עֵקֶב Eikev

DeVAsH

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HADAR Children & Families

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י"ב – י"ח אָב תשפ"ו

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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!



פְּשַׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Moshe tells Benei Yisrael that Eretz Yisrael will be filled with fruit, water streams, and valuable resources. But he warns them not to forget the source of all goodness.

Devarim 8:17-18

You might say to yourselves, "My own power and the might of my own hand got me all this wealth."

Remember God your Lord
Who is the One Who gives you the power to get wealth, fulfilling the covenant that God promised to your ancestors, just like today.

דברים ח:יז-יח

וְאָמַרְתָּ בִּלְבָבֶךָ כֹּחִי וְעֹצֶם יָדִי
עָשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחַיִל הַזֶּה:

וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ
כִּי הוּא הַנֹּתֵן לְךָ כֹחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת חָיִל
לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לַאֲבֹתֶיךָ כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

- What do you notice? What is the main idea here? What words stand out?
- Why can't we take full credit for our accomplishments? What is the Torah trying to teach us about our own powers and the role God plays in the things we are able to achieve in our lives?
- How does that change your attitude about your accomplishments?
- When you're feeling successful or proud, what are some ways to remind yourself to give credit to others who helped you - other people as well as God?



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

haftarah: Yeshayahu 49:14 to 51:3

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 questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah.** The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

Good luck!



1. What items lasted far longer than expected for Benei Yisrael in the wilderness?
2. Who is compared to fire?
3. What lasted 40 days and 40 nights? (Two things)
4. Who was the second כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (kohen gadol, high priest)?



5. In this aliyah, what are we commanded to circumcise?
6. When and where are you supposed to teach your children about mitzvot?



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 word עֵקֶב (eikev) appear in our parashah?
9. How many people from Benei Yisrael went down to Egypt?
10. **From the haftarah:** In the bright future, who will act as babysitters and nurses for children?

* Look for the answers on page 11!

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מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Devarim 10:12

Ve-atah (and now), Israel, what does God your Lord ask of you? Only this: to fear God your Lord, to walk in God's ways, 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:



If you look inside the Torah you'll see that there's a paragraph break before this pasuk. This space tells us that the Torah is starting a new idea. But how can that be? How can a new idea start with וְעַתָּה (ve-atah, And now)? What is that "and" connecting to?

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

R. Yehudah ben Abba (in Sifrei Bemidbar 136) connects this pasuk to something we read about a few pesukim earlier, in Devarim 9:22, where Moshe talks about how Benei Yisrael complained to God in Taveirah and Massah.

what now?

Ve-atah, according to R. Yehudah, shows us that after Benei Yisrael did something wrong (complaining), God immediately gave them a chance to make it better through תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah, repentance). Ve-atah teaches that Benei Yisrael could seize the opportunity and make a change.

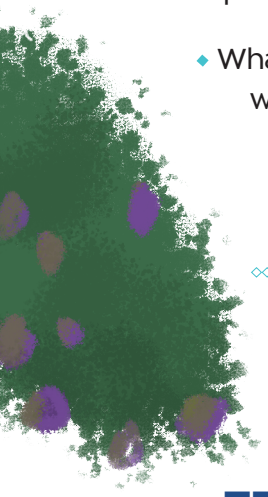
Another midrash notices that ve-atah also appears in connection to the very first sin in the Torah.

Bereishit Rabbah 21:6	**בראשית רבה כא:ו**
"Ve-atah (and now) perhaps he (Adam) will reach out his hand" (Bereishit 3:22):	"וְעַתָּה פֶּן יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ" (בראשית ג:כב):
R. Abba bar Kahana said: This teaches that the Holy Blessed One opened the door for Adam to do teshuvah. The word "ve-atah" always refers to teshuvah, as it is stated, "Ve-atah, Israel, what does God your Lord (ask of you)..." (Devarim 10:12).	אָמַר רַבִּי אַבָּא בַּר כַּהֲנָא מְלַמֵּד שֶׁפָּתַח לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא פֶּתַח שֶׁל תְּשׁוּבָה, וְעַתָּה, אֵין וְעַתָּה אֶלָּא תְּשׁוּבָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים י:יב): "וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ ..."

