

Community Sefer Torah Dedication Own Your Own Parasha

Sunday September 16, 2018 at 9:30 am
Mashadi Jewish Center Shaare Shalom

Followed by a lavish breakfast in honor of the New Sefer Torah



Dedicate a Parasha in the Memory of a Loved One

**Under the Instruction of our Chief Rabbi,
Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Haim**

This special, travel-size Sefer Torah is only
30 centimeters tall.

This Torah will be available for community
members to borrow when traveling to Miami,
Las Vegas, Tuscan or
MYC weekend getaways.

When in town, this Sefer Torah will be kept in
Rabbi Ben Haim's minyan.

The name of each Parasha with its
donor's names will be engraved on
the cover of the Torah.

In addition to donating a Parsha, any
community member who would like to be
part of this beautiful mitzvah can have their
name enscribed on the inside of the Torah
cover for a \$100 donatation.



Bereshit

G-d creates the world in six days. On the first day He makes **darkness** and **light**. On the second day He forms the **heavens**, dividing the “upper waters” from the “lower waters.” On the third day He sets the boundaries of **land and sea**, and calls forth trees and greenery from the earth. On the fourth day He fixes the position of the **sun, moon and stars** as timekeepers and illuminators of the earth. Fish, birds and reptiles are created on the fifth day; land animals, and then the **human being**, on the sixth. G-d ceases work on the seventh day, and sanctifies it as a day of **rest**.

G-d forms the human body from the dust of the earth, and blows into his nostrils a “**living soul**.” Originally Man is a single person, but deciding that “it is not good that man be alone,” G-d takes a “side” from the man, forms it into a woman, and **marries** them to each other.

Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, and commanded not to eat from the “**Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil**.” The serpent persuades Eve to violate the command, and she shares the forbidden fruit with her husband. Because of their **sin**, it is decreed that man will experience death, returning to the soil from which he was formed, and that all gain will come only through **struggle** and hardship. Man is banished from the Garden.

Eve **gives birth** to two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain quarrels with Abel and murders him, and becomes a **rootless wanderer**. A third son, Seth, is born to Adam; Seth’s eighth-generation descendant, Noah, is the only righteous man in a corrupt world.

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Noah

G-d instructs **Noah**—the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption—to build a large wooden *teivah* (“**ark**”), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the **water**, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species.

Rain falls for **40 days** and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat, and from its **window** Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of **doves**, “to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth.” When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the *teivah* and repopulate the **earth**.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the **rainbow** as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah regarding the sacredness of life: **murder** is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the **meat** of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes **drunk** on its produce. Two of Noah’s sons, **Shem** and **Japheth**, are blessed for covering up their father’s nakedness, while his third son, **Ham**, is punished for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendants of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great **tower** to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their **language** so that “one does not comprehend the tongue of the other,” causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into **seventy nations**.

The Parshah of Noah concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later **Abraham**), and the latter’s journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the **land of Canaan**.

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Lech Lecha

G-d speaks to **Abram**, commanding him, “**Go** from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.” There, G-d says, he will be made into a great **nation**. Abram and his wife, **Sarai**, accompanied by his nephew **Lot**, journey to the land of Canaan, where Abram builds an altar and continues to spread the message of a **one G-d**.

A famine forces the first Jew to depart for **Egypt**, where beautiful Sarai is taken to Pharaoh’s palace; Abram escapes death because they present themselves as **brother and sister**. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching her, and convinces him to return her to Abram and to compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and **cattle**.

Back in the land of Canaan, Lot separates from Abram and settles in the evil city of **Sodom**, where he falls captive when the mighty armies of **Chedorlaomer** and his three allies conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Abram sets out with a small band to rescue his nephew, defeats the four kings, and is blessed by **Malki-Zedek** the king of Salem (Jerusalem).

G-d seals the **Covenant Between the Parts** with Abram, in which the exile and persecution (**galut**) of the people of Israel is foretold, and the **Holy Land** is bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage.

Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Abram to marry her maidservant **Hagar**. Hagar conceives, becomes insolent toward her mistress, and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly; an angel convinces her to return, and tells her that her son will father a populous nation. **Ishmael** is born in Abram’s eighty-sixth year.

Thirteen years later, G-d changes Abram’s name to **Abraham** (“father of multitudes”), and Sarai’s to **Sarah** (“princess”), and promises that a son will be born to them; from this child, whom they should call **Isaac** (“will laugh”), will stem the great nation with which G-d will establish His special bond. Abraham is commanded to **circumcise** himself and his descendants as a “sign of the covenant between Me and you.” Abraham immediately complies, circumcising himself and all the males of his household.

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Vayera

G-d **reveals** Himself to Abraham three days after the first Jew's circumcision at **age ninety-nine**; but Abraham rushes off to prepare a meal for three **guests** who appear in the desert heat. One of the three—who are **angels** disguised as men—announces that, in **exactly one year**, the barren Sarah will give birth to a son. Sarah **laughs**.

