

This Week at
 Temple Israel of Long Beach
 Experiencing the Warmth of Tradition



August 1, 2026
 18 Av 5786
 Shabbat Ekev



PARSHAT EKEV
To Lead Is To Listen

“If only you would listen to these laws...”
(Deut 7:12)

These words with which Parashat Ekev begins contains a verb that is a fundamental motif of the Book of Deuteronomy. The verb is SHEMA. It occurred in the previous parasha in the most famous line of all of Judaism, *Shema Yisrael*. It occurs later in Parashat Ekev in the second paragraph of the Shema. “It shall be if you surely listen [*shamo’a tishme’u*] (Deut. 11:13). It appears no less than ninety-two times in Deuteronomy as a whole.

We often miss the significance of this word because of what I call *the fallacy of translatability*: the assumption that one language is fully translatable into another and assumes that it has the same meaning in both. But often it does not. Languages are only partially translatable into one another. The key terms of one civilization are often not fully reproducible in another.

This is particularly so in the case of the Hebrew verb SHEMA. There is no single English word that means to hear, to listen, to heed, to pay attention to, and to obey. SHEMA also means “to understand”.

One of the most striking facts about the Torah is that, although it contains 613 commands, it does not contain a word that means “to obey”. The verb used by the Torah in place of “to obey” is SHEMA. G-d wants us to listen, to reflect, to seek to understand, to internalize, and to respond. He wants us to become a *listening people*.

In Judaism, listening is a deeply spiritual act. To listen to G-d is to be open to G-d. That is what Moses is saying throughout Deuteronomy: “If only you would listen”. So it is with leadership – indeed with all forms of interpersonal relationship. Often the greatest gift we can give someone is to listen to them.

Listening matters in a moral environment as insistent on human dignity as Judaism. The very act of listening is a form of respect. It is common to find leaders who speak; it is very rare to find leaders who listen. But listening often makes a difference. A leader is one who knows how to listen.

Excerpt from:
 “Lessons In Leadership”
 by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Candle Lighting

Shabbat - 7:54 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat – 8:04 pm

For week of 08/01/26 - 08/07/26



We thank the following donors for their generous contributions to Temple Israel this past week.

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