

PINCHAS



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
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1st aliya (Bamidbar 25:10-26:4)

Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon halted the plague. He will merit the covenant of peace, of priesthood. Those killed by him were Zimri, the prince of a family of Shimon and Kozbi, the daughter of a prince of a family of Midian. Harass the Midianites due to this enticement. G-d instructs Moshe and Elazar to take a census of the men over the age of 20.

Our parsha is the parsha of transition. Aharon has died. Elazar has taken his place. Moshe is told he too will die before entry to the Land. He will appoint his successor. It is in this context that we encounter Pinchas' slaying of a mixed couple: a Jewish man and a Midianite woman. And not just

any man and woman; dignitaries, leaders of their respective families. Pinchas jumps into the breach and slays them. Does this story ring a bell? Has there been a story in the Torah of a mixed couple, dignitaries, a Jew, and a non-Jew? And where someone just cannot tolerate this and jumps violently into the breach slaying the people? But in that story, it was a Jewish woman Dina and a non-Jewish man Shechem. And into the breach jumped Shimon and Levi, slaying the males of the city. Yaakov was not happy, for that was not his way. Here too. Who is Pinchas? The grandson of Aharon. The epitome of peace. Were Aharon alive, he too would have winced. Grimaced. This is not my way. But. Such is life. Sometimes the grandchildren go in their own way. Contrary to the legacy of their grandparents. And that is the crucial importance of this story and this parsha. Transition. New leadership. Sometimes like the old. And sometimes not. But leadership it is.



2nd aliya (26:5-51) The census of each tribe is done, listing the families and the census count of each tribe. The census total is 601,730 men over the age of 20.

Though the summary of this aliya is rather terse, it is in fact a lengthy aliya of 47 verses. The purpose of this count is to prepare for the dividing of the Land, instructions for which are in the next aliya. But, in addition, it is part of the unfolding transition of power. This story is the repetition of the story of the census done by Moshe and Aharon. The repetition of stories in Tanach is often to indicate that the new generation is doing a fine job of following



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in the footsteps of the old. Or not doing a fine job. Or doing a different, but equally fine job. Here, what was then is identical to what is being done now. They did it then; we are doing it now. 39 years ago Moshe and Aharon did a census. Today Moshe and Elazar are doing a census. Elazar's role as the new Kohen leader is taking root.



3rd aliya (26:52-27:5) The Land is to be divided according to this census; those with more, receive more. Though the plots are given by lottery. The tribe of Levi is enumerated, though they will not receive Land allocations. None of those of the census of Moshe and Aharon are alive for this census, save Yehoshua and Calev. The 5 daughters of Zelopchad question Moshe and Elazar: though our father left Egypt, he has no male heirs to enter the Land. Why should his name be forgotten? Let us claim his portion. Moshe brought their query before G-d.

The claim of these daughters is a legitimate claim. In the narrative of transition of leadership, Elazar is getting his first lesson from Moshe: we don't know it all. Nothing wrong with a leader, even Moshe, saying "I don't know."



4th aliya (27:6-23) Moshe is told that the daughters of Tzelophchad are correct; their father's portion will be allotted to them. Moshe is told to ascend the mountain and peer at the land of Israel for he will not enter it. Moshe asks for a successor. G-d instructs him to transfer his leadership to Yehoshua in front of all the people. He did so in front of Elazar and all the people.

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Moshe, in spite of the personal disappointment that he will not see the goal of his entire leadership, that he will not enter the Land, thinks about transition. If the leader is motivated by his legacy, by his accomplishment, then when told he will not achieve his goal, he would kick and scratch to preserve his goals. When the leader is motivated by serving his people, well, then it's different; they can be served mightily finely by me or by someone else. Moshe cannot allow the news of his end to preoccupy him. His role is to lead the people. And if he will not, he wants to ensure someone else will.



5th aliya (28:1-15) **The Communal Offerings.**

There are specific offerings for specific occasions

that are My bread, My pleasant aroma. **Daily:** 2 lambs, one in the morning, one in the evening, accompanied by flour with oil and wine. Like was brought at Sinai. **Shabbat** Mussaf: 2 additional lambs with their flour, oil and wine. **Rosh Chodesh** Mussaf: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs, with their flour, oil and wine and 1 goat sin offering.

Every day there is an offering done in the Temple, the daily offering of a lamb in the morning and in the afternoon. Very simple. On special occasions there is an additional

offering, the Mussaf. The special occasions include Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and in the upcoming aliyot, all the holidays of the year. This description of the Mussaf offerings is read in shul the most times of any Torah reading over the course of the year. It is read for every Rosh Chodesh and as the Maftir for every Yom Tov – 35 times a year in Israel, 38 in chutz laaretz. I have appended a chart at the end of this article – borrowed with a little adjustment from the Artscroll Chumash at the end of this Parsha. You will note that the Shabbat Mussaf is different than every other one. It is simply a daily double; 2 lambs. No bulls, rams or goats. Makes you wonder if the Talmudic statement that we have a double neshama on Shabbat and the halacha that we have 2 challot – is that an aggadic statement, a midrashic flair, or is it merely extending what the Torah itself says? The Mussaf is a double. So too, our soul is doubled. As does our enjoyment, our challah, double.



6th aliya (28:16-29:11) Pesach is on the 14th of the 1st month. On the 15th begins the 7-day holiday of

Matza. The first day is a holiday. The Mussaf for each day of Pesach: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs, with their flour, oil and wine and 1 goat sin offering. The 7th day is a holiday. **Shavuot:** the new grain offering is brought. Mussaf: same as Pesach. **Rosh Hashana:** is a holiday, a day of Teruah. Mussaf: the same as the others except only 1 bull, not 2. **Yom Kippur:** is a holiday, a day of affliction. Mussaf: same as Rosh Hashana.

