

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND



BY: **SARA COHEN**

Tribe gap year student

Parashat Va'etchanan recounts Moshe's (Moses) speech to *Bnei Yisrael*, the Jewish people, as they prepare to enter Israel. He reminds them of, and highlights, the main principles of Judaism, including the prohibition of idolatry, love and fear of God, and the Ten Commandments.

Moshe tells the nation: "See, I have imparted to you laws and rules... for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter

and dwell in."

He later commands: "Be careful, then, to do as you have been commanded. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left."

The Torah then, a third time, commands *Bnei Yisrael* to observe the commandments of God.

Professor Nechama Leibowitz (1905-1997) highlights this repetition, and asks: why is it necessary to emphasise not turning aside to the left or right, if *Bnei Yisrael* have already been commanded to follow the mitzvot as instructed?

Both Rashi (1040-1105) and Ramban (1194-1270) explain that this seemingly unnecessary addition comes to teach us a

concept which has not been explicitly stated previously, the concept of 'acting beyond the letter of the law'. Ramban elaborates on this, stating how it is impossible for the Torah to instruct our actions in every possible situation, and instead it is up to us to judge each situation and carry out the correct action, beyond what the Torah has commanded us.

Following the Torah's commandments isn't just about acting according to each instruction that it gives us, but rather, understanding how to act with *derech eretz* (respectful ways) and good *middot* (character traits) in all situations, towards everyone.

Parasha Wordsearch

Find these words in the grid. The words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

P	X	D	B	N	G	K	C	B	F	Y	R	P	E
H	B	P	U	C	A	P	V	V	Y	B	F	I	A
I	E	N	G	Q	C	N	D	S	U	A	T	B	W
H	S	H	E	Z	S	F	A	T	X	Y	J	E	R
W	R	H	S	I	B	Q	V	H	L	V	Y	V	V
W	J	G	A	O	Y	W	E	H	C	S	T	M	F
X	P	E	S	B	M	I	I	Z	M	T	O	Z	H
G	R	Z	T	S	B	E	S	S	S	E	E	Q	L
D	J	S	H	E	M	A	Z	R	L	F	Q	A	J
U	K	G	P	H	F	H	T	U	A	V	P	W	V
W	I	Y	G	B	A	Z	A	L	Z	E	T	W	B
N	G	W	X	W	C	R	A	Q	H	A	L	K	A
M	O	T	F	H	Z	G	O	V	M	D	H	V	T
A	N	J	Q	O	F	L	H	T	C	D	H	G	C

SHABBAT

MOSHE

BNEI YISRAEL

SHEMA

VA'ETCHANAN

MEZUZAH

TORAH

