

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



HADAR
 Children & Families

VOLUME
 ISSUE 54

כ"ח אָלוּל תשפ"ה – ה' תשרי תשפ"ו September 21 – 27, 2025



מה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Moshe tells Benei Yisrael that he is 120 years old and his life is coming to an end. He will not be able to enter Eretz Yisrael with them.
- Moshe encourages the people. He tells them not to be afraid, God will take care of them.
- Yehoshua will lead Benei Yisrael, and Moshe urges him: חֲזַק וְעָמַץ (hazak ve'ematz, be strong and brave)!
- Every seven years, at the end of שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah, the year of release), there's a special ceremony on Sukkot. It's called הַקְהֵל (hakhel), and it's a massive public Torah reading event.
- God describes what could happen when, in the future, Benei Yisrael stop following the Torah. God mentions the painful possibility of הִסְתֵּר פָּנִים (hester panim, hiding God's face), like someone not as present or visible, turning away from the people's needs and suffering.
- God tells Moshe to write down the song of the Torah and teach it to Benei Yisrael. (See the פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary section, p. 3, for what this could mean.)





Devarim 31:2

Moshe said to them: "I am now 120 years old, I can no longer go and come. And God has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.'"

דברים לא:ב

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
אֲנֹכִי הַיּוֹם לֹא אוֹכֵל עוֹד לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא
וְה' אָמַר אֵלַי לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה:

The Gemara wonders about this pasuk.

GOOD QUESTION!

Talmud Bavli Sotah 13b

"I can no longer go and come" – **What is going and coming?** It can't be that Moshe had trouble actually walking, because the Torah says (Devarim 34:7) "And Moshe was 120 years old when he died...he was still in perfect physical health!"

...R. Shmuel bar Nahmani said in the name of R. Yonatan that Moshe could no longer go and come in words of Torah. The gates of wisdom were closed to him.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה דף יג עמוד ב

"לֹא אוֹכֵל עוֹד לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא" מַאי
לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא? אֵילִימָא לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא
מִמֶּשׁ, וְהִכְתִּיב "וּמִשֶּׁה בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים
שָׁנָה בָּמוֹתוֹ...לֹא נָס לָחֵה"!

...אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי
יוֹנָתָן לָצֵאת וּלְבֹא בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה. מִלְּמַד
שְׁנִסְתָּתְמוּ מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁעַרֵי חִכְמָה.

- ♦ What activities do you do with your feet, and what activities do you do with your mind? What kinds of "going and coming" can we do with our minds?



- ♦ What message might this midrash be suggesting about which kinds of activities were most important to Moshe?
- ♦ What do you think it felt like for Moshe that the gates of wisdom were closed to him?



פְּרָשְׁנוֹת • Commentary

What songs do you know by heart? Do you know any poems by heart?

In this pasuk in our parashah, God tells Moshe to make sure that Benei Yisrael know a certain שִׁירָה (shira, song or poem) really, really well.

Devarim 31:19

Therefore, write down this shira and teach it to Benei Yisrael; put it in their mouths, in order that this shira may be My witness for Benei Yisrael.

דברים לא:יט

וְעַתָּה כְּתֹבוּ לָכֶם אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת
וְלַמָּדָה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁמְרָהּ בְּפִיהֶם
לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְעֵד בְּבִנְי
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Our פְּרָשְׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) wonder: **What shira are we talking about here?**

Rashbam (France, 950 years ago)

רשב"ם

"Shira" – A poem means words that have been arranged [with a specific structure].

"הַשִּׁירָה" – סִדּוּר דְּבָרִים קְרוּי שִׁירָה.

"הַזֹּאת" – פְּרָשֶׁת הָאֲזִינוּ...

"This shira" – this is Parashat Ha'azinu...

Rashbam thinks the pasuk is talking about next week's parashah, Ha'azinu. It has a unique poetic structure and is often called a shira. Open up Ha'azinu and you'll notice right away that it looks and sounds different from most of the Torah!

- ♦ Try to look through Ha'azinu a little. Why do you think it's important to study and know this shira so well?

Haketav Ve-Hakabbalah (Germany, 200 years ago)

הכתב והקבלה

It seems to me that the word shira doesn't just refer to Ha'azinu. It includes the whole Torah, from "Bereishit" (the first word) to "before all Israel" (the last words).

אָמַנְם לִי נִרְאָה שֶׁבְּמִלַּת שִׁירָה עֲצָמָה
הַמוֹכֵן בּוֹ לֹא שִׁירָת הָאֲזִינוּ בְּלִבָּד, כִּי
אִם אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה מִ"בְּרֵאשִׁית" עַד
לְעֵינֵי כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

According to R. Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg, author of Haketav Ve-Hakabbalah, the whole entire Torah can be described as one giant song or poem! That's the shira we're being told to write down, learn, and place in our mouths.



