

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 49

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RE'EH

27th AV 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 11, verse 26- Chapter 12, verse 10

- ✚ Moshe informs Bnai Yisrael that if they obey Hashem's commandments they will be reciprocated with blessings but they would be the recipients of curses if they don't.
- ✚ Moshe tells them once they are in the land of Israel they are only allowed to bring Korbonos (sacrifice offerings) to a designated area where Hashem will show them (Jerusalem) and not to any other place they might desire.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 12, verses 11 - 28

- ✚ Moshe assures the people that although it is forbidden to offer korbonos in any location other than the one designated by Hashem, it is permitted to slaughter cattle for consumption purposes in their own cities.
- ✚ Blood of any animals may never be eaten.
- ✚ The consumption of various tithes and other sacred foods is also restricted to the holy city of Jerusalem only.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 12, verse 29 - Chapter 13, verse 19

- ✚ Moshe expresses that every Mitzvah described in the Torah is perfect and warns the nation not to add or subtract any part from them.
- ✚ If someone claims to be a Prophet and tells you to follow other G-ds, Moshe warns Bnai Yisrael not to listen as he / she is a heathen and must be put to death.
- ✚ If someone receives the death penalty for trying to coerce someone else to perform idolatry, don't take pity on them, even if they happen to be a family member or a friend).
- ✚ Moshe describes the consequences of an Ir ha'nedahat (a city whose inhabitants are leading people astray) If proven the city along with everything in it must be completely burned to ground.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 14, verses 1 - 21

- ✚ Moshe warns the people that since we are Children of Hashem, we should refrain in taking part in other Nations common practices or rituals, including mourning the departed by self-mutilation, or defacing the body with tattoo's etc.
- ✚ Moshe repeats some of the laws relating to the laws of kashrus, what is and what is not considered Kosher and the law which teaches us not to cook meat and milk products together.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 14, verse 22- 29

- ✚ The laws of giving Ma'aser (tithing) and Ma'aser Sheni are explained.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 15, verses 1 - 18

- ✚ The rules relating to the Shmittah year (the end of a seven year cycle) are discussed here.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 15, verse 19 - Chapter 16, verse 17

- ✚ The male firstborn of kosher cattle must be consecrated and given to the *Kohen* to eat.
- ✚ The three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavu'ous and Succot are described in more detail here.

Haftorah – YISHAYAH (ISAIAH) Chapter 54 verse 11 to Chapter 55 verse 5

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Hashem comforts his afflicted nation assuring that Jerusalem, will be restored to full glory and that their future generations will enjoy abundant peace.
- ✚ Yishayah then invites the thirsty to acquire "water," (specifically those who are thirsty for spirituality), to come and study the words of Torah.
- ✚ He finishes by promising the nation an everlasting covenant similar to that made with Dovid Ha Melech (King David)

. LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ This is the third of the seven prophecies of comfort read between Tisha bar Av and Rosh Hashanah.
- ✚ The Haftorah reiterates the words said by Moshe at the beginning of the sedra expressing that if we choose to follow Hashem's path, we will reap in all the benefits he has to offer.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Shmittah, the sabbatical year, comprises a number of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah, While the laws of Shmittah for those of us living in Israel are quite numerous and complex, there are four main commandments which need to be addressed and understood.

The first one is that the land should rest, meaning that the land owners must refrain from planting, pruning, ploughing, harvesting or engaging in any other form of working the land.

The second is that all the seventh-year produce is classified as hefker (ownerless and free.) meaning anyone can enter the land and help themselves.

The third mitzvah is to cancel any outstanding debts, obligations you may have with another and finally the fourth one is to sanctify all the seventh-year produce. We do this by handling it respectfully, consuming it completely, and not doing any business with it.

In an attempt to understand their applications further, I like to explore a little deeper. The first mitzvah is interesting the Torah does not merely say, "Let the land rest;" rather, it says "let the land rest, a Shabbat to Hashem." Like the commandment to rest every seven days on Shabbat, Shmittah not only provides physical benefits but also enables humanity to develop spiritually and appreciate all of Hashem's creations.

The second and third commandments of Shmittah teaches us the great sensitivity Hashem has towards all living things, reorienting us to ensure that every part of society is looked after, especially the destitute and underprivileged.

The fourth category of Shmittah: the laws of sanctifying the seventh-year produce, called Kedusha shevi'it are complex but basically it teaches us that there is Kedusha in everything and must be treated as such.

Shmittah teaches us about responsibility, but unfortunately, the world we live in doesn't recognize the wisdom, it demonstrates. May Hashem help us through the next Shmittah cycle, (which will commence this year on Rosh Hashanah), so we can preserve it for our future generations to enjoy.

