

## A Daily Bread

**Date:** 4 Tishrei 5780 (September 26, 2025)

**Torah Portion:** Vayelech

**Topic:** Read the Torah

It is written, “[You must] read this Torah before all Yisrael in their hearing” (Deut. 31:11). Hashem commanded through Moshe that “at the end of seven years” (ibid., v. 10), the king shall read the Torah aloud. From this, we are to derive three key lessons: First, Hashem is Master over us. This is reflected in His command that we refrain from certain types of labor during the sabbatical year. Second, Hashem is Master over nature, as expressed in His decree that the land must rest during this period. Third, Hashem is Master over our possessions, in that the produce of the sabbatical year, even if it grows on our own property, is to be considered ownerless and available to all.

As long as the Temple is not standing, certain commandments of the Torah cannot be fulfilled in their literal form. However, in an allegorical sense, we can still fulfill them. In general, the fulfillment of a commandment involves thought, speech, and deed. When it is not possible to fulfill a mitzvah in deed, we should strive to fulfill it through thought and speech. For instance, we may study the halakhot (laws) pertaining to the commandment and internalize its spiritual lessons. Additionally, by reciting the relevant Torah passages, we fulfill its verbal aspect.

In this respect, most commandments possess an inherent value in their physical performance, independent of the intent behind them. Nonetheless, when performed with intentionality, the mitzvah gains an added dimension. Therefore, when we fulfill the intention behind a commandment—even today—we are not only engaging with its intellectual and verbal aspects, but we may also access a portion of its deed-dimension. Although we cannot always fulfill a commandment in its ideal form as described in the Torah, it remains important to do so to the greatest extent possible.

Accordingly, we should make a conscious effort to assemble our families periodically, to strengthen one another spiritually in a spirit of love and camaraderie. Furthermore, we must extend this influence beyond our households, encouraging others to deepen their commitment to Torah values and lifestyle, all grounded in the love and awe of Hashem. While the Torah formally obligates men in the study of its commandments, the *sod* (mystical or esoteric) level includes the obligation of women to study Torah as well. Women are required to be well-versed in all laws that apply to them—such as those governing daily conduct, life-cycle events, prayer, business ethics, and the observance of Shabbat and festivals. The primary difference is that women are not obligated to study areas of Torah that do not pertain to them, whereas men are commanded to study the entire Torah *lishmah*—for its own sake.

Nevertheless, today’s technological advancements offer women the opportunity not only to study practical halakhah, but also to engage deeply with the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of the Torah. Women can now become thoroughly educated in both the *letter* and the *spirit* of the Torah, including areas that may not apply to them directly. This is vital, as it enables them to provide accurate and meaningful Torah education to their children. For example, although women are not required to wear *tzitzit*, they should still study the relevant laws in order to teach their sons how to observe the mitzvah properly and to review these laws with them during study.

Finally, women—endowed with a unique emotional depth and nurturing warmth—can infuse Torah study with sensitivity and spiritual vitality. It is true that, historically, women did not typically engage in comprehensive Torah learning, particularly in philosophical or Talmudic disciplines. However, with modern resources and educational tools, this engagement is not only possible but also crucial. It may well be a harbinger of the imminent arrival of the messianic era, in which “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as the sea covers the seabed” (Isa. 11:9).

Shalom.