

KI TAVO



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
RCA Israel Region

Our Parsha begins the conclusion of our Torah. The book of Devarim consists of Moshe's long speech at the end of his life. His speech is crafted beautifully, a magnum opus of past, present and future. He began with a review of our history, including successes and failures and their lessons in the impending settling of the land. He then outlined what a Jewish society shall look like; 170 mitzvot including ethical monotheism in all its color, nation building of judiciary, legislature and executive and the high ethical calling in the life of the individuals. Parshat Ki Tavo has but 6 mitzvot. It is the beginning of the conclusion of Moshe's charge to the people. It is followed by 4 very short parshiot, which combined would be a long parsha. Meaning, we are barely a parsha length from the end of the

Torah following Ki Tavo. This is the end of our Torah. And this section deals not with the present, meaning the successful settling of the Land. It gazes into the future; the distant future, the future that follows a long and successful sojourn in the Land.



1st aliya (Devarim 26:1-11) When settled in the Land, bring your first fruits as an offering. When offered declare the following: My forefathers descended to Egypt, were enslaved, called out and You redeemed them with a strong arm, bringing them to this Land of milk and honey. And I am acknowledging that I have benefitted from all that, rejoicing in all the good I have been given.

This mitzvah of bikkurim, of first fruits, is a rich one. But besides its own beauty, lies its significance in the narrative of Devarim. In bikkurim, the successful farmer gives a full throated expression of how fortunate he is to be where he is. He stands on the shoulders of our history. Egypt, redemption, the Land and now little me, enjoying a bounty in the Land. That is a beautiful mitzvah of gratitude and appreciation. But it is also foreshadowing. Know, my people, Moshe is saying, know that this is the way you should live. Appreciative, aware, a sense of history, placing G-d at the core of your success. And rejoicing, having simcha. This is a foreshadow to the horrible curses Moshe will outline should this ideal not be realized. Here is the way it should be. And could be.



2nd aliya (26:12-15) In the 3rd year, declare that all tithes have been given: I have given the holy tithes

לעילוי נשמת

In loving memory of

פרידה בת ישראל דוד ושיינדל אסתר ז"ל

Frieda Schorer z"l

כ"ג אלול - on her 4th yahrzeit

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as well as those to the Levi and the needy. I have done all that I have been commanded to do. Gaze down from Your holy place in the heavens and bless us in this Land flowing with milk and honey.

The tithes include gifts to the Kohanim and Leviim; communal support of religious leaders. And it also encompasses a legislated type of welfare state. Maaser sheni produce floods Jerusalem creating inexpensive food, a safety net for the needy. And in the 3rd year, 10% to the poor themselves. In these first 2 very short aliyot, these 2 mitzvot encapsule Jewish living as it ought to be. Monotheism, centrality of His place in Jerusalem, religious sensitivity and care for the needy. Ethical monotheism. What we should be and what we could be.

 **3rd aliya (26:16-19)** Today G-d is commanding you to keep His laws with all your heart. You declare today that He will be your G-d and you will keep His laws. And He declares that you will be a treasured nation, to elevate you, to be a glorious and holy people.

A brief statement but a powerful one. We are both committed: we to Him, He to us. This is our noble calling. Moshe states it positively; he will shortly however outline the heavy implications of being His people.

 **4th aliya (27:1-10)** Moshe with the elders commanded the people: upon entering the Land, establish a monument of stones with this entire Torah written upon it. Build an altar in front of it, offer offerings and rejoice before your G-d. Moshe, the Kohanim and the Leviim spoke: know that today you are

איזהו חכם? הרואה את הנולד
Who is wise? He who foresees the future.
פרקי אבות ב', ט'



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G-d's people.

Monuments, stone, permanence. The Torah shall be permanent in life in the Land. Note the people Moshe enlists here: first, the elders join him in commanding the people. Then, the Kohanim and the Leviim. The encouragement of the people comes from all levels of leadership.



5th aliya (27:11-28:6) Moshe commanded the people: 6 tribes shall be on Har Gerizim, 6 on Har Eval.

The Leviim shall between the mountains, pronouncing the following, affirmed with Amen by the people. Cursed is the one who: makes idols in private, curses parents, alters the Land demarcations with his neighbor, deceives the blind, manipulates justice of the weak, commits incest, strikes another privately, takes a bribe resulting in corporal punishment, or fails to keep the Torah. **The Blessings and Curses:** If you keep the mitzvot, you will be a glorious nation. You will be blessed with children, with produce, and flocks.

The dramatic presentation of who is cursed is conspicuous; all things done in private. With all the needs of communal leadership, the core of our religious life is our personal relationship with G-d. It is the things done in private that truly convey our allegiance. When no one is looking, He is. And this too is foreshadowing. For we will never truly be in a position to assess the fullness of our righteousness, for who can see into the hearts of human beings.