The pasuk in Bereishit is describing God removing Adam from גַּן עֵדֶן (Gan Eden, the Garden of Eden) after he sinned by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This seems to be a punishment. But the midrash explains that the Torah uses the word ve-atah to teach us that it was actually God giving him a chance to do teshuvah.

- What does teshuvah have to do with "now" and the present? What is this midrash teaching us about the potential of every present moment?
- What is hard about correcting what you have done wrong? Why does it sometimes take so long? Does it take a lot of time to be ready to fix your mistakes, or can it sometimes be done more quickly?







בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

Consider the pasuk on the previous page (Devarim 10:12) with the one that comes right after it.

Devarim 10:13	**דברים י:יג**
To keep God's mitzvot and laws, which I command you today, for your own good.	לִשְׁמֹר אֶת מִצְוֹת ה' וְאֶת חֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם לְטוֹב לָךְ:

Pasuk 12 tells us to fear God, walk in God's ways, love God, and worship God.

Pasuk 13 adds to that list and tells us to also keep mitzvot.

What's the difference between what appears in each pasuk? What does each pasuk add? Why do you think the list in pasuk 12 comes first?



רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Devarim 11:10

For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you planted had **to be watered** by your foot like a vegetable garden.

דברים יא:י

כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בָא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ
לֹא כְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר יְצָאתֶם
מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע אֶת זַרְעֲךָ **וְהִשְׁקִיתָ**
בְרַגְלְךָ כְּגַן הַיָּרָק:

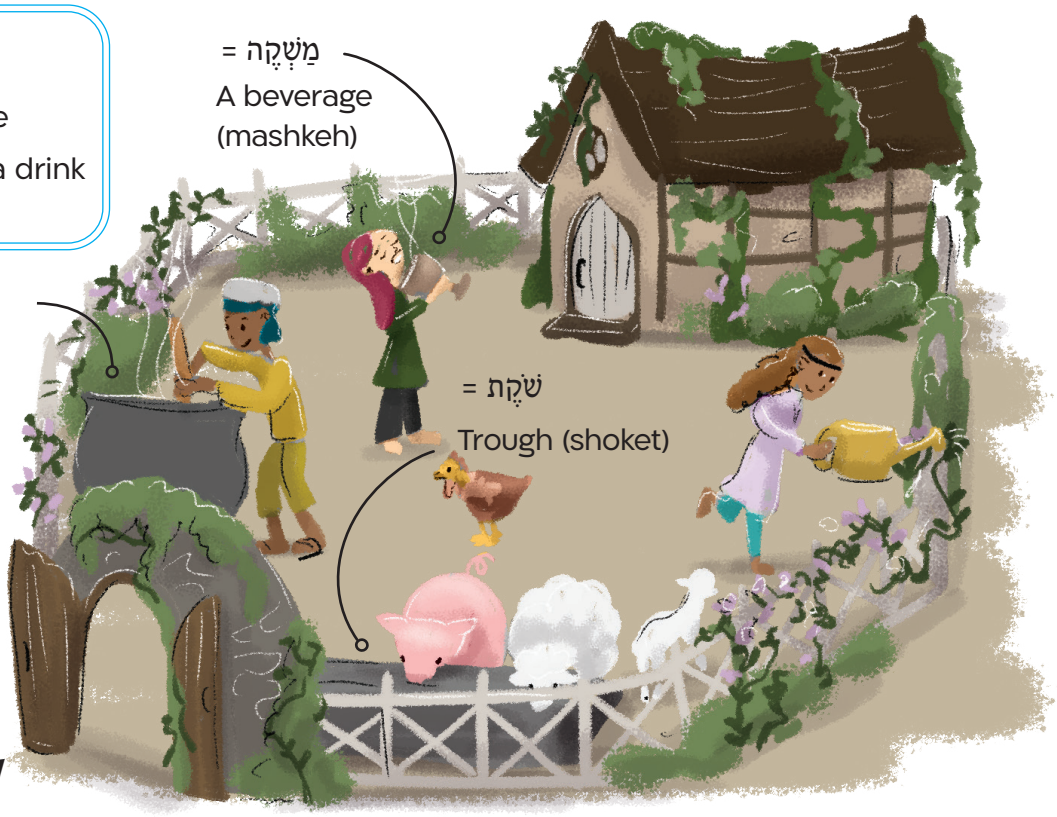
לְהַשְׁקוֹת (שׁ.ר.ש ש.ק.י)

