

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash
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PARASHAT HASHAVUA

PARASHAT EKEV

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

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לע"נ

יהודה פנחס בן הרב שרגא פייוועל

כ"ב אב תשכ"ח – י אב תשע"ב

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

**The Expanded Shema
By Rav Yoel bin-Nun**

Keriat Shema, the twice-daily creed, is a focal point of our prayers, with its first two paragraphs, *Shema* and *Ve-haya im Shamo*, coming from *Sefer Devarim*: 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 respectively. These two passages share thematic elements and details (especially in their conclusions), their recitation being biblically mandated, as well as their inscription in *tefillin* and *mezuzot*. In addition, they bookend the "commandments of faith" – the *mitzvot* concerning love, fear, and service of God, and concerning the eradication of anything relating to idolatry upon entering the land inhabited by the Seven Nations.

This latter point is readily apparent if we read the expanded text of *Shema* (*Devarim* 6) along with the expanded text of *Ve-haya im Shamo* (10:12–11:25). In both units, we find the commandments to be aware of and to acknowledge God, to love and to fear Him; as well as warnings against idolatry.

Expanded <i>Shema</i>	Expanded <i>Ve-haya im Shamo</i>
(6:5) And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your substance.	(11:1) Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, always. (11:13) ...to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul...
(6:13) You shall fear the Lord your God, and serve Him, and you shall swear by His Name.	(10:20) You shall fear the Lord your God; Him shall you serve, and to Him you shall hold fast, and swear by His Name.
(6:2-3) That you may fear the Lord your God, to keep	(10:12-13) And now, Israel, what does the Lord your

all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you – you, and your child, and your child's child, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Hear, therefore, O Israel, and take care to do it, that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, as the Lord, God of your fathers has spoken to you, a land flowing with milk and honey.	God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command you this day, for your good. (11:9) That you may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord swore to them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey.
(6:6-9) And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your arm, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and within your gates.	(11:18-20) And you shall lay up these, My words, in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and within your gates.

The correspondence between the two units is clearly apparent, with the latter unit expanding on the former. Before we delve into what comes in between, let us consider the clear connections between these two units and the opening statement of the Ten Commandments.

Rav Mordechai Breuer *zt"l*¹ notes the two accepted ways of reading this opening statement (in accordance with the tradition of Israel and the tradition of Babylonia, respectively): *ta'am tachtan* (lower cantillation) and *ta'am elyon* (upper cantillation). According to the former, the opening sentence reads,

I am the Lord your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage – you shall not have other gods before Me.

The exact meaning of "you shall not have other gods" is a spiritual prohibition on accepting any other divinity, even only conceptually, in one's mind.² Thus the verse in its entirety deals with the molding of awareness and consciousness. Only in the verses that follow is there

¹ *Pirkei Mikraot*, Alon Shevut 5769, chapter 10, pp. 142-157, and see my book (with Rav Shaul Baruchi), *Mikraot, Parashat Yitro*, pp. 172-182.

² See Ramban's commentary on this command (5:6) based on Targum Onkelos.

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an explicit prohibition against fashioning any idol or image, bowing down to them, or serving other deities. Since a person is able to sin by merely thinking about other gods as actual deities, even without actually fashioning any god or bowing down to it, and conversely he is able to sin by making an idol or image (and even, heaven forbid, bowing down before it) without actually recognizing its divinity, it is clear that each of these prohibitions stands on its own. (Indeed, Rambam counts these, in his *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, as four separate prohibitions.³) The main distinction between “You shall not have other gods” and “You shall not fashion... you shall not bow down to them, nor serve them” is the difference between the spiritual prohibition of accepting another divinity in one’s consciousness and the practical prohibitions against fashioning an idol or image, prostrating oneself to or serving other gods.

Even a cursory glance at *Devarim* 6 makes it immediately clear that the unit is focused on the sphere of consciousness, starting from the commandment of God’s Oneness (“The Lord our God, the Lord is One”) through the commands to love God, to fear Him, and to serve Him, and to swear [only] in His Name, up to the warnings in this chapter – three in number⁴ – which likewise concern consciousness:

1. “Guard yourself lest you forget the Lord Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (6:12);
2. “You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the nations that are round about you” (6:14);
3. “You shall not try the Lord our God, as You tried Him at Massa” (6:16).

