

# Torah Weekly

ת"ב

July 16 - 22, 2023  
27 Tammuz - 4 Av, 5783

Torah Reading:  
Devarim: Deuteronomy 1:1 - 3:22  
Haftarah:  
Isaiah 1:1-27

## PARSHAT DEVARIM

### 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 Matzah 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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No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

**Goals** A person can live from day to day, or he or she can have a clear goal in life. For such a person, every major decision is made in terms of that goal. Some people are so strongly and pure-heartedly focused on their goal that even apparently minor decisions and ordinary, everyday activities are firmly directed towards their aim and hope in life.

The same can apply to an entire people. Throughout their history, the Jewish people have had a series of goals which interconnect with each other. This Shabbat we find two of the central goals linking together. The first concerns the weekly Torah reading.

This begins the fifth book of the [Torah](#). This book, Devarim (Deuteronomy), differs strikingly from the other four books. The earlier books of the Torah are focused on recounting events as they take place: the creation of the world, the Flood, Abraham's life, his descendants being enslaved in Egypt, going free in the Exodus, receiving the Torah at Sinai, building the Sanctuary, and various specific events during the forty years in the wilderness.

By contrast, the fifth book consists of talks by Moses to the Jewish people in the last year of his life, preparing them to enter the Land of Israel. The fifth book is focused on the future: aware of the past, but preparing the Jewish people for something which is going to happen.

The Jewish people have already gone through many different stages of experience, including bitter slavery and wandering in the desert for forty years. They are now ready to enter the Promised Land, and together with their leader Moses they can look confidently towards the future.

This is one way in which this Shabbat expresses reaching towards a goal: the Jewish

people are poised to enter the Holy Land.

Now we come to a second, complementary goal. This week's reading is always read on the Shabbat before the fast of the Ninth of Av. This fast commemorates the destruction of both the first and second Temples, and many other tragedies. Yet the [Ninth of Av](#) is more than a gloomy lament about the past. In its inner essence, it too generates a bold and expectant gaze towards the future.

Why? Because we are able to look back at two millennia of suffering, and in particular at the horrors of three-quarters of a century ago. We have traveled through our wilderness of history. Now we are able to look forward, with the perspective of Jewish teaching, towards the coming of Messiah and the rebuilding of our beautiful Temple in Jerusalem.

It is true that we have many times seen many tears in our long past. In recent centuries, and in recent decades, we have also seen much confusion. One may indeed wonder, reading the daily newspapers, what does the future hold? Yet our sages are clear in their view: the future is filled with joy.

The key message as to how we should face this radiant future, prepare for it and make it happen, is expressed by the concluding verse of this week's *haftarah* (reading from the prophets): "Zion will be redeemed through justice [Torah], and its captives [will go free] through charity" ([Isaiah 1:27](#)). Through Torah study, teaching justice in all aspects of life, and good deeds such as charity, we can make the glorious future, the goal of Judaism, for us and all humanity, happen now.

## Moses the Translator

The fifth of the Five Books of Moses describes the final 37 days of Moses' life. During this time, Moses repeats many of the laws he has already taught, rebukes the people, and retells some of the major happenings of the previous 40 years.

Moses also takes on a new role: translator. Until this point, Moses had been the conveyer of the Torah, communicating the Divine wisdom to the Jewish people, but now he translated it into 70 languages for them.

His audience, the Children of Israel about to enter the Promised Land, all spoke Hebrew and had no practical use for a translation in Egyptian, Babylonian, or Cantonese. Centuries later, when the translation of the [Torah](#) would become an important priority, would it not suffice for the great scholars of the time to translate it? Why did Moses himself have to dedicate the last days of his life to this extensive task?

Language captures culture. It's not enough to translate the word; each language captures a unique perspective, a distinctive way of understanding the world, which is why translation is a tricky business. Moses understood this. He knew that translating the Torah was not simply a pragmatic matter that could be left to future generations. G-d's infinite will and wisdom is relevant not just in Hebrew and not just to the people living in ancient Israel. The Torah is the ultimate truth, and applicable to all places, times, and cultures, and therefore can, and must, be translated into all languages by someone who deeply understands the nuances and sensitivities.

There is also a deep mystical significant to the translation. The goal of the Torah is to unite all people with the one [G-d](#). The 70 languages, by contrast, are a

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

source of division. Initially, all people spoke one language, leading to a deep sense of unity, which they tried to preserve by constructing the Tower of Babel. G-d, however, disrupted their unity by confusing their language and forcing them to scatter across the earth. The act of translating the Torah, therefore, is an awesome spiritual undertaking—one so radical it had to be spearheaded by Moses himself. The act of translation is the bridge which brings the unity of G-d into the diversity of existence. It is the thread that transforms diversity into harmony,

As we read about the last precious days of Moses' life, we take this message to heart. We understand that, yes, the message of the Torah is as true in ancient Hebrew as it is in modern English. We remind ourselves that we too must be translators of the Torah, carrying on the task of connecting the plurality of existence with the oneness of G-d, and revealing that the incredible diversity of the universe is an expression of the one G-d.

*By Rabbi Menachem Feldman*

**Sunday, July 16, 2023 --- 27 Tammuz, 5783**

**Third expulsion from France (1322)**

After having been allowed back into France in the year 1315 (after the expulsion in 1306 by Philip IV), the Jews were once again expelled from France by Charles IV, who thus broke the pledge made by his predecessors in 1315 that the Jews would be able to stay in France for at least 12 years.