- To water or irrigate
- To give someone a drink (lehashkot)

מַשְׁקֶה =
A beverage (mashkeh)

שִׁקּוּי =
Potion (shikui)

שֹׁקֶת =
Trough (shoket)



Find the Word!

In the Torah, the water well is a common meeting place. Look up the story about Yaakov and Rahel meeting each other at this location (Bereishit chapter 29). How many times can you find our שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) about watering?

פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Our parashah is named for a strange word:

Devarim 7:12	**דברים ז:יב**
And it will be "**eikev**" you listen to these laws and keep and do them, and God your Lord will keep the covenant and the kindness that God promised to your ancestors.	וְהָיָה **עֵקֶב** תִּשְׁמְעוּן אֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְשָׁמַר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת הַבְּרִית וְאֶת הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לַאֲבֹתֶיךָ:

What is the meaning of "eikev" in this pasuk?

Rashi (based on a midrash) connects this word to the word for "heel," which sounds similar.

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)	**רש"י**
(You will get blessing) if you listen to the mitzvot that a person might think of as less serious and tread on with their heels.	אִם הַמִּצְוֹת הַקַּלּוֹת שֶׁאָדָם דָּשׁ בַּעֲקֵבָיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן.



According to Rashi, this pasuk is viewing the heel as the bottom, and it teaches us to pay attention even to the mitzvot that we think of as being on the lowest level—the smallest or least serious.

- Why do we sometimes think that small things or details don't matter?
- Can you think of some examples of small details that are really important? What are some important details that are often overlooked?

Or Ha-Hayyim (North Africa, 300 years ago)	**אור החיים**
"Eikev" means "in the end"... and anyone who does not come to the end has no basis to be happy.	עֵקֶב הוּא סוֹף וְתַכְלִית... וְכָל שֶׁלֹּא הִגִּיעַ לָזֶה אֵין לוֹ מָקוֹם לִשְׂמֹחַ.

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According to the Or Ha-Hayyim, this pasuk is emphasizing the end, just like the heel is the end of the body. It's saying that we must perform mitzvot in a complete and comprehensive way; until their very end.

In other words, we are being told "not to rest on our laurels." Laurels are leafy crowns that used to be given out to the winners of ancient Greek and Roman sports events. The warning not to rest on your laurels means that we should not be satisfied with one single achievement and celebrate that at the expense of remembering that there are other important accomplishments ahead.



- Why do you think God's blessings might be kept for people who perform mitzvot fully?
- Is there value to doing a mitzvah even if you can't do it completely? Why or why not?



בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!

In our מִדְרָשׁ / Midrash section this week (p. 3) we considered a pasuk that asked: What does God want from us?

R. Meir (in Bavli Menahot 43b) made a play on words with the Hebrew word מָה (mah, what). He read it as a word that sounds similar: מֵאָה (me'ah, one hundred). Based on this, he read the pasuk as saying, "God wants 100 from us," and taught that people should aim to say 100 בְּרָכוֹת (berakhot, blessings) every day!

Does that sound like a lot?