All three prohibitions pertain to the sphere of consciousness: You shall not forget; you shall not allow foreign influences⁵; you shall not put God to a test. The first two correspond precisely to the two parts of the opening verse of the Ten Commandments: You shall not forget the Lord Who brought you out of Egypt, and you shall not go after other gods.

This suggests that chapter 6 in its entirety – the introduction, the *Shema*, and the units immediately preceding and following it⁶ – correspond precisely to the first of the Ten Commandments (following the *ta’am tachton*), the crux of which is acceptance of God’s Kingship alone, the remembrance of God having brought us out of Egypt, our love and fear and service of Him, and the prohibition of thought or consciousness of any foreign

deity, which includes the prohibition of doubting God or testing Him.

Once we reach chapter 7, we immediately find the transition to the struggle against actual idolatry, the ban on covenants or marital ties with the pagan nations in Kena’an, and the obligation to eradicate anything related to their worship. It is therefore clear that the *mitzvot* which appear after the Ten Commandments are listed in the same order. The Ten Commandments are the main categories, as it were, while the *mitzvot* that follow are subcategories.⁷ The first of the Ten Commandments is oriented in its entirety to molding consciousness and awareness, and it is then broken down into the *mitzvot* of faith in the spiritual realm – including the warnings and prohibitions included in the First Commandment. These are neither positive nor negative *mitzvot*, but rather *mitzvot* that tell us: Know and be aware and remember → Love and fear and serve → Guard yourself against forgetting, against foreign influences, and against doubting and testing.

Rav Breuer z”l goes on to demonstrate a different reading (according to the Babylonian tradition, known as *ta’am elyon*), according to which the first Commandment consists only of “I am the Lord your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage”⁸ – while all four prohibitions that follow⁹ belong to the Second Commandment, which concerns idolatry: from the prohibition of accepting any other divinity in thought, to the prohibitions on foreign influences and doubts; to prohibitions on actual fashioning and service of deities.

It turns out that this reading, too, is anchored in the list of *mitzvot* that appears in the unit of *Shema* and the verses that follow, up to the end of verse 13, all of which come to mold our consciousness through positive guidance: Know and recognize and remember → Love and fear and serve → Guard yourself against forgetting. Indeed, this warning in verse 12 represents decisive proof that the first Commandment, “I am the Lord your God”,¹⁰ is a command that obligates action: it demands knowledge and remembering, since it is accompanied by its own prohibition: “Guard yourself lest you forget the Lord Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Any attempt¹¹ to interpret the Commandment, “I am the Lord your God” as merely an introduction to the prohibitions of “You shall have no other

⁷ This is echoed in the forbidden labors of Shabbat; see *Mishna, Shabbat*, chapter 7.

⁸ *Pirkei Mikraot* (see above, n. 1), pp. 144-146; 149-151.

⁹ “**You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not fashion for yourself... You shall not bow down to them, nor shall you serve them.**”

¹⁰ This is echoed in the verse in *Tehillim* (50:7), “Hear, My people, and I will speak; Israel, and I will testify against you: God your God am I.” See also my addendum to the words of my father and teacher in his book, *Eretz Ha-Moriah: Pirkei Mikra Ve-lashon* (Alon Shevut, 5766), pp. 115-116, concerning the difference between “*ani*” and “*anokhi*” in biblical Hebrew.

¹¹ See Ramban’s gloss on Rambam’s first commandment, concerning the exclusion of the foundations of faith from the list of commandments. However, Ramban agrees with Rambam on this decisive issue; see his comment on Prohibition no. 1.

³ *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, Prohibitions no. 1-2, 5-10. Ramban disagrees, viewing them all as a single prohibition.

⁴ The formulation “*Hishamer lekha... pen...*” (“Guard yourself... lest...”) is a form of warning or prohibition; see Prohibition no. 10 in Rambam’s *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*.

⁵ In recording King Shelomo’s agreement that his wives set up altars to their gods, the text reads (*Melakhim* I 11:5): “And Shelomo went after...” See also v. 10, which states that Shelomo violated this command. Concerning Achav, in contrast, we read, “And he went and served Ba’al, and prostrated himself before him” (*Melakhim* I 16:31).

⁶ The unit immediately following *Shema* opens with the words, “And it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you to the land...” (6:10), raising the obvious comparison with *Shemot* 13 (the *parashiyot* of the *tefillin*). Indeed, we find extensive parallels between *Shemot* 13 and *Devarim* 6.

