

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 44

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RE'EH

30th Av 5775

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' - 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, Shavuuous and Succot are described more in detail here.

Maftir – Bamidbar, Chapter 28 Verses 9 – 15

- ✚ The Korbonos (Sacrifices) which are required to be offered up to Hashem on Rosh Chodesh during the times when the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash stood are discussed here.

Haftorah – Yishayah (Isaiah), Chapter 66, Verses 1 – 24

- ✚ Yishayah describes the ultimate downfall of all our enemies during the war of Gog and Magog. The Navi forewarns that insincere expressions of devotion are synonymous to those who offer up blemished korbonos (sacrifices) to Hashem for because of this lack of sincerity and devotion, will be ultimately punished for it.
- ✚ Nevertheless, Yishayah's message, those who truly mourn for the absence of the Bais Hamikdash will merit and rejoice in its future redemption and reconstruction and will once again be able to witness the Rosh Chodesh offering and service, and fully participate in expressing their devotion and commitment to Hashem.

.LINK TO SEDRA READING:

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

There is a clear instruction in this week's sedra: "Do not add or subtract from any of Hashem's mitzvors." (Deut. 4:2) Intuitively, it is understandable why we should not subtract from the Torah. But surely Hashem would give his approval if we added something to it. Isn't doing more always better?

I once posed this question to a friend of mine, He answered 'Judaism is a process, a journey, where every step counts.' He perceives that when it comes to individual observance of a Mitzvah, A person must strive to do their best, and no more. But on a national level, we can't allow lower standards to be "institutionalized." The strength of Jewish law is its belief that human needs and desires remain consistent throughout history. If you try and redefine a particular Mitzvah for each individual, family, or society, then it will cease to be effective, resulting in the whole Jewish framework falling apart.

Our Commentator's explains that the reason for this mitzvah of 'bal tosif and bal tigras' (not adding or subtracting) is that when a person adds on to or subtracts from something, in essence they are saying that the original was in some way lacking, it wasn't perfect. Consider a great work of art for example. Would you remove a few notes from a Verdi opera or a Beethoven symphony or add some additional brushstrokes to a Rembrandt or a Picasso? No! It would spoil the whole ambience of the piece. And could damage their longevity of being masterpieces. This applies to all of the mitzvors written in the Torah too as they all originate from Hashem and therefore are inherently perfect. Everything that Hashem does and commands us to do or refrain from is beneficial and intrinsically good with no imperfections. If anyone of us decided to add or subtract from even one of them, we are implying that there must be a flaw in Hashem's laws which needs addressing to make it right.

Therefore, Moshe is emphasizing the importance of this commandment in his final teachings before Bnai Yisrael enter the Promised Land.

Adding to the mitzvot is not being subservient to Hashem; it is in effect self-worshiping of one's own creativity. Perfection, by definition, cannot be improved upon. Jewish law is a precise metaphysical science. For just as removing one wire from a phone means that it no longer can pick up a reception, so too we mustn't tinker with the mitzvors. Don't mar a masterpiece! If we take heed to the well-known verse and song written by Dovid Ha Melech (King David in Tehilim (Psalm) 19:8 "**Torah Hashem Temimah**" (the Torah of Hashem is perfect" we all be serving Hashem, just the way he would like us to.