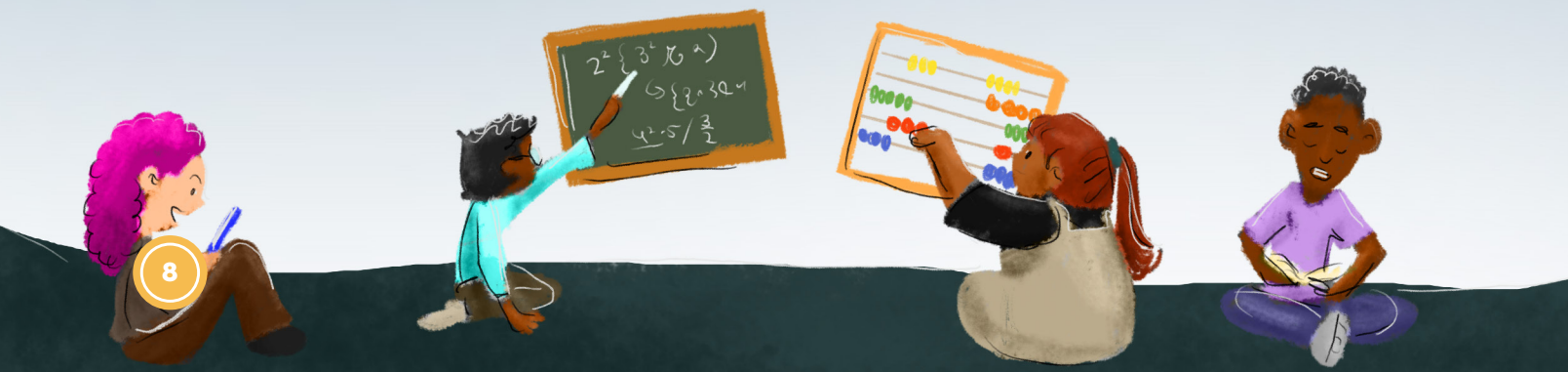
On weekdays it shouldn't be too hard. Each weekday Amidah contains 19 berakhot, so if you say it three times (Shaharit, MInhah, Ma'ariv), that's:

$$\begin{array}{r} 19 \\ \times\ 3 \\ \hline 57 \end{array}$$

That leaves:

$$\begin{array}{r} 100 \\ -\ 57 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

43 berakhot remaining to say in your day





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: Rainy weather is great.



Agree!



- Rain helps crops grow.
- It's a blessing from God, and a symbol that we're following mitzvot.
- It's fun to jump in puddles. If you haven't tried mud sliding during summer rain, you should.



Disagree!

- Everyone is happier on sunny days.
- Too much rain can cause floods.
- Rain can get in the way of doing some mitzvot, like sitting in the sukkah. If you lived in the time of the Beit Ha-Mikdash, and you wanted to travel there for a holiday to do עֲלִיָּה לָרֶגֶל (aliyah la-regel), it would be really annoying to get rained on.

When you count the other berakhot in tefillah like the berakhot for saying Shema (three in the morning and four at night), the morning berakhot (15), and the berakhot for learning Torah, putting on tzitzit and tefillin, saying Barukh She'Amar and Yishtabah... we say over 90 berakhot in our daily tefillot alone! Add some berakhot over food and drink, handwashing and going to the bathroom, and you can hit 100 no problem.

Shabbat is a little more challenging. We say Mussaf, but each Amidah on Shabbat is shorter than on weekdays, so we fall 29 berakhot short.

Our recommended strategy: Say Birkat Ha-Mazon for three meals (4x3 = 12), and for the remaining 17... eat lots of snacks!



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Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

הֲלָכָה • Halakhah

Devarim 8:10	**דברים ח:י**
You shall eat, and be satisfied, and bless God	וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבָעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ

These words from our parashah are the source for saying בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן (Birkat Ha-Mazon, Grace after Meals). We talked about it in last year's Devash for Eikev!