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gods” must fail as it encounters the explicit warning against forgetting, formulated with the words “Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage,” and the concentration of commandments of consciousness and awareness (before there is any mention of action) in the unit of *Shema* and the adjacent verses.

A brief review of Rambam’s understanding of the text, as expressed in *Sefer Ha-mitzvot* as well as *Mishneh Torah*, shows that this is exactly how Rambam interprets the words of both the Torah and *Chazal*. The first *mitzvot* that Rambam enumerates are:

- a. Knowledge¹² of God’s existence – “I am the Lord your God”¹³
- b. Knowledge of His Oneness – “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One”
- c. Love of God – “And you shall love the Lord your God”
- d. Fear of God – “The Lord your God you shall fear”
- e. His service – “You shall serve Him”¹⁴
- f. Cleaving to the Sages – “And you shall cleave to Him”
- g. Swearing in His Name when necessary – “And you shall swear in His Name”¹⁵
- h. To walk in His ways – “To walk in all His ways” / “And you shall walk in His ways” (*Devarim* 10:12 / 28:9)
- i. To sanctify His Name – “And I shall be sanctified among *Bnei Yisrael*” (*Vayikra* 22:32); this is the first *mitzva* that Rambam includes from a source other than *Sefer Devarim*, by virtue of its content and meaning, which relate to the *mitzvot* of faith. For all the preceding *mitzvot*, the main obligation comes from the expanded *Shema* units, extending from *Shema* to *Ve-haya im Shamo*.
- j. Recitation of *Shema* every evening and morning – “And you shall speak of them... when you lie down and when you rise up”

- k. To study and teach Torah – “And you shall teach them diligently to your children”
- l. *Tefillin* upon the head – “And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes”¹⁶
- m. *Tefillin* upon the arm – “And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand”
- n. Making *tzitzit* – “And they shall make for themselves *tzitzit*” (*Bamidbar* 15:38); this is the second *mitzva* that Rambam includes in the list distilled from the expanded *Shema* that is not from *Sefer Devarim*, by virtue of *Chazal*’s ruling that this unit be included in *Keriat Shema*.
- o. Placing a *mezuzah* – “And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and within your gates.”

Our understanding of the intention behind the order of subjects in *Sefer Devarim*, in the *mitzvot* of consciousness and awareness that are concentrated in the expanded units of the *Shema*, coincides with the understanding of Rambam, and it represents the foundation of his magnum opus, *Mishneh Torah*. The first two of its fourteen volumes are *Sefer Ha-madda* and *Sefer Ahava*. The former is comprised of the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, Laws of Character, Laws of the Study of Torah, Laws of Idolatry and Its Customs, and Laws of Repentance. Only afterwards comes *Sefer Ahava*, with its Laws of *Keriat Shema*; Laws of Prayer and the Blessing of the *Kohanim*; Laws of *Tefillin*, *Mezuzah* and *Sefer Torah*¹⁷; Laws of *Tzitzit*; Laws of Blessings¹⁸; and Laws of Circumcision.

We might add that the Talmud begins with the *Keriat Shema*, prayer, and blessings, all of which represent the crux of *Sefer Ahava*. Rambam deviates from this order by putting *Sefer Ha-madda* first, based on the list of *mitzvot* of consciousness in *Sefer Devarim*, in accordance with the explicit outline: “I am the Lord your God” and “You shall not have other gods” → the units of *Shema* → *Ve-haya im Shamo*.

Thus, Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah* is based on the original *Mishneh Torah* of Moshe *Rabbeinu* (*Sefer Devarim*).¹⁹ In this sense, we may indeed assert:²⁰ “From

¹² Rav Yosef Qafih *zt”l* translates Rambam’s formulation as “*yediat metziuto*” (“knowledge of His existence”) rather than “*ha’amanat metziuto*” (“belief in His existence”), as Ibn Tibbon renders it; see the dispute over the translation of the term in *Guide of the Perplexed* I, 50, between the note in Rav Qafih’s translation (published by Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, Jerusalem) and the translation and note by Michael Schwartz (Tel Aviv University, 5763).