Abraham pleads with G-d to spare the wicked city of **Sodom**. Two of the three disguised angels arrive in the doomed city, where Abraham's nephew **Lot** extends his hospitality to them and protects them from the evil intentions of a Sodomite **mob**. The two guests reveal that they have come to **overturn** the place, and to save Lot and his family. Lot's wife turns into a **pillar of salt** when she disobeys the command **not to look back** at the burning city as they flee. While taking shelter in a **cave**, Lot's two daughters (believing that they and their father are the only ones left alive in the world) get their father **drunk**, lie with him and become pregnant. The two sons born from this incident father the nations of **Moab** and Ammon.

Abraham moves to Gerar, where the Philistine king **Abimelech** takes Sarah—who is presented as Abraham's sister—to his palace. In a **dream**, G-d warns Abimelech that he will die unless he returns the woman to her husband. Abraham explains that he feared he would be killed over the **beautiful** Sarah.

G-d **remembers** His promise to Sarah, and gives her and Abraham a son, who is named **Isaac** (*Yitzhak*, meaning "will laugh"). Isaac is circumcised at the age of **eight days**; Abraham is one hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, at their child's birth.

Hagar and Ishmael are banished from Abraham's home and wander in the desert; G-d hears the **cry** of the dying lad, and saves his life by showing his mother a **well**. Abimelech makes a treaty with Abraham at Beersheba, where Abraham gives him **seven sheep** as a sign of their truce.

G-d **tests** Abraham's devotion by commanding him to **sacrifice** Isaac on Mount Moriah (the **Temple Mount**) in Jerusalem. Isaac is **bound** and placed on the altar, and Abraham raises the knife to slaughter his son. A voice from heaven calls to stop him; a ram, caught in the undergrowth by its **horns**, is offered in Isaac's place. Abraham receives the news of the birth of a daughter, **Rebecca**, to his nephew Bethuel.

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Chayei Sarah

Sarah dies at age 127 and is **buried** in the Machpelah Cave in **Hebron**, which Abraham purchases from **Ephron the Hittite** for four hundred shekels of silver. Abraham's servant **Eliezer** is sent, laden with **gifts**, to Charan, to find a wife for **Isaac**. At the village well, Eliezer asks G-d for a **sign**: when the maidens come to the well, he will ask for some **water** to drink; the woman who will offer to give his camels to drink as well shall be the one destined for his master's son.

Rebecca, the daughter of Abraham's nephew **Bethuel**, appears at the well and passes the "test." Eliezer is invited to their home, where he repeats the **story** of the day's events. Rebecca returns with Eliezer to the land of Canaan, where they encounter Isaac praying in the **field**. Isaac **marries** Rebecca, loves her, and is comforted over the loss of his **mother**.

Abraham takes a new wife, Keturah (**Hagar**), and fathers six additional sons, but Isaac is designated as his only heir. Abraham dies at age 175 and is buried beside Sarah by his two eldest sons, **Isaac and Ishmael**.

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Toldot

Isaac and **Rebecca** endure twenty childless years, until their prayers are answered and Rebecca **conceives**. She experiences a **difficult pregnancy** as the “children **struggle** inside her”; G-d tells her that “there are **two nations** in your womb,” and that the younger will prevail over the elder.

Esau emerges first; **Jacob** is born clutching Esau’s **heel**. Esau grows up to be “a **cunning hunter**, a man of the field”; Jacob is “a **wholesome** man,” a dweller in the **tents of learning**. Isaac favors Esau; Rebecca loves Jacob. Returning exhausted and hungry from the hunt one day, Esau sells his birthright (his rights as the **firstborn**) to Jacob for a pot of **red** lentil stew.

In Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, Isaac presents Rebecca as his **sister**, out of fear that he will be killed by someone coveting her beauty. He **farms** the land, reopens the wells dug by his father Abraham, and **digs** a series of his own wells: over the first two there is strife with the Philistines, but the waters of **the third well** are enjoyed in tranquility.

Esau marries two Hittite women. Isaac grows old and blind, and expresses his desire to bless Esau before he dies. While Esau goes off to hunt for his father’s **favorite food**, Rebecca dresses Jacob in **Esau’s clothes**, covers his arms and neck with goatskins to simulate the feel of his hairier brother, prepares a similar dish, and sends Jacob to his father. Jacob receives his father’s blessings for “the **dew of the heaven** and the **fat of the land**” and mastery over his brother. When Esau returns and the deception is revealed, all Isaac can do for his weeping son is to predict that he will live by his **sword**, and that when Jacob falters, the younger brother will forfeit his supremacy over the elder.

