



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS
RCA ISRAEL REGION

PARSHAT RE'EH

Parshat Re'eh begins a section filled with Mitzvot. In the next 3 parshiot there are 170 Mitzvot, $\frac{1}{4}$ of all the mitzvot of the Torah. In the flow of Moshe's speech, he pivots from a discussion of how we got to where we are to a discussion of how we are to live in the Land. No more speaking about it; now we are speaking of it, the creation of the Jewish society in the Land. In the first 3 parshiot of Devarim he reviewed our history and its lessons. If you doubt you can take the Land, remember the sin of the spies; don't repeat their skepticism. If you doubt your ability, remember your victories over Sichon and Og. If you are worried that the nations are too powerful for you, remember the wonders of Egypt; He will do what is necessary. If you doubt your worth, remember Sinai; He chose to speak with you, His people. And if you think you are superior, remember your failing of the golden calf. These first 3 parshiot address the thoughts, doubts, and concerns in the minds of the people; Moshe assuages those uncertainties through recounting the lessons of their journey to here. Now Moshe begins to address the society we want to

build in the Land. What are the pillars of this new society? What are its features? Its principles, its values. It is this that Moshe addresses now, through the language of Mitzvot. It is to be a G-d centered society. Your loyalty to G-d will be challenged; it must be vigilantly protected. And a society of generosity.



1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 11:26 - 12:10)

I place before you blessing as a consequence of keeping mitzvot; and curse as a consequence for not. You are entering the Land and will establish yourself there. These are the laws: rid the Land of idols whether they are on mountains, hills or under trees. And hence uproot service of them. Do not serve your G-d in many places rather serve Him in the one place I choose. That is where you shall bring all your offerings. And that is where you shall rejoice.

We are introduced here for the first time to the notion of one Temple; there is one and only one place of national service of G-d. By having just one place, we reinforce that there is but one G-d. And we are introduced to the notion of simcha. In serving G-d in this one central place, you will have simcha. Simcha is the inner joy, the satisfaction, elation of standing before G-d. True joy is the sense that our lives have meaning, that we have a treasured relationship with G-d and He with us; nothing could be more meaningful or more satisfying. That is simcha, inner joy.

Happy Chai Aliyah Anniversary!

Michael & Channie Greenberg

Becca, Daniel, Naomi, and Benjamin





2ND ALIYA (12:11 - 28)

The place that G-d will choose to dwell shall be the place you bring your offerings. And you shall rejoice there with your family, your workers and the Levi. Now, you may consume meat wherever you dwell, but not as holy offerings. The holy things are to be done in this one place only. When you enjoy expansive borders and want to consume meat, you may do so without any restrictions of tuma. However, do not consume the blood. You may not offer holy things and vows in your locale, but only in the place He chooses.

The Torah is emphasizing the exclusive nature of the Temple. And at the same time distinguishing between consumption of meat and Divine service. Meat you may consume wherever you are; it is mundane, routine, not Divine service. Meat of Divine Service; that may only take place in the central place.



3RD ALIYA (12:29 - 13:19)

When you become settled in the Land, be wary of the snare of attraction of the religions in the Land. Though you be tempted to want to learn how they serve their gods and to borrow from that, do not do it. We have ours; do not add, nor subtract from our own. If a prophet predicts future events with accuracy but instructs people to follow a false god, do not listen to him. You are to follow G-d. If your brother, son, daughter or even wife or best friend try to convince you to follow an idol, do not listen to them. They are to be put to death for attempting to sway people to idol worship; you are not to shield them. If an entire city worships idols, it is to be destroyed.

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This aliya outlines the allure of idol worship and in particular, the hooks, the lures that draw people. In particular 4 hooks: the beauty of the practices, the power of the charismatic prophet, the draw of the people closest to us, and the sway of the crowd. The religions of the world have their attraction. There are many noble practices, much grandeur, inspiration and beauty. You may wonder perhaps if our services can be enhanced by gospel singers or the majesty of the Church organ. Don't go looking for their best. For 2 reasons: our practices are ours. We serve Him in the way He says. And second, in looking at their practices, you risk being drawn to switch sides and simply stay with theirs.

And people influence people. The prophet, who has earned authority through predicting the future has great sway. Don't listen to him if he professes a belief in idols. So too, those closest to us, relatives, spouses, best friends. People listen to people they trust. But not if they are drawing you to idols. And the power of the group – social pressure, an entire city. For all of these, it is difficult to turn against them in judgment. We protect our leaders, our family. We know this all too well; there is a great pull to protect the person in power or the family member, while allowing them to continue their damaging ways.



4TH ALIYA (14:1 - 21)

The laws of kashrut: animals with a split hoof and chew their cud may be eaten. Fish with fins and scales. Birds that are predatory are listed as not kosher. And do not consume an animal that died on its own, nor cook a

calf in its mother's milk.

The laws of kashrut have already been given in Parshat Shemini. They are repeated here perhaps because they serve as a barrier to social contact with the peoples of the Land. While we see the Divine in every person and this demands of us to respect and honor every person for that Divine image, the Torah is very concerned that if we come too close to the idol-worshiper we will be attracted to the idol worship. Too close, too dangerous. Food is the forum for social intimacy. Hence, our rules severely limit this social contact in order to protect us from slipping into idol worship.



5TH ALIYA (14:22 - 29)

Maaser sheni: 10% of your produce is to be eaten in proximity to the Temple area. If this is too much to transport, exchange it for money. The money must be used for food in the holy place, shared with others. And you will rejoice before G-d.