¹³ Rambam reads these three Hebrew words (*Anokhi Ado-nai Elohekha*) on their own, as an exclamation. Only afterwards is there the mention of the Exodus, as a separate statement that follows. This stands in contrast to R. Yehuda Ha-Levi’s reading at the beginning of *Sefer Ha-Kuzari* (1:11-25), which emphasizes God’s revelation in the history of *Am Yisrael*, in contrast to Rambam’s emphasis on God’s existence itself, unrelated to anything else.

¹⁴ Rambam, in his gloss, disagrees with the inclusion of this commandment. He maintains that “service of God” such as prayer or study is of rabbinical origin, while the term *avoda* (service) as used in the Torah is a general command that should not be counted as a specific commandment.

¹⁵ Here, too, Rambam disagrees with the counting of this commandment, but he agrees with Rambam with regard to the essence – the definition of the directives concerning consciousness and remembering, love and fear, as commandments. See his gloss at the end of Prohibition no. 1.

¹⁶ This is the only place where Rambam changes the order from that set out in the verses, and he does so because of the fundamental priority of *tefillin* of the head over *tefillin* of the arm, despite the order in which they are wrapped, which follows the order of the verse.

¹⁷ *Tefillin* and *mezuzah* feature prominently at the conclusion of both parts of the *Shema*, while the *mitzva* of *sefer Torah* appears in the unit in *Sefer Devarim* pertaining to the king, as well as in the *mitzva* of *Hakhel*, the final *mitzva* in *Sefer Devarim* and in the Torah.

¹⁸ The main biblical *mitzva* in this area is *Birkat Ha-mazon* (Grace after Meals), which is the essence of chapter 8, at the center of the expanded *Shema*.

¹⁹ The centrality of *Sefer Devarim* to Rambam’s approach is apparent in many places. Examples include his view of miracles (Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, chapters 8 and 10, corresponding to *Devarim* 13 and 18 – in contrast to the impression arising from *Sefer Shemot* and *Sefer Bamidbar*); the rejection of any notion of corporeality in relation to God (corresponding to *Devarim* 4 especially); and his formulation of the Laws of Kings (corresponding to the unit concerning the king in *Sefer Devarim*).

²⁰ This accords with what Rambam himself writes in his introduction to *Mishneh Torah*: “... that a person studies first the Written Law; thereafter he studies this [work], thereby

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Moshe [son of Amram] to Moshe [son of Maimon], there arose none like Moshe [son of Maimon in the footsteps of the son of Amram].

The Mitzvot in between Shema and Ve-haya im Shamo

Let us now turn our attention to the *mitzvot* located in between the two units of the expanded *Shema*:

The whole of chapter 7 is devoted to the eradication of the idolatry practiced by the Seven Nations, along with the prohibitions of forging covenants or intermarrying with them, as well as the charge to keep away from the idolatrous spoils of the battles against them.

Chapter 8 in its entirety speaks of the obligation of remembering and blessing God for the goodness and abundance in the Land of Israel, with a warning against the anticipated forgetting; here we find the biblical mitzva of *Birkat Ha-mazon* (no. 19 in *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*). In its formulation and its content, this chapter recalls chapter 6 (*Shema*) as well as the unit extending from 10:12 until after *Ve-haya im Shamo* in chapter 11. The content of *Birkat Ha-mazon* sits well with the content of *Shema*: both are positive commandments involving speech that molds consciousness.

Chapter 9 (along with 10:1-11²¹) is all rebuke over the sins in the desert, especially the episode of the Golden Calf, which is the only sin described in great detail. Thus, the rebuke here is focused on idolatry.

It is easy to see that all the intervening units are closely bound up with the first two of the Ten Commandments, and their overall structure may be presented as follows:

a. <i>Mitzvot</i> of faith: consciousness and thought, remembering, love, fear, service Warnings against forgetting, against foreign influences, and against doubting and testing	
	b. <i>Shema</i> – <i>mitzvot</i> of eradicating idolatry, as well as keeping away from it and from its practitioners
a. Thanksgiving for good and <i>Birkat Ha-mazon</i> Warning against forgetting	
	b. Rebuke for the idolatry of the Golden Calf (and the sins in the desert)
a. Reiteration regarding fear and love of God, remembering, and consciousness	

learning [the essence of] the entire Oral Law, with no need to study any other work in between.”

²¹ The marking of chapter 10 in *Sefer Devarim* is an error attributable to the early Christians who divided the chapters. The first half of chapter 10 belongs to chapter 9, while the second half introduces chapter 11.