Jacob leaves home for **Charan** to flee Esau’s wrath and to find a wife in the family of his mother’s brother, **Laban**. Esau marries a third wife—**Machalath**, the daughter of Ishmael.

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Vayetzai

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (**mitzvot**) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitzei. These include the laws of the **beautiful captive**, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, **burial** and dignity of the dead, returning a **lost object**, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a **safety fence** around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of **kilayim** (forbidden plant and animal hybrids).

Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who **falsely accuses** his wife of **infidelity**. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a *mamzer* (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of **Moabite** or Ammonite descent; a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian.

Our Parshah also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an **escaped slave**; the duty to pay a worker on time, and to allow anyone working for you—man or animal—to “**eat on the job**”; the proper treatment of a **debtor**, and the prohibition against charging **interest** on a loan; the laws of **divorce** (from which are also derived many of the laws of **marriage**); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for *yibbum* (“**levirate marriage**”) of the wife of a deceased childless brother, or *chalitzah* (“removing of the shoe”) in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to **remember** “what **Amalek** did to you **on the road**, on your way out of **Egypt**.”

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Vayishlach

Jacob returns to the Holy Land after a 20-year stay in Charan, and sends angel-emissaries to **Esau** in hope of a reconciliation, but his messengers report that his brother is on the warpath with 400 armed men. Jacob prepares for **war**, **prays**, and sends Esau a large **gift** (consisting of hundreds of heads of livestock) to appease him.

That night, Jacob ferries his family and possessions across the Jabbok River; he, however, remains behind and encounters the angel that embodies **the spirit of Esau**, with whom he wrestles until daybreak. Jacob suffers a dislocated hip but vanquishes the supernal creature, who bestows on him the name **Israel**, which means “he who prevails over the divine.”

Jacob and Esau meet, embrace and **kiss**, but part ways. Jacob purchases a plot of land near **Shechem**, whose crown prince—also called Shechem—abducts and rapes Jacob’s daughter **Dinah**. Dinah’s brothers **Simeon and Levi** avenge the deed by killing all male inhabitants of the city, after rendering them vulnerable by convincing them to circumcise themselves.

Jacob journeys on. **Rachel** dies while giving birth to her second son, **Benjamin**, and is buried in a roadside grave near Bethlehem. **Reuben** loses the birthright because he interferes with his father’s marital life. Jacob arrives in **Hebron**, to his father Isaac, who later dies at age 180. (Rebecca has passed away before Jacob’s arrival.)

Our Parshah concludes with a detailed account of Esau’s wives, children and grandchildren; the family histories of the people of **Seir**, among whom Esau settled; and a list of the **eight kings** who ruled Edom, the land of Esau’s and Seir’s descendants.

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Vayeshev

Jacob settles in Hebron with his twelve sons. His favorite is seventeen-year-old **Joseph**, whose brothers are jealous of the preferential treatment he receives from his father, such as a precious **many-colored coat** that Jacob makes for Joseph. Joseph relates to his brothers two of his **dreams** which foretell that he is destined to rule over them, increasing their envy and hatred towards him.

Simeon and **Levi** plot to kill him, but **Reuben** suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him. While Joseph is in the pit, **Judah** has him sold to a band of passing **Ishmaelites**. The brothers dip Joseph's special coat in the blood of a goat and show it to their father, leading him to believe that his most beloved son was devoured by a wild beast.

Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, **Er**, dies young and childless, and his wife, **Tamar**, is given in levirate marriage to the second son, **Onan**. Onan sins by spilling his seed, and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, **Peretz** (an ancestor of King David) and **Zerach**.

Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold to **Potiphar**, the minister in charge of **Pharaoh's** slaughterhouses. G-d blesses everything he does, and soon he is made overseer of all his master's property. **Potiphar's wife** desires the handsome and charismatic lad; when Joseph rejects her advances, she tells her husband that the Hebrew slave tried to force himself on her, and has him thrown into **prison**. Joseph gains the trust and admiration of his jailers, who appoint him to a position of authority in the prison administration.

In prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's **chief butler** and **chief baker**, both incarcerated for offending their royal master. Both have disturbing **dreams**, which Joseph interprets; in three days, he tells them, the butler will be released and the baker hanged. Joseph asks the butler to intercede on his behalf with Pharaoh. Joseph's predictions are fulfilled, but the butler **forgets** all about Joseph and does nothing for him.

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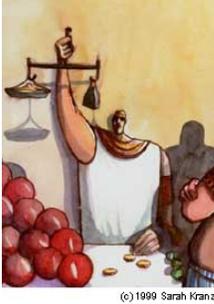
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Joseph's imprisonment finally ends when Pharaoh dreams of seven fat cows that are swallowed up by seven lean cows, and of seven fat ears of grain swallowed by seven lean ears. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of hunger, and advises Pharaoh to store grain during the plentiful years. Pharaoh appoints Joseph governor of Egypt. Joseph marries Asenath, daughter of Potiphar, and they have two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Famine spreads throughout the region, and food can be obtained only in Egypt. Ten of Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to purchase grain; the youngest, Benjamin, stays home, for Jacob fears for his safety. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him; he accuses them of being spies, insists that they bring Benjamin to prove that they are who they say they are, and imprisons Simeon as a hostage. Later, they discover that the money they paid for their provisions has been mysteriously returned to them.

