mean to be close to God?



Talmud Bavli Ketubot 111b says

תלמוד בבלי כתובות דף קיא עמוד ב

But is it possible to "stick" to the Shekhinah (God's Presence)? Isn't it written that "God is a devouring fire" (Devarim 4:24)? (How can you stick to a fire and not be burned?!)

וְכִי אֶפְשָׁר לְדַבּוֹקֵי בַּשְּׁכִינָה? וְהַכְתִיב "כִּי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֵשׁ אוֹכְלָה" (דברים ד:כד)!

Actually, it means that if you encourage your children to marry Torah scholars, and help Torah scholars in business, and use your property to benefit Torah scholars—then it's just like you are sticking to the Shekhinah.

אֶלָּא כָּל הַמַּשִּׂיא בִּתּוֹ לְתַלְמִיד חָכָם, וְהָעוֹשֶׂה פְּרַקְמַטְיָא לְתַלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים, וְהַמְהַנֶּה תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים מִנְּכָסָיו—מַעֲלֶה עָלָיו הַכָּתוּב כְּאִילּוּ מִדַּבֵּק בַּשְּׁכִינָה.





Interesting. Here's what Ramban says

(Spain, 800 years ago)

רמב"ן

וְיִתָּכֵן שֶׁתִּכְלֹל הַדְּבֵקָה לֵאמֹר שֶׁתִּהְיֶה זוֹכֵר הַשֵּׁם וְאַהֲבָתוֹ תָּמִיד, לֹא תִּפָּרֵד מַחְשַׁבְתְּךָ מִמֶּנּוּ בְּלֶכְתְּךָ בְּדַרְכֶּךָ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ, עַד שֶׁיִּהְיוּ דְּבָרָיו עִם בְּנֵי אָדָם בְּפִיו וּבִלְשׁוֹנוֹ, וְלִבּוֹ אֵיננוּ עִמָּהֶם אֲבָל הוּא לִפְנֵי הַשֵּׁם.

Deveikut describes a person who always remembers God and God's love. Your thoughts should never leave God, even "when you walk on your way, when you lie down, and when you wake up" (like we say in Shema). While a person with deveikut speaks with other people with their mouth and tongue, their heart is never with them, but always before God.

The Gemara explains that deveikut is something we gain when we are close to Torah scholars.

Ramban says we achieve deveikut when we focus our hearts and minds on God entirely.

- Do you feel close to any teachers of Torah? Why might being close to them be like being close to God? What does Torah knowledge have to do with closeness to God?
- If you could keep God in mind when you're just going about your day, walking from place to place, or even talking to other people, what might happen? Try it out! Notice if it makes you feel different or behave differently.

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הֲלָכָה • Halakhah

learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

The mitzvah to say בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן (Birkat Ha-Mazon, Grace after Meals) comes from these words in our parashah (Devarim 8:10).

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ

You shall eat, and be satisfied, and bless God

We can learn different details about Birkat Ha-Mazon from each word!

וְאָכַלְתָּ—You shall eat

We say Birkat Ha-Mazon after eating a meal that includes bread, or a meal of doughy food like pizza, even if you made the berakhah מְזוֹנוֹת (mezonot) on the food (Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim, 168:6).

וְשָׂבָעְתָּ—and be satisfied

No matter how much you eat, if you feel full, you say Birkat Ha-Mazon. The Gemara adds that we recite Birkat Ha-Mazon for eating at least a כְּזַיִת (k'zayit) of bread even if we don't feel full (Berakhot 20b). K'zayit means "the size of an olive," and in modern measurements it's about the size of a slice of bread.

וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ—and you shall bless God

Eating yummy food and enjoying it can be a reminder to say "thank you." Birkat Ha-Mazon expresses gratitude to God for food, redemption, Torah, life, Eretz Yisrael, Yerushalayim, and all kinds of God's goodness.



Oops!

I forgot to say Birkat Ha-Mazon after breakfast and now I'm at school! What should I do?

It's best to say Birkat Ha-Mazon where you ate. If you accidentally go to a new place before remembering Birkat Ha-Mazon, it's best to return to the place where you ate to say it there. But if you can't—like if you're already at school—it's ok to say Birkat Ha-Mazon wherever you remember (Mishnah Berakhot 8:7, Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim, 184:1).



I totally forgot Birkat Ha-Mazon! Is it too late?

It depends how late you are. You always have 72 minutes to say Birkat Ha-Mazon, after you eat. If 72 minutes have passed, but you still feel full from your meal, you can still say Birkat Ha-Mazon (Berakhot 53b, Arukh Ha-Shulhan OH 184:7-8). So, want something to eat?





דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



Debate: Miracles are important for believing in God.



Agree!

- Benei Yisrael experienced miracles like the ten plagues, the splitting of Yam Suf, and the daily מָן (mann, miraculous food). These must have been amazing experiences that helped them believe in God.
- When you believe in God, you are also more likely to see and recognize miracles in your life. It's kind of a cycle!

Disagree!