Reiteration of warning against idolatry and rebuke	
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This is the same structure that we find in the units comprising the expanded *Shema* in *Sefer Devarim*. *Shema* and *Ve-haya im Shamo* are the beginning and the end; in between them we find the prohibitions of idolatry and rebuke over the sin of the Golden Calf; and right in the middle: the thanksgiving of *Birkat Ha-mazon*, alongside the charge to remember and the prohibition to forget God. Thus, the same structure emerges: a–b–a–b–a.

The Historical Shema

There are indications that our forefathers recited the entire text from the Ten Commandments to the end of *Parashat Ekev* – the full and expanded *Shema*. Texts from the Second Temple period²² (mainly from Qumran²³) seem to suggest a continuous recitation from the Ten Commandments up to *Shema*, as well as recitation of chapter 8 (perhaps in the context of *Birkat Ha-mazon*).²⁴

It is also clear from *Chazal's* writings that in the Second Temple period it was customary to recite daily²⁵ the Ten Commandments, *Shema* and *Ve-haya im Shamo*. It was only after the Destruction, with intensifying pressure from Christianity,²⁶ that the Ten Commandments were omitted, leaving the recitation of *Shema* as we have it today, which is a condensation of the commandments representing the crux of *Sefer Devarim*, the Book of the Covenant.

We might ask: can there really be any condensation or abbreviation of the Torah? Or even of *Sefer Devarim*?

In truth, there **has to be** some condensation of the Torah or of *Sefer Devarim*; it could not be otherwise.

²² The Nash papyrus, discovered in Egypt, shows the Ten Commandments in a mixed version (an amalgamation of the versions in *Shemot* and *Devarim*), a linking verse, and the *Shema*. Apparently this was part of an ancient prayer-book. For a description of the Nash papyrus, see M.Z. Segal's article in *Leshonenu* 15 (5711), pp. 28-36; see also Emmanuel Tov's book about research into versions of the biblical text (Jerusalem 5750), pp. 80-96.

²³ For background see *Elisha Qimron, Megillot Midbar Yehuda: ha-Hibburim ha-Ivriyim*, Yad Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem 5770; *Qimron, Megillot Qumran: Mevo'ot uMechqarim* (ed. Menachem Kister), Yad Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem 5769. For historical background see Hanan Eshel, *Megillot Qumran Veha-medinah Ha-hashmona'it*, Yad Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem 5764.

²⁴ This is attested to by a text discovered in Cave 4 in Qumran (4QDeuteronomy^a) which was apparently a prayer book from the Second Temple period. See Dr. Esther Eshel's article in *HUCA* LXII (1991), pp. 117-154.

²⁵ *Mishna Tamid* 5:1.

²⁶ See Yerushalmi, *Berakhot* 1:4 – “R. [A]bba said... that the Ten Commandments are themselves the essence of the *Shema*, as Rav Matana and R. Shemuel bar Nachman taught... that it is proper to recite the Ten Commandments every day, so why is this not the practice? Because of the claims of the *minim* [Christians], so that [Jews influenced by them] would not say: These [commandments] alone were given to Moshe at Sinai.”

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Every contract or covenantal text²⁷ must have an abbreviated or point-form summary that any layman can understand. Anyone who has ever signed a contract knows that it is almost impossible to review thoroughly and in depth all the numerous, lengthy sections, with all the small print, before signing on the dotted line and committing oneself in a manner that entails a price – sometimes a heavy price – should one change his mind and seek to annul it. What do kings and rulers do before they sign their important and binding contracts? No one would imagine that they have actually read through, digested and understood every subsection and minor point. How, then, can they sign?

I watched a television broadcast showing the president of the USA and the premier of Russia signing a historic global agreement to reduce and disable weapons of mass destruction. Each man had a full copy of the treaty in front of him – a thick volume which he clearly could not possibly have read in depth. In fact, it was clear that **no one** could have read the document from cover to cover. Each chapter would have been researched, formulated and reviewed by a specialized team of experts. However, along with the treaty, each leader was also equipped with a brief summary that he could read and understand. At the historical moment of signing – truly a moment recalling the vision of Yeshayahu ben Amotz, depicting the beating of swords into plowshares – the two leaders both signed the weighty, full treaty, which neither of them had read, and the summaries, which they themselves, along with anyone else who so wished, could review. At that moment, I had tears in my eyes as I realized the greatness of *Chazal's* insight and wisdom: this ceremony demonstrated precisely the same principle that is reflected in the contracted *Shema*, a text that every Jew is capable of reciting twice daily, understanding, internalizing and remembering. The average person would not be able to recite seven chapters from *Sefer Devarim* every day. If there were such an obligation, it would be viewed in the same light as the recitation of *Tachanun* on Mondays and Thursdays – as a recitation for which many people are happy to find any halakhic exemption.

