

# Torah Weekly

August 2-8, 2020  
12-18 Av, 5780

Torah: Eikev: Deuteronomy  
7:12 - 11:25

Haftarah:  
Isaiah 49:14 - 51:3

PARSHAT EIKEV

## Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

## Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

## Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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**ALEPH INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

**The Battle: Then and Now** The Torah makes for a lousy history book. Oftentimes significant historical events are completely omitted, whereas seemingly trivial incidents are related at length. To make matters a bit more confusing, the Torah has a penchant for recounting events out of chronological sequence.

This is because the Torah, although presented in story form, is not a history book at all. Every biblical episode is actually “current events,” applicable to our daily lives. Thus the Torah relates only stories whose messages are timeless, and even those stories are “edited”—leaving only the details which are germane to its eternal messages, and presented in a manner which will bring across the message in an optimal manner. Thus, to study Torah without exploring the text for its pertinent messages is to ignore the Torah’s soul. For example, when we feel overwhelmed and flooded by life’s troubles, we look to Noah for inspiration. When we are locked in combat with evil—temptations from within, or opposition from without—we read the story of Jacob and Esau, and learn how to react. The story of the Exodus teaches us how to deal with our enslavement to our impulses, nature and/or addictions. The Book of Deuteronomy is replete with Moses’ descriptions of the upcoming conquest of the land of Canaan, and his assurances that the Israelites will be successful in battle. The following, taken from this week’s Torah reading, is one of Moses’ many statements on this subject: *Will you say to yourself, “These nations are more numerous than I; how will I be able to drive them*

*out?” You shall not fear them... You shall not be terrified of them, for the L-rd, your G-d, who is in your midst, is a great and awesome G-d. (Deuteronomy 7:17–21)* Moses was addressing a nation that was as accustomed to miracles as we are to nature. With Moses at their helm, the Israelites had just conquered the two mighty kingdoms of the Emorites and Bashanites. Their daily diet consisted of heavenly manna and water which spewed forth from a rock. Yet Moses sensed their dread and trepidation, and felt the need to reassure them. They were keenly aware that once they entered Canaan they were on their own. G-d wouldn’t send ten plagues upon the Canaanites, nor would Moses be there to manipulate nature at whim. And facing the 31 Canaanite kings in battle on an even playing field was a frightening prospect. And Moses didn’t deny that the foe was formidable. But he reassured them that while G-d’s hand would not be patent in their impending war, it would nevertheless be behind the scenes, ensuring the Israelites’ victory. Recognizing the importance of morale, Moses infused the Israelites with confidence, reassuring them that they need only do their part on the battlefield, and G-d will arrange the favorable outcome. We, too, face a battle every day. And often the foe seems formidable and unconquerable. The chassidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once addressed G-d: “Master of the Universe, You have placed all the earthly temptations before our eyes, while the spiritual benefits and rewards for following Your will are relegated to the books we study. That is quite unfair! Reverse the situation. Serenade our senses with an appreciation

for spirituality, and consign all material benefits and pleasures to the library shelves. See, then how many people will sin!” It would be foolhardy to underestimate the battle which we face daily, and we may not have the wherewithal to succeed merely on our own powers. Yet, Moses enjoins us to remember that we are not alone on the battlefield. G-d wants us to struggle and toil, but when we do so, He personally guarantees our victory. *“The L-rd, your G-d, will drive out those nations from before you, little by little...” (Deuteronomy 7:22)* The battle is slow; we do not become spiritual people overnight. But with persistence, determination and help from Above, we will eventually become the spiritual and refined individuals we so yearn to be. *By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg*

**Bread, Bucks, and Making a living** *Man does not live by bread alone.* A famous line (it even figured prominently in an ad for a burger chain some years ago), but what does it mean? The verse comes from this week’s Torah reading, and is a reference to the miraculous manna, which fell from heaven daily during the Jewish people’s sojourn in the wilderness. The conclusion of the verse is that “rather, by the utterance of G-d’s mouth does man live.” Thus, it is reminding us about the true source of human sustenance. Contrary to popular belief, it is neither our earthly toil, nor the sweat of our brow, nor all those conferences, meetings and sales seminars that ensure our success. The reality is that it is G-d who sustains us and looks after us, in the very same way as our ancestors trekking through the

