



# ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS  
RCA ISRAEL REGION

## 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF PESACH



### 1ST ALIYA (EXODUS 12:21-24)

Offer the Pesach offering, place its blood on the doorposts and remain indoors ‘til the morning. For G-d will pass over the homes identified with the blood and your firstborn will be spared. This law is eternal.

The simplicity of this narrative belies its drama. Take the Pesach. Offer it. And they did.

But this is anything but simple. It is defiance. You, who have no status in this place, you who are slaves – slaughter what the Egyptians deify in an act of defiance.

The slave people listened to their G-d regardless of the risk from their overseers.

This is the first act of loyalty demanded of the Jewish people by G-d. All of the Torah has been G-d’s promises to us. Now he asks for our hand to be stretched to Him in return. The Holy One could have redeemed us, could have passed over our homes

May the Torah learned from  
this issue be לעילוי נשמת

**Prof. Mark Jay Steiner ז”ל**

**מרדכי יהודה בן אפרים ז”ל**  
on his 6<sup>th</sup> yartzheit - י”ב ניסן

*Steiner, Shuchman  
and Zommer families*



### 2ND ALIYA (12:25-28)

When you enter the Land and your children ask you what this service is, you will answer that this is a Pesach, as Hashem passed over our homes. The people did as Moshe commanded.

These simple verses are as dramatic as the first.

“When you enter the Land”? What? Slaves are being told to keep this mitzvah when they enter the Land? The Land of Israel is the farthest thing from their minds, mired in slavery. Who is thinking, before being redeemed, with redemption still just a hope, an aspiration, who is thinking of what we will do in the Land of Israel?

From the dawn of our history, we are dreamers, dreaming fantastic dreams and visions of the future, oblivious to the grimness of the reality of the moment.



### 3RD ALIYA (12:29-36)

At midnight all the first born in Egypt are killed. Paro orders Moshe and Aharon to leave and take all the people to their festival and to bless him as well. The Egyptians urged the Jews to leave quickly. The Jewish people took unrisen dough and gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians.

While the buildup to this moment took many months, the redemption occurs in a flash. Out. Now.

Even the Jews, knowing they are going to

be redeemed that night, are unprepared for the moment, dough unrisen. They had not prepared provisions. Faithful they were; prepared, not.

Anticipation tempers not the shock of the moment.



#### 4TH ALIYA (12:37-42)

The people left, including 600,000 of military age, many others who joined, and laden with flocks. The dough was baked hastily as they were expelled in haste. The Jews lived in Egypt 430 years; they departed after exactly 430 years. This day that G-d anticipated for their departure remains a noted day for Jews forever.

The Torah emphasizes that this was the day destined from the start for the redemption. From *our* perspective the redemption was sudden; *we* were unprepared. But from *His* perspective, this was in the cards the whole time. He anticipated it. That is our history. Sweeps of hundreds of years, even millennium, for the Divine plan to take shape.



#### 5TH ALIYA (12:43-51)

**The Pesach Offering:** non-Jews may not participate, must be eaten in one home, may not be taken out of the home, no bone may be broken, all Jews participate. One who joins the Jewish people and is circumcised may join the Pesach; there is one law for all. On that day G-d took the Jewish people out of Egypt.

The Torah emphasizes the home. Consume the Pesach in the home. Do not leave the home.

The Pesach Seder is truly remarkable. The first seder was in the home. I don't know what that home looked like. Or what Jewish homes have looked like over the 3,000 plus



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years of our history. What did our homes look like in the land of Israel to Babylonia, Persia, Italy, North Africa, Germany, France, Russia, Poland.... How varied those homes have looked.

But with their varied look, Jews have had matza and marror around the table at the Seder. From that first one to this day. Remarkable.

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## 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF PESACH

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#### 1ST ALIYA (EXODUS 13:17-22)

The people traveled away from Egypt toward the sea. Moshe took the bones of Yosef, as Yosef had instructed them to do. A Divine cloud guided them by day, fire by night.

When Yosef died, he should have done what Yaakov did. Yaakov wanted to assert that the Land of Israel is our land, not Egypt,

In loving memory of  
our dear mother, grandmother  
and great-grandmother

**DOROTHY WEINER** a”h  
On her 21<sup>st</sup> Yahrtzeit - שביעי של פסח -

Rena & Zev Lewis  
Heschel & Sarelle Weiner

and demanded he be brought to Israel for burial.