When a king is appointed, the Torah obligates the following:

When he sits upon his royal throne, he shall write himself a copy of this Torah upon a scroll, before the *Kohanim* and the Levites, and it shall be with him, and he shall read from it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and to observe all the words of this Torah, and these statutes, to perform them. (*Devarim* 17:18-19).

Would the king have only a complete, ponderous tome of the Torah,²⁸ from which he could read “all the days of his life” – hindered in this endeavor only by his many concerns and responsibilities? Or is there perhaps

a summary, likewise referred to as a “book of the Torah,” which the king could read every day and remember by heart?

Clearly, the king would also have a summary. In the final mitzva in the Torah,²⁹ at the end of *Sefer Devarim* (31:11-13), in the unit on *Hakhel*, we find:

You shall read this Torah before all of Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together – men and women and children and the stranger that is within your gates – that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to perform all the words of this Torah...

From the wording of the text here it would seem that at the *Hakhel* gathering there is an obligation to read the entire Torah – or, at least, *Mishneh Torah*, i.e., the entire *Sefer Devarim*. However, from *Chazal's* teachings (*Mishna Sota* 7:8), we learn that this is not the case:

He reads from the beginning of *Devarim* up to *Shema*, then *Ve-haya im Shamo'a*... “You shall surely tithe...,” “When you have finished tithing...,” then the unit concerning the king, then the blessings and curses, up to the end of the *parasha*.

The Tosefta (*Sota* 7:17) records the opinion of Rabbi: “It is not necessary to start from the beginning of *Devarim*, only from *Shema*... up to the end of the unit concerning the king.” All opinions clearly agree that at the *Hakhel* gathering, the reading entails not the entire Five Books of the Torah nor even the entire *Sefer Devarim*, but rather an abbreviation – and the words “you shall read this Torah” must necessarily refer to this abbreviation. The same idea would also seem to apply in other places in *Sefer Devarim*, and in *Tanakh* in general.

Rambam (Laws of *Chagiga* 3:3) writes explicitly that the reader **skips** from *Shema* to *Ve-haya im Shamo'a*..., and also **skips** from “You shall surely tithe...” to “When you have finished tithing...” However, his ruling follows that of the Sages in the Mishna, and not that of Rabbi in the Tosefta. For this reason I was greatly troubled at a ceremony organized as a remembrance of *Hakhel*, which brought together some ten thousand participants at the *Kotel*, on *Chol Ha-mo'ed* Sukkot following a *shemitta* year. The reader began from *Devarim* 1:1, in accordance with Rambam's ruling, but after about ten minutes, before he even got as far as the Ten Commandments and *Shema*, the audience began to grow restless. The men, women and children who had travelled and gathered specially for this ceremony began chatting amongst themselves. Thus we lost a precious opportunity for a most impressive reading of the Ten Commandments and a tremendous communal recital of the *Shema*, with an unforgettable sense of uplift. Had the organizers realized from the outset that an audience of tens of thousands would have an attention span of only

²⁷ There are famous texts from the ancient world presenting covenants between kings discovered along with their summarized versions.

²⁸ As Rambam writes in his *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, no. 17, with further explanation in no. 18.

²⁹ Rambam derives from the writing of the Torah and the song (after *Hakhel*) the additional mitzva upon every individual in *Am Yisrael* to write himself a *sefer Torah* of his own, and he places this obligation alongside that of the king's *sefer Torah* (nos. 17-18 in *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*).

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ten minutes, they would no doubt have narrowed the reading down to just the Ten Commandments and the shortened *Shema*.

Our *Keriat Shema* is simply a summary of the *mitzvot* of consciousness and intellect set forth in *Sefer Devarim*, which themselves flow from the first two of the Ten Commandments.

Translated by Kaeren Fish

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