6th aliya (28:7-69) You will be blessed with military success, with an abundance of G-d's



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treasury, and excelling over others. But if you do not do the mitzvot: you will be cursed. In offspring, produce, flocks, illness. Enemies will chase you. You will be carrion in the field. Illness, blindness, dementia, wandering without direction. You will not enjoy the fruits of your labor; they will be snatched from you. This will all drive you mad. You will be carried off to other nations, serving idols there. Your efforts there will not be successful. You will sink, other nations rise. You will be derided as one who abandoned G-d, refusing to serve Him in your success. All will disintegrate; your family, your social structure, those dear to you. Illnesses will decimate you. In lieu of being as the stars of the heavens, you will be miniscule. You will be thrown around the world, serving idols, finding no solace, fearful day and night. You will even end up back in Egypt, the place you were to never return. This is the covenant of the plains of Moav.

This aliya is the aliya of the curses; what will occur due to our abandonment of G-d and of mitzvot. And it is long; at 63 verses,


Mazal Tov to
Dr. Daniel & Sara Berelowitz
and family
on the marriage of
Shevi to Jacob Namrow
 son of Dr. Caroline & Eric Namrow
 grandson of
 Phyllis Namrow (Maryland, USA)
 and grandson of
 Stephen Waldenberg (Leeds, UK)




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one of the longest in the entire Torah. In this, Moshe moves well beyond the present. He has been preoccupied, understandably, with what is necessary to build the Jewish nation successfully. He has described what we can anticipate in life in the Land; it's challenges, like idol worship, and its glory. Now, he peers into the distant future. There will be a time of exile. I know, we haven't even entered the Land, but there will be a time when we will lose this Land. We will lack gratitude, lack allegiance and be exiled. Our experience in exile will be horrible; illness, failure, insecurity, total societal breakdown. And how does it all end? Uh, well, it doesn't. There is no happy ending. We are left hanging; wandering, suffering, decimated. Oh, but that is this parsha. In the most beautiful of parshiot of the Torah, Moshe returns to pick up the future next week, the parsha of Teshuva. But the power of the poetry, of ending this description of the curses with no conclusion

is painful, and leaves us with a terrible feeling of dissatisfaction and dread.



7th aliya (29:1-8) Moshe called the people and spoke: You say all the wonders of Egypt, but it has taken to this day to understand its meaning. He guided you, defeated nations, giving you their lands. So keep this covenant, to live insightfully.

This deceiving short aliya has a surprising and profound brief statement. "It has taken till today to understand our history". We shall never allow ourselves to be facile, to be presumptuous, to feel we understand history and G-d's ways. It took those in the desert 40 years to fully appreciate their history, the dynamic of G-d in their history. Understanding His ways is no easy matter.

HAFTORAH

YESHAYAHU 60:1-22

This week's *haftorah* is the sixth of a series of seven "*Haftarot* of Consolation." These

Shabbat afternoon Parsha shiur with Rabbi Chanoch Yeres at 5:00pm in the back garden of the OU Israel Center

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"V'Samachta Bechol Hatov Asher Natan Lecha Hashem Elokecha" (26:11)

"And you shall rejoice in every good thing that Hashem has given you"

The Pasuk tells us of becoming happy from the good things that G-d gives us. Why doesn't the Pasuk just say it in a concise fashion, that we will be happy from all the good that we receive? Obviously, all comes from G-d, why must we emphasize it?

Rabbi Shlomo Rabinovitz (the Tifferet Shlomo the Admor of Radumsk 1803-1866) shares with us the reason. If a man receives a large gift from a king, he rejoices not just the value of the gift but also the fact that it came from the king himself. The main joy is reflected on who gave it. So too, our Pasuk says that "you will rejoice in every good thing" not only because they are good but because HASHEM is the giver.

Shabbat Shalom ■

seven *haftarot* commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

In exhilarating terms the navi describes what will unfold during the Redemption. Beginning with the resurrection of the dead and the ingathering of the exiles, continuing with the joy and abundance the Jewish people will then experience. The navi also spotlights the gifts that will be brought to G-d from all of the nations of the world.

In the end, the Jewish nation will no longer experience the hatred of the other nations, be despised and derided. The day will come when there will no longer be violence nor mourning, Hashem will shine His eternal light on His beloved people. ■

STATS

50th of the 54 sedras; 7th of the 11 in D'varim
 Written on 233 lines (rank: 13th) 21 Parshiyot; 5 open (P), 16 closed (S)
 122 p'sukim - rank: 17 (2nd in D'varim)
 1747 words - rank: 16 (2nd in D'varim)
 6811 letters - rank: 15 (4th in D'varim)
 P'sukim are longer than average for the Torah, but short for D'varim

MITZVOT

6 of the 613; 3 pos. and 3 prohibitions

*Mazal tov to
 Yehudah & Yaffa Brochin and family
 on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson
 Avrom Hillel Rubin
 and on the birth of a new grandson
 in Far Rockaway, NY
 Mazal Tov to the parents
 Moshe & Chava Rubin*



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