- Benei Yisrael experienced some of the greatest miracles, and they still complained all the time. Clearly, miracles are not enough.
- True belief involves seeing God's constant presence in the world, even in normal things that aren't obvious miracles, like sunlight, food, or people's faces.



דָּגָל שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Devarim 10:20

You must fear God your Lord: only worship God, **stick to God**, and swear by God's name.

דברים י:כ

אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ תִּירָא אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד
וּבוֹ **תִּדְבָּק** וּבִשְׁמוֹ תִּשָּׁבֵעַ:

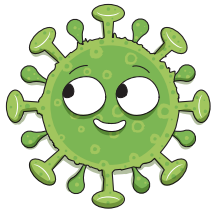
לִדְבֹּק (שֹׁרֶשׁ ד.ב.ק)

- To cling, attach, or stick to (lidbok)



= מַדְבֵּקָה
Sticker (madbeikah)

= מִדַּבֵּק
Contagious (midabek)





= דִּבּוּק
Dybbuk (In Jewish folklore, this is a wandering ghost that tries to attach itself to people)



= דֶּבֶק
Glue (devek)





טַעֲמֵי הַמִּקְרָא • Torah Trop

If you have ever sung in a choir or played a musical instrument, you might know about rests. Rests are marks that tell you to just hold on for a minute and pause singing or playing. Sometimes, when making music, it is just as important to be quiet as to make a sound! Well, Torah trop has a rest too, and it is called a pesik (or sometimes a pasek). It is just a line that divides between two words, telling you to take a short break. Here's a place in our parashah where two of them appear very close to each other:









שַׁקֵּץ | תְּשַׁקְּצֶנּוּ וְתַעֵב | תְּתַעֲבֶנּוּ דברים ז:כו

Devarim 7:26 you must reject it as abominable and disgusting

Do you see anything interesting about the words before and after each pesik? That's right, they are very similar to each other, sharing the same שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root). This is a case where a pesik is used to divide between words that are similar, in order to make sure we hear each of them clearly.

A pesik might also be used to keep God's name separate from what follows, so that we don't blend that special name in with other ordinary words. A pesik only follows notes that don't end a musical phrase—you would otherwise run right into the next word, and the pesik is there to tell you: "Hold up there just a minute!" Don't forget to take a brief rest whenever you see one of these!

How many other times can you find a pesik in our parashah?



Find the Word!

In Sefer Devarim, this שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) comes up a bunch of times, as an instruction to stick to God. Why do you think Moshe might want to emphasize this idea to Benei Yisrael, at the end of their journey through the wilderness? Can you find this shoresh in Parashat Devarim, chapter 4? (Hint: Look for a line you might recognize from the Torah service in shul!)

שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. **The answers to the last three are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.**

aliyot:

1) Devarim 7:12 to 8:10
2) 8:11 to 9:3
3) 9:4 to 9:29
4) 10:1 to 10:11
5) 10:12 to 11:9
6) 11:10 to 11:21
7) 11:22 to 11:25



Good luck!

1. What are the שִׁבְעַת הַמִּנִים (shivat ha-minim), the Torah's seven favorite kinds of produce associated with Eretz Yisrael?

2. If Benei Yisrael get too comfortable and wealthy, what might they say in their hearts?

3. What five place names are mentioned in this aliyah as places where Benei Yisrael rebelled or made God angry?

4. According to our parashah, where does Aharon die and get buried?

5. According to our parashah, which two groups of people does God love?

6. How is the source of water in Egypt different from the source of water in Eretz Yisrael?

7. What four major land features are given in our parashah as guides to the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael?

8. How many times does the root ע.ק.ב appear in our parashah?

9. Moshe repeatedly talks about spending a certain amount of time on the mountain with God. How much time did he spend there?

10. Can you identify in our parashah a famous phrase from the first בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) of the Amidah?

* Look for the answers on page 12!





מִי הָיוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ • Who Were Our Sages?

This week's מִדְרָשׁ/ Midrash section described God as a consuming fire (p. 2). This is a lesson learned by **R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus.**

In a dramatic story, the Talmud (Bava Metzia 59b) tells us how R. Eliezer—one of the greatest Torah scholars of all time—refused to accept when he was outvoted in a halakhic debate. This was considered to be a very big deal, and he ended up getting banned.

It's not surprising that this is the advice he gives in Pirkei Avot:

Mishnah Avot 2:10

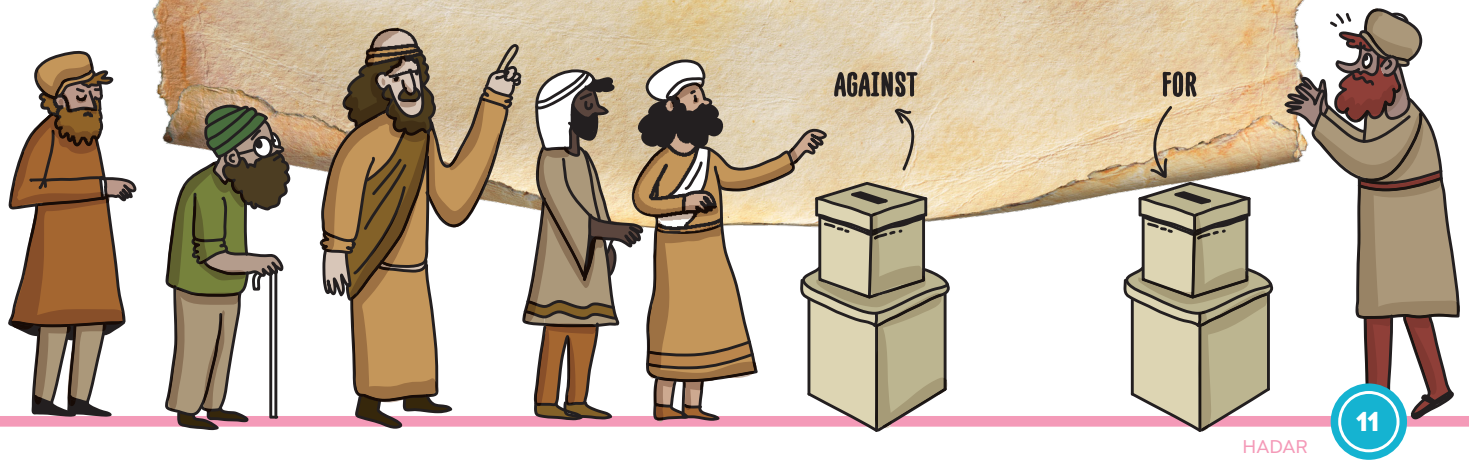
Warm yourself by the fire of hakhamim (sages), but be careful with their coals so you don't get burned.

משנה אבות ב:י

וֶהֱוֵי מִתְחַמֵּם כְּנֶגֶד אוּרָן שֶׁל חֲכָמִים, וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּגַחַלְתָּן שֶׁלֹּא תִכָּוֶה.

R. Eliezer learned this lesson the hard way. It is not just God that can be like a fire, dangerous when you get too close. It can be hard to be close to some people, too, and it can sometimes feel like being burned.

- We tend not to have such high expectations of people we don't really care about. But when a close friend or loved one disappoints us, that can feel terrible. Have you ever felt this way?
- What can you avoid doing to people you care about so they don't feel "burned"?





מָה זֶּה • What's Going On Here?



The שִׁבְעַת הַמִּנִים (shivat ha-minim), sometimes called the "seven species," are the Torah's favorite kinds of produce associated with Eretz Yisrael (Devarim 8:8). Number seven on the list definitely deserves a mention in our magazine... it's דְּבַשׁ (devash, honey)!

But it's not the kind that comes from bees! You see, the other six plants on the list are agricultural products; things that farmers plant and grow (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, and olives). So it makes sense that the devash here in this pasuk would also be something that can be grown. Rashi says devash is date honey. This is a sweet syrup that you make by boiling and squeezing dates. It's very popular in Israel, where it's called "silan."



But, in other places in Tanakh, devash can refer to bee honey. For example, in Sefer Shoftim, Shimshon finds a beehive (inside the carcass of a lion!) and he eats the devash there (Shoftim 14:8).

So learning Torah together might be as sweet as bee's honey **AND** date honey!

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. חִטָּה (hittah, wheat), שְׂעֹרָה (seorah, barley), גֶּפֶן (gefen, grapes), תְּאֵנָה (te'einah, figs), רִמּוֹן (rimmon, pomegranate), זֵית שֶׁמֶן (zeit shemen, olive oil), דְּבַשׁ (devash, honey) (8:8)
2. כֹּחִי וְעֹצֶם יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת־הַחַיִל הַזֶּה ("my own power and the strength of my hand created this wealth") (8:17)
3. Horeiv (9:8), Taveirah, Massah, Kivrot Hataavah (9:22), Kadeish Barnei'a (9:23)
4. Moseirah (10:6)
5. The ancestors of Benei Yisrael (10:15) and the גֵּר (ger, stranger)—a person from a different nation who chooses to live with Benei Yisrael, and who is usually poor (10:18)
6. In Egypt, you "water your garden with your feet" (11:10)—irrigation canals provide water from the Nile that can be pedaled in by your feet to your fields. In Eretz Yisrael, you have to wait for rain (11:11).
7. הַמִּדְבָּר (ha-midbar, the desert off to the south and the east), הַלְּבָנוֹן (ha-levanon, the Lebanon mountains in the north), נְהַר־פְּרָת (nehar perat, the Euphrates River in the northeast), יָם הָאַחֲרוֹן (yam ha-aharon, the Western Sea aka the Mediterranean) (11:24)
8. Four—twice in the form of the word עֵקֶב (eikev) (7:12 and 8:20) and twice in the form of וּלְיַעֲקֹב (u-l'Ya'akov) (9:5 and 9:27)
9. 40 days and 40 nights (he mentions this five times!—9:9, 9:11, 9:18, 9:25, 10:10)
10. הָאֵ-ל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבֹּר וְהַנּוֹרָא (ha-El ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-nora, God the Almighty the Great the Powerful the Awesome) (10:17)

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