- ♦ Poetry isn't just about making sure things rhyme. It's often about sharing thoughts in a beautiful way, and looking for ways that words can have many meanings. How does that connect to the Torah?



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



הלכה • Halakhah

Kids at shul!

הַקְהֵל (hakhel) is the mitzvah to gather Benei Yisrael for a massive Torah reading once every seven years. The pesukim in our parashah about hakhel emphasize—twice!—that children should be there (Devarim 31:12-13).

According to the Gemara (Hagigah 3a), adults get extra credit for bringing kids along to hakhel. Ramban describes hakhel as an educational experience. Kids come along, they hear the Torah being read, then they ask questions, and this sparks important conversations, and ultimately, spiritual growth.

Even though we don't do hakhel today, it teaches us an important lesson about kids... at shul!

Tosafot (Hagigah 3a)

We rely on this (hakhel) to bring young children to shul.

תוספות (מסכת חגיגה דף ג עמוד א)

וְעַל זֶה סִמְכוּ לְהַבִּיאַ קְטָנִים לְבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת.



The Mishnah Berurah (98:3) quotes the position of the Shla Ha-Kadosh (R. Isaiah Horowitz), who said that parents should bring to shul any child who is old enough to learn to say “amen” to Kaddish and Kedushah. He worried, however, that very young children who don't yet know how to control their behavior might disturb others while they try to pray, and might learn to treat shul like a place for games or snacks, rather than as a place for prayer.

But others think the youngest children should come to shul. In the Talmud Yerushalmi (Yevamot 3a) there's a story about Rabbi Yehoshua's mother, who would bring her son to the Beit Midrash in his cradle, even while he was a little baby. She wanted him to get used to hearing Torah and tefillah from the very beginning of his life—and it worked! Rabbi Yehoshua grew up to become an amazing Torah scholar and teacher.

There are many things kids can do at shul.



- ◆ Listen and learn your way around the Siddur



- ◆ Sing along!



- ◆ Find surprising details in the Torah reading



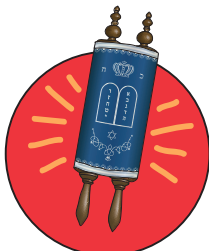
- ◆ Find the answers to a Devash Scavenger Hunt



- ◆ Lead Adon Olam



- ◆ Say “amen” to Kaddish and Kedushah, or make a berakhah



- ◆ Do גְּלִילָה (gelilah, dressing the Torah in its cover)



- ◆ Connect with friends and community

The bottom line is that you're never too young to pray to God or learn something new from the Torah!



דְּבַשׁ שֶׁל דִּיּוּחַ • 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: Yehoshua's job will be just as hard as Moshe's.



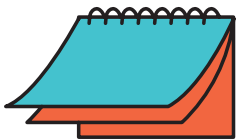
Agree!

- ♦ They may be close to Eretz Yisrael, but Yehoshua is going to have to lead the people in many, many wars.
- ♦ In the מִדְבָּר (midbar, wilderness), Benei Yisrael had all their needs met. It will be a challenge for Yehoshua to help the people learn independence once the מָן (mann, miraculous food from God) comes to an end.
- ♦ Who would want to try to fill Moshe's shoes? Yehoshua's job will be just as hard, or maybe even harder, than Moshe's, because the people will feel that Yehoshua can never live up to what Moshe was.



Disagree!

- ♦ Benei Yisrael learned a lot of lessons in the midbar. Thanks to Moshe's leadership, they have become more obedient and unified. This will make Yehoshua's job easier than Moshe's.
- ♦ Yehoshua gets to be the leader in a land flowing with milk and honey...way more cushy than having to work in a hot and dry desert, like Moshe did.



בְּנֵי דִּיּוּחַ • The Calendar

We are still in the middle of the High Holiday period. During this time we add Tehillim 27 to our morning and evening tefillot. Most communities add it from the beginning of Elul through the end of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).

What makes this chapter of Tehillim appropriate for this time of year?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>

Here is one of its central pesukim:

One thing I ask from God, this I request: to be in the house of God all the days of my life, to see the pleasantness of God, and to visit God's sanctuary.

אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת ה' אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ
שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּי לַחַזוֹת
בְּנֹעַם ה' וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלֹו:

This is a really appropriate thing to say during the season of the year when we spend the most time in shul!

