

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 46

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DEVARIM

6th AV 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 1 - 10

- ✚ On the first day of the eleventh month in the fortieth year, wandering through the midbar (desert), Bnai Israel were encamped on the eastern bank of the Jordan River on the verge of entering the land of Canaan.
- ✚ Knowing his death was imminent Moshe begins his final monologue as their leader.
- ✚ Cleverly disguised by recalling all the places Bnai Yisrael had been to over the past thirty nine years, Moshe delivers a harsh rebuke towards his people for their past misdemeanours which prevented them all from conquering the land much sooner, after Matan Torah (The giving of the Torah) itself.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 11 - 21

- ✚ At that time Moshe felt he could no longer lead them single handed, which was why he decided to appoint judges to help ease his burdens. Moshe implored the judges not to show any favouritism or be afraid of anyone as he needed them to judge righteously; but if they felt that any case would be too difficult for whatever reason, then the case had to be presented to him, to decide upon the final verdict.
- ✚ Upon leaving Horev and reaching Kadesh Barnea (Canaan's Southern Border), disaster occurred.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 22 - 35

- ✚ Moshe told his beloved people to remain brave and not to lose heart but instead they requested that one man from each tribe should go and spy out the Promised Land first.
- ✚ Even though they came back with glowing reports about the fertility of the land, Bnai Yisrael rebelled against Moshe because they listened to all the negatively relating to how the land could never be conquered, because the current inhabitants dwelling in Canaan were too strong.
- ✚ Hashem became angry and swore that none of that generation apart from Caleb and Yehoshua (Joshua) will enter the land.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 1, verse 36 - Chapter 2, verse 1

- ✚ When the people heard this and although they were warned by Hashem from doing so, a group of them rebelled once more and rushed into the land, only to be defeated and killed by the Amorites.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 2, verses 2 - 30

- ✚ Moshe recounts how thirty eight years later the next generation were being instructed by Hashem not to provoke the Edomites as they crossed the land of Seir in order to get to Israel because Hashem had given Seir to Esav as an inheritance. However Bnai Yisrael were given permission to buy provisions of water and food from them.
- ✚ Since Lot was also given the land where the nations of Moab and Ammon dwelt as an inheritance from Hashem. Bnai Yisrael were not permitted to conquer their land either.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 2, verse 31 – Chapter 3, verse 14

- ✚ Moshe recalls how both the Amorite King 'Sihon' and the King of Bashan 'Og' refused Bnai Yisrael entry into their lands and instead led their men into battle only to be defeated by Bnai Yisrael's army.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 15 - 22

- ✚ These lands were then given and split up between the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe's tribe to dwell; on the condition they would assist in conquering the rest of the land of Israel first.

Haftorah – Yishayah (Isaiah) Chapter 1 verses 1 to 27

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yishayah relives his vision he experienced to the Jewish nation, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against Hashem and not abandoning their sinful ways.
- ✚ Yishayah, attempts to encourage the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of kindness especially towards the needy; promising them the best of the land in return for their obedience, making them ready for the Messianic era.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ This is the third and final prophecy which is always read the Shabbat before the ninth of Av, commemorating the destruction of both the first and second Beis Hamikdashim (temples).
- ✚ The Haftorah is fitting for this sad occasion as it clearly shows what is expected of us and to how low we have sunk.
- ✚ The first word of the *Haftorah* is "*Chazon*" (vision), teaching us not to be disheartened because Hashem will once again reestablish peace in Israel and that the third Holy Temple will one day be rebuilt.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The Book of Devarim begins with Moshe delivering his final address to Bnai Yisrael. The address itself is basically composed of three elements. The reviewing of some of the commandments, emphasizes their importance along with additional information on how to perform them. Secondly, revealing more mitzvot that had not been previously discussed; but before this Moshe begins by reminiscing on his time as leader, places he visited, and events he had participated in etc.

On the surface this is a nice way to start, but we know, all the place names in which Moshe recalled were all words of rebuke, enumerating the sins, which Bnai Israel had committed over the past thirty nine years. Why would Moshe want to start off his final teachings with rebukes?

Moshe felt that if Bnai Israel could feel genuine regret and remorse for what they had done and sincerely promise not to repeat them again, then Hashem in his mercy would find compassion and retract from his preordained punishments for doing wrong.

Making mistakes is an inevitable part of life. Teshuva, (returning back to Hashem) and repentance, is the Jewish response in dealing with those mistakes. The Hebrew word for sin 'Chait' can also be interpreted as "missing the mark" and Teshuva is Judaism's way of getting us back on track.

Parsha Devarim is always read the week proceeding Tisha b'Av. The saddest day in the Jewish calendar, where so many atrocities had taken place, including the destruction of both the first and second temples. The purpose of commemorating such a day is to arouse our hearts and open our eyes to the ways of repentance and Teshuvah.

The purpose of Tisha b'Av, and indeed all the other fast days is exactly what Moshe in Devarim was trying to teach. We should confess our own wrongdoings, along with the sins of our ancestors and to try and mend our ways; which is what true Teshuva is all about. There's a misconception that you can only do Teshuva during the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as the Jewish calendar puts a special emphasis on it. The truth is however, it's possible to do Teshuva at any time. One of the defining aspects of Judaism is the belief that our Neshama's (souls) are pure and we can choose every day to be the person we want to be.

As we approach Tisha b'Av. we should accept it as a rebuke and commence trying to rectify our mistakes and begin our Teshuva process now; in order to give us all a better chance of being inscribed in the book of life and that we all will have a year full of good health, happiness and peace. Amen.