desert were totally dependent on Him for their daily bread. Wealth is a G-dly gift. At the end of the day, it is not our business acumen alone that provides our daily bread, but the blessings from Above which endow our efforts with success. Ask anyone in sales how often their best-laid plans and pitches have come to naught, and then, out of the blue, a big order comes in with little or no effort. Of course, it's not the rule, and we must be prepared to put in effort if we are to succeed. But when it does happen, it reminds us that there are higher forces, beyond our control, at work. But there's another meaning to this verse as well. Man does not live by bread alone. The human spirit is such that we crave more than bread. Human beings are never satisfied with money or materialism alone. Money is important, but we cannot live by money exclusively. What about job satisfaction? I know a number of individuals in our community who willingly gave up lucrative positions for less rewarding ones, because they found their work unstimulating. They were making lots of cash, but there was no emotional reward. I also know people who have it all financially, but who are nonetheless unhappy people. They are very successful—and very miserable. The successes we achieve do not guarantee our happiness. After we've bought the house of our dreams, and our fantasy sports car, and the latest cell phones, laptops and DVDs, we tire of them all. For satisfaction to be lasting, it must be more than material; it must be spiritual. We need more than bread and money; we need stimulation and a sense of meaningful achievement. We need to know that our lives have purpose, and that somehow we have made a difference. We want to be assured that our work is productive and will have lasting value. They tell the story of a prisoner in a Russian labor camp whose job it was to turn a heavy wheel attached to a wall. For twenty-five years the prisoner worked at his backbreaking labor. He assumed that this wheel must be attached to a mill on the other side of the wall; perhaps he was milling grain, or pumping water that irrigated many fields. In his mind's eye he saw the plentiful crops and the sacks of milled grain feeding thousands of people. After twenty-five years of hard labor, when he was about to be released, the prisoner asked to be shown the apparatus behind the prison wall. There was nothing there! The wheel was just a wheel—all his "work" had served no useful purpose. The man collapsed in a dead faint, absolutely devastated. His life's work had been in vain. We have a deep-seated need to know that our life's work is purposeful, physically and spiritually. When we understand that every good deed is attached to a complex spiritual apparatus, that our every action meshes with a systematic structure of cosmic significance, then our lives become endowed with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. We desperately need to know that, in some way, our work is helping others—that we are making a contribution to society beyond our own selfish needs. Then, we live. Then we are happy. Man does not live by bread alone. We simply cannot. *By Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

**Sunday, August 2, 2020 --- 12 Av, 5780**

**Nachmanides' Disputation (1263)**

By order of King James I of Aragon (Spain), Nachmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, 1194-1270) was compelled to participate in a public debate, held in the king's presence, against the Jewish convert to Christianity, Pablo Christiani. His brilliant defense of Judaism and refutations of Christianity's claims served as the basis of many such future disputations through the generations. Because his victory was an insult to the king's religion, Nachmanides was forced to flee Spain. He came to Jerusalem, where he found just a handful of Jewish families living in abject poverty, and revived the Jewish community there. The synagogue he built in the Old City is in use today, and is perhaps the oldest standing synagogue in the world.

**770 Acquired (1940)**

On this date in 1940, the building at 770 Eastern Parkway in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York was purchased by Agudas Chassidei Chabad (the Chabad-Lubavitch community) to house the living quarters, study and office, Yeshivah, and synagogue of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), who had arrived in New York (following his rescue from Nazi-occupied Warsaw) five months earlier. It also served as the headquarters of his son-in-law and successor, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, and continues to be the center of Chabad-Lubavitch's global network of institutions of Jewish education and outreach.

**Tuesday, August 4, 2020 --- 14 Av, 5780**

**R. Schneur Zalman Settles in Liadi (1801)**

The first Rebbe of Chabad, R. Schneur Zalman (known as the Alter Rebbe), served as preacher in the town of Liozna (in present-day Belarus) from 1783 until 1801. In that year, R. Schneur Zalman was imprisoned for a second time in Petersburg, due to trumped-up charges presented by his opponents to the government. After his release, he relocated to Liadi (also in Belarus), where he continued leading his followers and teaching the philosophy of Chabad. He remained in Liadi until 1812, when he and his family fled eastward from the oncoming French forces of Napoleon. Under the leadership of R. Schneur Zalman's son, R. DovBer, in 1814 the seat of the Chabad movement was transferred to the town of Lubavitch (in Russia near the Belarussian border). It remained there for over 100 years, until 1915, when the fifth Chabad Rebbe, R. Sholom DovBer, fled from Lubavitch to Rostov in face of the advancing German army during World War I.

**Wednesday, August 5, 2020 --- 15 Av, 5780**

**End of Dying in Desert (1274 BCE)**

In wake of the incident of the "Spies," in which the generation that came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership demonstrated their unpreparedness for the task of conquering and settling the Holy Land, G-d decreed that entire generation would die out in the desert. After 38 years of wandering through the wilderness the dying finally ended, and a new generation of Jews stood ready to enter the Holy Land. It was the 15th of Av of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE)

**Jeroboam's Roadblocks Removed (574 BCE)**

Upon the division of the Holy Land into two kingdoms following the death of King Solomon in the year 2964 from creation (797 BCE), Jeroboam ben Nebat, ruler of the breakaway Northern Kingdom of Israel, set up roadblocks to prevent his citizens from making the thrice-yearly pilgrimage to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judea. These were finally removed more than 200 years later by Hosea ben Eiliah, the last king of the Northern Kingdom, on Av 15, 3187 (574 BCE).

**Thursday, August 6, 2020 --- 16 Av, 5780**

**Sir Moses Montefiore (1885)**

Sir Moses Montefiore was a religious philanthropist who worked tirelessly on behalf of his brethren worldwide, and especially in the Land of Israel. He dispensed large sums toward charitable causes and founded numerous establishments and institutions. Sir Montefiore traveled far and wide to visit Jewish communities and interceded on their behalf before rulers such as Queen Victoria, Czar Alexander the Second, the Ottoman Sultan, and the pope. He lived to the ripe old age of 100, passing away on 16 Menachem Av 5645 (1885).