Yosef didn't do that. Rather Yosef commanded "when you all leave here, take my bones with you." Wow, Yosef was mighty confident in the Divine promise of redemption. He staked his bones on it.

What a powerful assertion of faith on his part. And a powerful expression of encouragement to the people: "things will get bad here in Egypt, plenty bad. But I believe in the promise made to Avraham that we will be redeemed. And when that happens, because I know it will, take my bones with you."



#### 2ND ALIYA (14:1-8)

The people camp at the sea; Paro pursues with the elite of his fighting forces.

Paro's change of heart is a pattern; in the plagues and even after the plague of the first born. Though his change of heart oscillates between his own stubbornness and stubbornness assisted from Above.

Is that not the human condition? How much of life is our agency and how much influenced from Above? Thoughts planted unexpectedly, newfound and surprising energy. Us? Or Him?



#### 3RD ALIYA (14:9-14)

With the sea in front of them and Paro in pursuit, the people are desperate. They question why Moshe brought them out of Egypt to die in the desert. And state: this is what we said in Egypt. We would rather remain in Egypt to live and work as slaves than leave Egypt to die in the desert. Moshe reassured them.

This is the first we hear of the reluctance of the people to leave Egypt. While the Torah tells the story of the Jewish people

leaving slavery, that doesn't mean that every Jewish person was a willing participant. Skepticism is not a modern invention; it is a part of our people from antiquity.

But, while skeptical, they *did* leave, taking their place as part of the redemption of the Jewish people. Skeptics join the Jewish adventure of redemption, albeit skeptically.



#### 4TH ALIYA (14:15-25)

G-d tells Moshe to march forward, raise his staff over the water, the water will split and the people will proceed through the water. Moshe does so, the sea splits, the people march through and the Egyptians pursue. By daybreak the Egyptians are stuck in the sea, claiming G-d is fighting the battle of the Jews.

Redemption occurs with water. The first thing in creation was water; verse 2 in the Torah states G-d's spirit hovered over the waters. Water recurs as a symbol of beginnings. The splitting of the sea and the redemption from Egypt closes a chapter of Jewish history and opens a new beginning. It is the beginning of the national march to receive the Torah and to enter the Land of Israel. A new beginning marked by water.



#### 5TH ALIYA (14:26-15:26)

The sea waters return, drowning the Egyptians. The people sing Az Yashir, the song of thanks. Miriam leads the women in song. The journey into the desert begins.

Redemption brings song. This song creates a religious paradigm. When we are the recipients of Divine gifts, we must respond. The religious heart cannot contain itself. It needs to burst forth with song. Divine gifts, His Hand in our history, must generate a response by us. And that response is Song. ■



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## PARSHAT SHEMINI



### 1ST ALIYA (VAYIKRA 9:1-16)

On the eighth day of the inauguration of Aharon and the kohanim, Moshe gathers the people. He instructs Aharon to offer a chatat and an olah. The people are also to bring a chatat, olah, shlamim and mincha. For today, G-d will appear. Aharon offers his offerings. He offers the people's offerings. The offerings are brought exactly as instructed.

This is the 8th day of the 7-day inauguration of Aharon and the Kohanim. Meaning, the inauguration is over. Aharon has been invested as Kohen Gadol. This is the day after the inauguration, the first day of full service by Aharon.

The Torah emphasized that Moshe filled the role of the Kohen Gadol during the 7 days of the inauguration. Moshe himself did all the service for those 7 days. Now it emphasizes that all the offerings on this, the 8th day are done by the new Kohen, Aharon.

However, these are not normal daily offerings. Moshe tells Aharon that this is to be a special day with special offerings. For it is the day that the G-d will appear.

The moment is pregnant with anticipation. For this is the day that G-d's Presence will fill the Mishkan. We hope.

For that is the purpose of the Mishkan. His Presence and our service. He meets us; we meet Him.

It is not just man serving G-d. It is Presence. A rendezvous. Not just us, but He too. The Divine meets man. That is actually the meaning of the word Mishkan; the place in which He Will Dwell.

So, this 8th day is a big, big moment. There is tense anticipation. Anticipation of the Shechina, of the Presence.

Moshe says so. The offerings today will invite G-d's presence. In fact, he tells them this twice.