We generally say Birkat Ha-Mazon after meals that include bread. **What about when you eat something that isn't bread? How should you thank God after that?**

The rabbis wonder about the category of food called the שִׁבְעַת הַמִּינִים (shiv'at haminim). These are seven species of food that grow in Eretz Yisrael. They appear in our parashah, just two pesukim before the pasuk about Birkat Ha-Mazon:

Devarim 8:8	**דברים ח:ח**
A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates. A land of olive oil and date honey.	אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעֹרָה וְגֶפֶן וּתְאֵנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן וּדְבָשׁ:

How should you thank God after eating these foods? It's a debate in the Mishnah (Berakhot 6:8)!

- Rabban Gamliel says: Say the full Birkat Ha-Mazon.
- The Sages say: Say a shorter version called בִּרְכָה אַחַת מֵעֵין שָׁלֹשׁ (berakhah ahat me'ein shalosh).

Sometimes this mini version of Birkat Ha-Mazon is just called בִּרְכָה מֵעֵין שָׁלֹשׁ (berakhah me'ein shalosh).

The Gemara (Bavli Berakhot 44a) explains the disagreement between Rabban Gamliel and the Sages.



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Their clothing, which did not wear out (8:4)
2. God (9:3)
3. Moshe's time up on the mountain to get the Torah (9:9), and Moshe's prayers on behalf of Benei Yisrael after חֵטְא הָעֵגֶל (heit ha-eigel, the sin of the golden calf) (9:18)
4. Elazar, the son of Aharon (10:6)
5. Our hearts (10:16)
6. When you stay at home and when you go out on your way, when you lie down to sleep and when you get up (11:19)
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. Twice (7:12, 8:20)
9. 70 (10:22)
10. Kings and queens (Yeshayahu 49:23)

- Rabban Gamliel is noticing that verses 8 and 10 are really close together, so he thinks: It must be that if you eat something from verse 8, you should say Birkat Ha-Mazon that appears in verse 10.
- The Sages believe that verse 9 is an interruption. This means the shivat ha-minim are not directly connected to Birkat Ha-Mazon.

R. Akiva presents a third opinion in the mishnah. He says that any time you eat anything and you feel full afterwards, you should recite Birkat Ha-Mazon.

It's most common to follow the Sages, and only say Birkat Ha-Mazon after a meal with bread. But there are some contemporary rabbis who think that any complete meal should be followed by Birkat Ha-Mazon. They think you shouldn't "get out" of Birkat Ha-Mazon if you eat a giant, lavish meal that just happens to not include bread!

In general, we say berakhah me'ein shalosh after eating:

- Grapes, figs, pomegranate, olives, or dates. (Shulkhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim, 208:1)
- Food made from grain that has not been baked into bread, such as noodles, cake, or cookies. (208:2)

תְּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah

In the first blessing of the Amidah we describe God like this:

The great, mighty, and awesome God **הָאֵ-ל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא**

These words might make you imagine God as a great miracle-worker, doing impressive things like creating the world or splitting the sea.

But the words actually come from our parashah, and the context here is something else entirely.

Devarim 10:17-18

The great, mighty, and awesome God who doesn't favor people unfairly, and doesn't take bribes.

Who does justice for the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving them food and clothing.

דברים י:יז-יח

הָאֵ-ל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבֹּר וְהַנּוֹרָא

אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:

עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפַּט יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאֹהֵב גֵּר לָתֶת לוֹ לֶחֶם וְשִׂמְלָה:

What is it that makes God great, mighty, and awesome? According to Parashat Eikev, it's the way God takes care of people fairly, and helps people who are in trouble or who don't fit in.

- The next verse tells us that we must love the stranger too. How might we help others who are in need, like God does? How can we pay special attention to people who are "strangers" or who don't fit in?
- **Try it!** When you say these words in the Amidah, can you focus your thoughts on people that you know, or people that you know about, who need help? How does that change your experience of saying the Amidah?

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