**Monday, July 17, 2023 --- 28 Tammuz, 5783**

**Passing of "Yismach Moshe" (1841)**

Tammuz 28 is the *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum (1759-1841) of Uhely, Hungary, author of *Yismach Moshe* and patriarch of the Hungarian Chassidic dynasties.

**Passing of Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried (1886)**

Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried (1804-1886) was born in Uzhhorod (Ungvar) in the Carpathian region of the Habsburg Empire (now Ukraine). When he was eight years old, Shlomo's father, Rabbi Yosef, passed away, and Ungvar's chief rabbi, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Heller, assumed legal guardianship of Shlomo. In 1830, he abandoned his work as a wine merchant and accepted the position of Rabbi of Brezovica (Brezevitz). In 1849, he returned to Ungvar to serve as a rabbinical judge. Realizing that the average Jew required a basic knowledge of practical halachah, Rabbi Ganzfried compiled the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, an abbreviated digest of Jewish law. To this day, the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* remains a classic halachic work, and it has been translated into many languages.

In addition to the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, he authored many works including *Kesset HaSofer*, a halachic primer for scribes, and *Pnei Shlomo*, a commentary on the Talmud.

**Tuesday, July 18, 2023 --- 29 Tammuz, 5783**

**Passing of Rashi (1105)**

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as "Rashi", passed away on the 29th of Tammuz of the year 4865 from creation (1105 CE).

Rashi was born in Troyes, France, in 1040. His commentaries on the Torah, Prophets and Talmud are universally accepted as the most basic tool for the understanding of these texts for schoolchild and scholar alike. Numerous commentaries have been authored on his commentary. In his famed "Rashi talks", the Lubavitcher Rebbe repeatedly demonstrated how Rashi's "simple meaning of the text" style enfolds many layers of meaning, often resolving profound difficulties in the text and presenting new, innovative interpretations with a simple word choice or rephrasing of a Midrashic passage.

**Wednesday, July 19, 2023 --- 1 Av, 5783**

**Passing of Aaron (1274 BCE)**

Aaron the first High Priest, brother of Moses and Miriam, passed away at age 123 on the 1st of Av of the year 2487 from creation (1274 BCE). This is the only *yahrzeit* (date of passing) explicitly mentioned in the Torah (Numbers 33:38).

**Ezra Arrives in Israel (348 BCE)**

Following their long journey from Babylon (see Jewish history for the [12th of Nissan](#)), Ezra and his entourage arrived in the land of Israel to be near the newly built second Holy Temple in Jerusalem. A relatively small group came together with Ezra, the majority of Jews, including great Torah scholars, choosing to remain in Babylon due to the harsh conditions that were then prevailing in Israel.

**Thursday, July 20, 2023 --- 2 Av, 5783**

**Vel' d'Hiv Roundup (1942)**

On the 2nd and 3rd of Av in the year 5702 from creation (1942 CE), more than 13,000 Jews were rounded up by French police and interred in the Vel' d'Hiv, an indoor bicycle stadium in the center of Paris. They were later transported to Auschwitz to be killed. Within days, the Vel' d'Hiv was cleaned up and ready for recreation.

**R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn Arrives in Israel (1929)**

In the summer of 1929, [R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn](#), sixth Rebbe of Chabad, visited the [Land of Israel](#) (the only Chabad Rebbe to do so—see link below). The stated purpose of the trip was to pray at the gravesites of the righteous individuals interred there. Among the cities he visited during his two-week-long stay were [Jerusalem](#), [Safed](#), [Meron](#), [Tiberias](#), [Hebron](#), and Tel Aviv.

**Friday, July 21, 2023 --- 3 Av, 5783**

**Passing of R. Shimshon of Ostropolle (1648)**

R. Shimshon of Ostropolle was a saintly individual who was greatly revered both in his lifetime and beyond. It is told that an angel called a *maggid* would come and reveal secrets of Torah to him, and that he merited revelations from [Elijah the Prophet](#). He himself records kabbalistic insights that were revealed to him in dreams.

R. Shimshon authored *Dan Yadin*, a kabbalistic commentary, as well as numerous other unpreserved works. Additionally, many of his interpretations that were preserved orally have been collected and published.

R. Shimshon died a martyr's death at the hands of a Cossack mob during the Chmielnicki Massacres, while wrapped in his [tallit](#) and [tefillin](#).

**Shabbat, July 22, 2023 --- 4 Av, 5783**

**Passing of R. Menachem Azariah of Fano (1620)**

[R. Menachem Azariah of Fano](#), Italy, was a famed Talmudic scholar and kabbalist. A prolific author, he composed numerous works in both [kabbalah](#) and Jewish law, the most famous of which is *Asarah Maamaros*, a collection of kabbalistic treatises. Additionally, he used his wealth to obtain and publish the works of other great sages (such as [R. Yosef Caro's Kessef Mishneh](#)).

R. Menachem Azariah was a devoted follower of the great kabbalist [R. Moshe Cordovero](#), whom he also lent financial support. Later, he was introduced to the kabbalistic doctrines of [R. Yitzchak Luria](#) (the Arizal), which he embraced wholeheartedly as well.