The daily tamid and the Mussaf offerings are communal; brought on behalf of the entire nation of Israel. There would never

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be an announcement in the Mikdash that today's Mussaf is being sponsored by Sarah Cohen in honor of her granddaughter's bat mitzvah. Can't do it. The notion of a communal approach to G-d may explain the anomaly of the placement of this section. Didn't we have a pretty exhaustive description of the sacrifices in Sefer Vayikra? Why is this section about sacrifices out of place, delayed until here? Because it fits into the thematic flow of the end of Bamidbar. Bamidbar is the national march to the Land. But Jewish living and Jewish society is both personal and communal. We pursue G-d personally. We do our mitzvot. And we will occupy a particular place in the Land of Israel; our little plot of Land that we just described in the previous aliyot. But, in addition, we are part of this people. As a people we have a unique relationship with G-d; and He with us. Part of the terrible disappointment of the creeping alienation of Jews from Israel that we are witnessing in our time is the complete dissipation of a sense of being a part of a people, a binding to the fate of the people. That is what is symbolized by the communal offerings.



7th **aliya** (29:12-30:1) **Sukkot**: the first day is a holiday. Mussaf: 13 bulls, 2 rams, 7 lambs with their flour, oil and wine and 1 goat sin offering. The 2nd day of the holiday has the same Mussaf except only 12 bulls. The 3rd day is 11 bulls. Each of the 7 days has one less bull, with all the other offerings the same. **Shemini Atzeret**: is a holiday. Mussaf: the same as Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Immediately apparent from this chart are the groupings: Pesach and Shavuot, the

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uniqueness of the extra offerings of Sukkot, and the pairing of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and oddly enough, Shmini Atzeret.

HAFTORAH
YIRMIYAHU 1:1- 2:3

	Olah Offering			Chatat Sin Offering
Day	Bulls	Rams	Lambs	Goat
Weekday Daily not Mussaf	0	0	1morning 1 evening	0
Shabbat	0	0	2	0
Rosh Chodesh	2	1	7	1
Pesach (all days)	2	1	7	1
Shavuot	2	1	7	1
Rosh Hashana	1	1	7	1
Yom Kippur	1	1	7	1
Sukkot Day 1	13	2	7	1
Sukkot -2	12	2	7	1
Sukkot -3	11	2	7	1
Sukkot -4	10	2	7	1
Sukkot -5	9	2	7	1
Sukkot -6	8	2	7	1
Sukkot -7	7	2	7	1
Shmini Atzeret	1	1	7	1

This week's *haftorah* is the first of a series of three "*haftorot* of affliction." These three *haftarot* are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

Yirmiyahu recounts how G-d appointed him as prophet — despite his initial reluctance to accept the task — and tells of the encouragement G-d gave him to fulfill his crucial mission.

He then describes two prophetic visions he was shown. The first featured an almond tree branch. G-d explained to Yirmiyahu that just like an almond tree is very quick to blossom, so too G-d will carry out his plan — to punish the Jews for their sins — in due haste.

The second vision was that of a boiling pot whose foam was directed northward. G-d explained that this was an allusion to the afflictions the Jewish people would suffer at the hands of the people from the north

STATS

41st of the 54 sedras;
8th of 10 in Bamidbar
Written on 280 lines (rank: 2nd)
35 Parshiyot; 10p 25s (2nd most)
168 psukim 2nd (2nd in B'midbar)
1887 words 9th (2nd in B'midbar)
7853 letters 4th (2nd in B'midbar)

MITZVOT

Contains 6 of the 613 mitzvot, all positive. One of only six sedras that have only positive mitzvot

Rabbi Yona Reiss Av Beis Din, cRc and Rosh Yeshiva, YU will IY"H give his annual *yahrzeit shiur* for his father

Harry Reiss z"l

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of the Holy Land, namely Bavel. G-d will cause the kingdoms of the north to lay siege on Yerushalayim and Judea and He will pass judgment on the Jewish people due to their abandonment of G-d's ways and their idol worship.

G-d then encouraged Yirmiyahu to deliver the prophecy and not to fear the Jewish populace who would certainly not take kindly to such harsh words.

The haftorah ends with a reassuring prophecy to the people: "Go and call out in the ears of Yerushalayim saying: so said G-d: 'I remember to you the loving-kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me in the desert, in a land not sown. Israel is holy to G-d, the first of His grain; all who eat him shall be guilty, evil shall befall them, says G-d. ■



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Bamidbar Chapter 25: 12 – "Therefore say, Behold I give him My covenant of peace"

Many commentaries ask the simple question, why Pinchas was rewarded specifically with the blessing of Peace in return for his act of zealotry. There was no more suitable reward or gift to grant him for such actions?

Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer (1815-1871) in his book the Ktav Sofer gives one answer. He points out that zealotry is the act of extremism, pitted with many dangers and one must be very wary of such acts. Pinchas who took such an action had to be put back on balance. What better way to return the person to a more moderate path than to give him a characteristic of yearning for peace.

The act of extremism was replaced with searching for peace.

Later, Tanach records Pinchas being sent to intercede on behalf of the two and a half tribes living on the eastern side of the Jordan. In the Book of Joshua Chapter 22, the nation of Israel became suspicious of these tribes left on the other side of the Jordan and accused them of idolatry. Pinchas realized that their intentions were pure. Pinchas, the one who stood and killed Zimri, now, prevented bloodshed and civil war. Shabbat Shalom ■