But more importantly, this pasuk expresses the wish to be as close to God as possible, to spend all our time with God. This is a **כַּוְּנָה** (kavvanah, intention) we can have as we work through our teshuvah and think about the coming year. How can we live our lives so that we do what God wants of us? How can we show others God's "pleasantness," and experience it ourselves? How can we earn being able to stay in God's house forever?



רְגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

Devarim 31:6

Be strong and resolute, be not in fear or in dread of them; for it is indeed your God who marches with you: God will not fail you or leave you.

דברים לא:ו

חֲזָקוּ וְאִמְצוּ אֶל תִּירָאוֹ וְאֶל תַּעֲרִצוֹ
מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ
עִמָּךְ לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבֶךָ:



לַעֲרִץ (שֹׁרֵשׁ ע.ר.צ.)

- ◆ To fear or be in awe of (la'arotz)

עֲרִיץ
Dictator, tyrant (aritz)



- מַעֲרִיץ
1. To admire or respect (often excessively so), to idolize
 2. A fan (ma'aritz)



Find the Word!

Did you know? This שֹׁרֵשׁ (shoresh, root) only comes up four times in the Torah, and all of them are in Sefer Devarim (though it is in other places in Tanakh). Can you find the first Torah appearance? (Hint: Look in Devarim 1:29.)



שאלות השבוע • 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 31:1 to 31:3
- 2) 31:4 to 31:6
- 3) 31:7 to 31:9
- 4) 31:10 to 31:13
- 5) 31:14 to 31:19
- 6) 31:20 to 31:24
- 7) 31:25 to 31:30

Good luck!

1 What does Moshe say he can no longer do at age 120?

2 What two kings of the Emori did the people defeat before crossing the Jordan River?

3 To whom did Moshe give the תּוֹרָה (torah, teaching) that he had written down?

4 On what holiday must the Torah be read in front of the whole people every seven years?

5 What does God say will happen after Moshe dies?

6 What does God say the people will never forget?

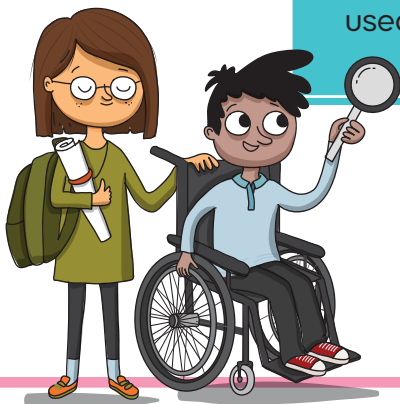
7 In this aliyah, what two witnesses does Moshe say he will call on, to testify against the people?

8 What two-word phrase does Moshe use twice to tell Yehoshua to have confidence?

9 What different Hebrew words for fear are used in our parashah?

10 What Hebrew letter appears as a word in our parashah?

*
Look for the answers on page 12!





Don't blink during Torah reading this week—you might miss it! That's right, this week's parashah has fewer verses than any other—only 30! Why would we have such a short Torah reading?

First, let's get a sense of just how short it is. Ready for some numbers?

The shortest parashah: Vayeilekh, 30 verses

The longest parashah: Naso, 176 verses

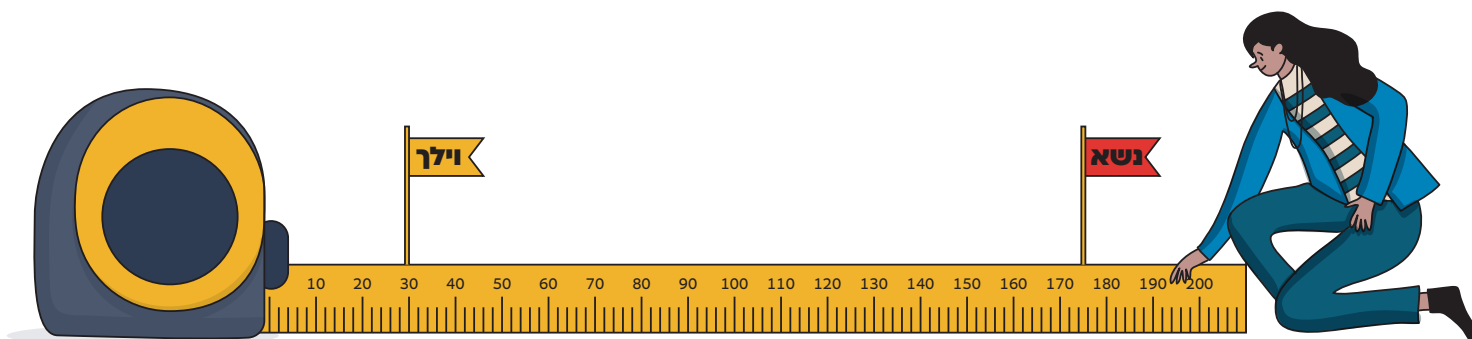
If you lined up all the parashiyot in order of length, which ones would be **in the middle?** Ki Teitzei, 110 verses; Eikev and Vayikra, 111 verses

And this might be the most surprising—the four shortest parashiyot in the Torah are... the last four! That's Nitzavim, Vayeilekh, Ha'azinu, and Vezot Haberakhah. Now, why would that be?