As Aharon assumes his role, bringing his offerings, both for himself and for the Jewish people, there is tense anticipation. Will His Presence descend and meet us here in this special place?



### 2ND ALIYA (9:17-23)

Aharon offers the mincha and the shlamim. All the details are performed as commanded. The portion Aharon is to receive is waved as commanded. Upon conclusion of all the offerings, Aharon blesses the people and descends from the offerings. Moshe and Aharon enter the Tent of Meeting, blessing the people upon exiting. The Glory of G-d appears to the people.

All the types of offerings have been brought by Aharon: chatat, olah, mincha, shlamim. The moment of rendezvous of the Divine, of responding to the approach of man is about to occur. Aharon blesses the people.

Aharon blesses the people with the hope that their aspiration for G-d's rendezvous be

realized. Nothing happens.

Moshe and Aharon bless the people: May the pleasure of G-d be upon you. May the Shechina dwell on your efforts.

And then, the Kavod Hashem, the Glory of G-d appeared to the people. Their approach and their prayers were granted with a rendezvous with the Divine. Truly a peak, sublime moment of the entire Torah. Man's approach to G-d is answered with His Presence.



### 3RD ALIYA (9:24-10:11)

A fire descended from G-d and consumed the offerings on the altar. The people saw, sang out and fell on their faces. Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aharon, took incense, though not commanded, and burnt it before G-d. A fire consumed them and they died. Moshe told Aharon that this is what G-d said: With those close to Me I am sanctified. Aharon was silent. After removing the bodies, Moshe told the other sons of Aharon to not mourn or leave the Mikdash; the Jewish people will mourn. Moshe commanded the kohanim to not consume wine when serving in the Mikdash, so that they can distinguish holy and profane and to teach the people.

The people are ecstatic with the Presence of G-d. They sing. Bow. Ecstatic.

But the ecstasy is shattered by the death of Nadav and Avihu in bringing incense not commanded.

Ecstasy and death. Ecstasy shattered by death.

What could the meaning of this terrible juxtaposition be? That our ecstatic rendezvous with the Divine is shattered with death?

We have seen a warning of death juxtaposed with the Divine Presence before. At Sinai. The people were warned: do not approach the mountain upon which the cloud has descended or you will die.

Even upon hearing G-d's voice the people trembled, recoiling, for man cannot experience G-d and live. The people didn't want to die. They asked Moshe to hear G-d's voice, so they wouldn't die.

Immanence is dangerous. It must be handled with care.

The Mishkan is the place of intimate approach to G-d, the meeting of man and G-d in His home. But the approach of finite man to infinite G-d is fraught with mystery. It must be handled delicately, gingerly. How can finite man dare to think he can approach the Infinite? It is absurd to imagine that we could rendezvous with His Presence. And yet, we were invited by Him to do so.

We can do so only because – well, because He told us how. G-d invited us, instructed us how to approach Him. And we do so tentatively, carefully, acknowledging that we are approaching Him only by His invitation.

Perhaps that is the conceptual underpinning of the detailed instructions of the Mishkan. And the detailed instructions of the offerings. Perhaps it is to communicate that the rendezvous of man and G-d is fraught with mystery. Finite man is incapable of fathoming how to approach G-d. He, though, reaches for us, with detailed instructions as to how to approach Him.

Without His reach to us, his instructions to us, the meeting of the Infinite with the finite would not be possible. It is only through the details of His instructions that

it is possible.

It is in this context, after a long, extended narrative of detailed instructions and detailed compliance that the spontaneous desire of Nadav and Avihu to approach G-d with their unauthorized incense must be seen.

That is not the way I said it. Where is the temerity? Man cannot approach G-d lest he die. Nadav and Avihu throw abandon to the wind and approach. They are smitten dead.



#### 4TH ALIYA (10:12-15)

Moshe instructs Aharon and his remaining sons, Elazar and Itamar, to consume the parts of the offerings that were brought today that they were entitled to. They need to consume the mincha matza and the meat of the breast in the holy grounds.

Moshe proceeds with the momentous day of the appearance of G-d's glory, proceeding with the details of the offerings. As if to say, service of G-d continues regardless of your personal tragedy.