Maaser sheni is an unusual mitzvah. Teruma is an amount given to Kohanim, as a tax to support the Kohanim. Maaser is 10% given to the Leviim to support them. But Maaser sheni is 10% of the remainder of the crop to be eaten in the holy place, in proximity to the Temple area. In Shilo that meant within eyesight of the Temple area, in Jerusalem it meant within the city walls. It does not need to be eaten by the owner; but it does need to be eaten in Jerusalem. There are 2 implications to this Mitzvah: 1)



the farmer is forced to go regularly to experience the holiness of the mikdash and 2) Jerusalem becomes full of produce. If 10% of all produce must end up in Jerusalem, the prices fall due to supply, and those in need know they can find plenty of food for cheap in Jerusalem. This is a double mitzvah: a push to the farmer to stay connected to holiness. And another form of safety net for the needy; Jerusalem becomes a breadbasket, city of plenty, of surplus and hence of help to those in need.



6TH ALIYA (15:1 - 18)

Shmita for loans: the 7th year cancels all loans. G-d will bless you in the Land so that there be no poor. When one who is needy approaches you, open your hand and give what he needs. Do not withhold a loan as the shemita year approaches knowing it will be canceled. Rather give him, for there will always be needy people. A slave shall also go free in the 7th year. Give him freely upon his release. Should he want to remain a slave to you, he may do so. Don't resent sending him free, for he worked for you for 6 years; G-d will bless you for your compliance.

This aliya and the one before form a second pillar of society in the Land: care

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for others. The first pillar was a G-d central society, monotheism, expressed by a central Temple where all offerings are brought. Care for others is the next pillar. The canceling of loans every 7 years is a form of bankruptcy; allowing a fresh start for one who has fallen on hard times. The Torah says there will be no poor. And then at the end of the aliya it says there will always be poor. What it means is that there will always be people who are needy. But when G-d blesses you with bounty, there is no reason for those people to be needy anymore; the farmer will share his bounty. When you are blessed, share the blessing with those who need. There will be people who need; it is your job to make sure they not remain that way.



7TH ALIYA (15:19 - 16:17)

A first-born animal shall be brought as an offering. Should it be blemished, it is consumed by the owner. Pesach: the Pesach offering must be brought in the place He chooses. Shavuot: You and all yours shall rejoice in the place He chooses. Sukkot: You shall celebrate for 7 days at the time of the harvest and shall be but joyful. On these holidays one appears before G-d and celebrates with what we have been blessed with.

The 3 regalim or pilgrimage holidays

Mazal Tov to

Paul & Hayley Weinberg and Family



on the Birth of a **Granddaughter**



are religious social engineering. The Jew needs to spend time in Jerusalem regularly. That experience makes a difference. We all know that. Moving out of our routine and experiencing a different more rarified and holy place will leave its mark. While we are always before G-d, the regular journey to Jerusalem creates a regular bond with rarefied holiness. We see it in our own time; oh, how privileged we are to see the impact of the richness of our modern-day Jerusalem on the Jews of the world. How many of us had our religious journey sparked in these streets of Jerusalem? The pilgrimage holidays are social engineering: the experience of the holiness of the Mikdash positively impacts the holiness of the people.

YESHAYAHU 54:11- 55:5

This week's *haftorah* is the third of a series of seven "*haftarot* of Consolation." Hashem addresses the "afflicted and storm-tossed" Jerusalem "who has not been comforted," assuring her that she, and her people, will be restored to full glory. The foundation, walls and ground of Yerushalayim will be

laid with precious stones. Her children will be "disciples of the L-rd," and will enjoy abundant peace. Any weapon engineered against her will fail.

The prophet then invites the thirsty to acquire "water," namely those who are thirsty for spirituality should study the quenching words of Torah. He promises the nation an everlasting covenant similar to that made with King David. This is also an allusion to Mashiach, David's descendant, who will be revered by all of the nations of the world. ■



STATS

47th of the 54 sedras; 4th of 11 in Devarim.
 257.8 lines in a Torah - ranks 4th.
 20 Parshiyot - 5 open, 15 closed.
 126 pesukim - ranks 13th (1st in Devarim).
 1932 words - ranks 7th (first in Devarim).
 7442 letters - ranks 7th (first in Devarim).



MITZVOT

55 of 613 - 17 positive, 38 prohibition.
 That's almost 9% of the Torah's mitzvot;
 only Ki Teitzei & Emor have more.

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

כי אם אל המקום אשר יבחר ה' אלוֹכֵיכֶם... לשוֹם את שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לִשְׁכֹּן וּבֵאת שְׁמָה (יִבְה:)

"But unto the place which the L-rd your G-d shall choose.. to put His name there" (12:5)

Why is Yerushalayim left out in the description of the future Holy city?

Rabbi Moshe Maimonides (Rambam 1138-1204) answers in his Guide to the Perplexed, that he has no doubt in his mind that the spot where Abraham received his prophecy on Mt. Moriah was known to Moshe Rabbeinu. However, the location of this Holy city was not mentioned in the Torah, only hinted to, for three reasons.

Firstly, if the nations of the world were aware of the significance of Jerusalem, they would battle over it most perseveringly.

Secondly, those who would take control of the city might destroy and ruin the place with all their might.

Thirdly, every one of the tribes would seek to have the Holy city in its borders, which would lead to divisions and discord.

Shabbat Shalom