Remember a few weeks back how Ki Tavo had a lot of really bad curses in it? Well, we don't want to go into the new year with all of that awful feeling from the curses, so we always make sure to read Ki Tavo before Rosh Hashanah and also have an extra Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah, to give us a chance to feel better.

But once you are done reading those curses and the verses that follow them, there are only 163 verses left in the Torah. And sometimes—like this year—there are four times we still need to read a parashah between Ki Tavo and Simhat Torah. That leaves us with only about 40 verses per parashah, so they all have to be pretty short!

We would say you should enjoy the short Torah reading this week, but we love Torah reading so much we will just hope you aren't too sad that there's so little of it!





בואו נדבר על זה • Tell Me More About This!

הַקְהֵל (hakhel) was a Torah reading that only happened once every seven years. Today, though, Jews read the Torah publically every Shabbat (and Monday and Thursday, and on other holidays). **Where did our regular cycle of public Torah reading come from?**

The story begins with עֶזְרָא הַסּוֹפֵר (Ezra Ha-Sofer, Ezra the Scribe), a prophet and major leader after the Jews returned from exile in Babylonia. In the Book of Nehemiah (chapter 8) we hear about Ezra organizing a ceremony that was a lot like hakhel. It included some practices that have become part of our Torah readings in shul, like making a berakhah before the reading (8:6). But it was also different in some important ways. For example, while we generally read Torah in shul, this reading took place in the town square (8:3).

During the time of the second Beit Ha-Mikdash, lots of towns started having regular Torah readings throughout the year. Like Ezra, they would hold these readings in a public place like the שוק

(shuk, market street). Because market days were Monday and Thursday (when people came to town to buy and sell produce in the shuk), they read the Torah on those days, when the most people could hear it.

They would also read the Torah on Shabbat morning in shul, like us—but with someone whose job was to translate the reading into Aramaic, called a מְתוּרְגֵמָן (meturgeman). This is also based on Ezra's Torah reading, since he had all the לְוִיִּם (Levi'im, members of the tribe of Levi) explain the Torah to the people (8:7-8).

- ♦ What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading Torah in the shuk versus in the shul?
- ♦ What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading Torah with someone translating versus letting people understand it themselves?
- ♦ Why is it important to have so many opportunities to hear the Torah in community?





קֶה דָּוָשׁ • What's Going On Here?

How much Torah was read at הַקְהָל (hakhel), that massive Torah reading event that happened once every seven years? Did they read the whole thing?

According to the Mishnah (Sotah 7:8), they read some key sections of Sefer Devarim. (Topics that have all come up in recent issues of Devash!)

♦ The first six chapters of Devarim, plus the first paragraph of Shema

♦ The second paragraph of Shema

♦ Two discussions of מַעֲשֵׂר (ma'aser, tithing)

♦ Rules for kings of Benei Yisrael

♦ Blessings and curses from God

in Eikev

in Re'eh
and Ki Tavo

in Shoftim

in Ki Tavo

in Devarim
and Va'ethanan



The Mishnah also reports that the Torah reader at hakhel would be none other than...the king himself! The Mishnah describes how it was a powerful experience for him to review, in this public way, all the rules that limited his own power over the people.

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

- Go out and come in—this might mean to lead the people in battle against their enemies, or see the midrash on p. 2 (31:2)
- Sihon and Og (31:4)
- The priests from the tribe of Levi (31:9)
- Sukkot (31:10)
- The people will turn to idolatry and will abandon the בְּרִית (brit, covenant) (31:16)
- הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת (ha-shira ha-zot, this song/ poem—see the פְּרָשְׁנוֹת / Commentary section on p. 3 for what this could mean) (31:21)
- Heaven and earth (31:28)
- חֲזַק וְעָמַץ (hazak ve'ematz, be strong and brave)! (31:7, 31:23)
- תִּירָא / תִּירָאוּ (tir'u, tira) and תַּעֲרִצוּ (ta'artzu) and תִּהְיֶה (teihat) (31:6,8)
- Nun—it's the name of Yehoshua's father! (31:23)

Get Devash
in the mail!



HADAR
Children & Families

הַדָּר
HADAR
TORAH · AVODAH · HESED