#### 5TH ALIYA (10:16-20)

Moshe inquired about the meat of the chatat but it had been burned, not consumed. He was upset: why did you not consume these in the holy place as commanded? Aharon responded: On a day that this occurred, should we offer the offerings and eat them? Is that proper in G-d's eyes? Moshe heard and agreed.

Moshe is upset that the offerings had not been consumed by Aharon and his other sons. Aharon, struck speechless by the death of his 2 sons, now challenges Moshe. Does our role as Divine servants eliminate our human feelings of tragedy? Is a holy person untethered to normal human emotion? Am

I angelic? Or am I a holy man with normal feelings, shattered by the death of 2 sons? Am I not entitled to mourn at least today?

This brief, very brief, confrontation expresses a universal theme of the holy man. Does holiness untether our humanity, our emotions, our desires, our hold on this world? Does the religious leader, the holy man, float above normal human feelings of grief? Does he continue serving G-d sublimating the pain he is suffering?

Religions of the world come down differently on this question. Moshe thought Aharon should rise above his despair. But Aharon objects. And Moshe agrees with him. The holiest person we have, the Kohen Gadol, cries like anyone else on the death of his children. Normal service does not continue as if nothing happened. However holy the holy man is, he is also a person with legitimate feelings. Holy men are holy, but men they remain.



#### 6TH ALIYA (11:1-32)

Of **land animals**, you may eat those with split hooves and that chew their cud. Those with only one such sign shall not be eaten: camel, hyrax, hare and pig. **Aquatic beings** that have fins and scales may be eaten. Predator **birds** may not be eaten. **Insects** may not be eaten with the exception of certain grasshoppers. Touching the carcass of certain dead animals renders a person Tameh, impure.

We would expect some transition from the horrible moment of the death of Aharon's sons to the laws of kashrut. Yet, there is no transition at all.

Perhaps the laws of kashrut continue this theme of the pursuit of the sublime. And addresses not only what you may not

consume, but what you may.

There has been extensive focus on the pursuit of the rendezvous with the Shechina. And the care, the respect that must be exercised in that pursuit.

But do not think that all of life is circumscribed by that pursuit. That perhaps meat can be consumed only in the context of sacrifices.

No. There is Divine service. And there is life. Plodding, pedestrian life. In which we consume meat. And refrain from non kosher.

The laws of kashrut restrict. And permit. This is forbidden. But this is permitted.

The permission is as important as the restriction. You, man, are permitted to consume meat. You are not restricted to eating meat only in the context of the encounter in the Mishkan. You may consume meat in your ordinary life.



### 7TH ALIYA (11:33-47)

The contraction of Tumah from contact with animals requires immersion in a mikveh. You shall be holy because I, G-d, am holy. I brought you out of Egypt to be My people and to be holy, as I am. You are to distinguish between pure and impure and between living things that may be eaten and those that may not.

We are instructed to imitate G-d's holiness. In what way are we to imitate Him? In Creation he separated, *mavdil*; so too we exercise discernment. We distinguish between that which we consume; and that which we don't. Discernment, self control, structure, in particular in those activities we share with animals are what make us holy, imitating His holiness.

## HAFTORAH SHEMINI 2 SHMUEL 6:1-19

King David makes the decision to move the Holy Ark to the new capital, Jerusalem. He instructed that the Ark be placed on a cart and it was brought to the Holy City amidst singing and dancing. When the Ark with the large procession made its way to *Goren Nachon*, the oxen misstepped and Uzza, Avinadav's son, reached out and took hold of the Ark to catch it. At that moment he was suddenly killed.

The haftorah which spotlights how Uzza was struck dead when he disrespectfully touched the Ark parallels the episode in the parsha of Nadav and Avihu's death.

King David was greatly distressed over this tragic episode. He then chose to place the Ark in the home of Oved-edom the Edomite, where it then stayed for three months.

Ultimately King David brought the Ark from the house of Oved-edom into the City of David with great joy and celebration. King David offers blessing and to all present at this historic moment in the history of the nation of Israel. ■



### STATS

26th of 54 sedras; 3rd of 10 in Vayikra.  
157.2 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 42nd.  
6 Parshiyot, 3 open, 3 closed.  
91 pesukim - ranks 41st (4th in Vayikra).  
1238 words - 41st (5th in Vayikra).  
4670 letters - 41st (5th in Vayikra).



### MITZVOT

17 mitzvot; 6 positive; 11 prohibitions.