Jacob agrees to send Benjamin only after Judah assumes personal and eternal responsibility for him. This time Joseph receives them kindly, releases Simeon, and invites them to an eventful dinner at his home. But then he plants his silver goblet, purportedly imbued with magic powers, in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers set out for home the next morning, they are pursued, searched, and arrested when the goblet is discovered. Joseph offers to set them free and retain only Benjamin as his slave.

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Vayigash

Judah approaches Joseph to plead for the release of **Benjamin**, offering himself as a slave to the Egyptian ruler in Benjamin's stead. Upon witnessing his brothers' **loyalty** to one another, Joseph reveals his **identity** to them. "I am Joseph," he declares. "Is my father still alive?"

The brothers are overcome by shame and **remorse**, but Joseph comforts them. "It was not you who sent me here," he says to them, "but G-d. It has all been ordained from Above to save us, and the entire region, from famine."

The brothers rush back to Canaan with the news. **Jacob** comes to Egypt with his sons and their families—**seventy souls** in all—and is reunited with his beloved son after 22 years. On his way to Egypt he receives the divine promise: "**Fear not** to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

Joseph gathers the **wealth of Egypt** by selling food and seed during the famine. Pharaoh gives Jacob's family the fertile county of **Goshen** to settle, and the children of Israel prosper in their Egyptian **exile**.

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Vayechi

Jacob lives the final 17 years of his **life in Egypt**. Before his passing, he asks **Joseph** to take an oath that he will **bury** him in the **Holy Land**. He blesses Joseph's two sons, **Manasseh** and **Ephraim**, elevating them to the status of his own sons as progenitors of **tribes** within the nation of Israel.

The patriarch desires to reveal the **end of days** to his children, but is **prevented** from doing so.

Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe: **Judah** will produce leaders, legislators and kings; priests will come from **Levi**, scholars from **Issachar**, seafarers from **Zebulun**, schoolteachers from **Simeon**, soldiers from **Gad**, judges from **Dan**, olive-growers from **Asher**, and so on. **Reuben** is rebuked for "confusing his father's marriage bed"; Simeon and Levi, for the massacre of Shechem and the plot against Joseph. **Naphtali** is granted the swiftness of a deer, **Benjamin** the ferociousness of a wolf, and Joseph is blessed with **beauty** and **fertility**.

A large funeral procession consisting of Jacob's descendants, Pharaoh's ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt and the Egyptian cavalry accompanies Jacob on his final journey to the Holy Land, where he is **buried** in the Machpelah Cave in **Hebron**.

Joseph, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. He, too, instructs that his **bones** be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land, but this would come to pass only with the Israelites' exodus from Egypt many years later. Before his passing, Joseph conveys to the Children of Israel the testament from which they will draw their hope and faith in the difficult years to come: "G-d will surely **remember** you, and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**."



Shemot

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Va'eira

G-d **reveals** Himself to Moses. Employing the “four expressions of redemption,” He promises to **take out** the Children of Israel from Egypt, **deliver** them from their enslavement, **redeem** them, and **acquire** them as His own chosen people at Mount Sinai; He will then bring them to the land He promised to the Patriarchs as their eternal heritage.

Moses and Aaron repeatedly come before Pharaoh to demand in the name of G-d, “Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness.” Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. Aaron’s **staff** turns into a **snake** and swallows the magic sticks of the Egyptian sorcerers. G-d then sends a series of **plagues** upon the Egyptians. The waters of the Nile turn to **blood**; swarms of frogs overrun the land; **lice** infest all men and beasts. Hordes of **wild animals** invade the cities; a **pestilence** kills the domestic animals; painful **boils** afflict the Egyptians. For the seventh plague, fire and ice combine to descend from the skies as a devastating **hail**. Still, “the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he would not let the children of Israel go, as G-d had said to Moses.”

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Bo

The last three of the Ten Plagues are visited on Egypt: a swarm of **locusts** devours all the crops and greenery; a thick, palpable **darkness** envelops the land; and all **the firstborn** of Egypt are killed at the stroke of **midnight** of the 15th of the month of Nissan.

G-d commands the **first mitzvah** to be given to the people of Israel: to establish a **calendar** based on the monthly rebirth of the **moon**.

The Israelites are also instructed to bring a “Passover offering” to G-d: a lamb or kid goat is to be slaughtered, and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel of every Israelite home, so that G-d should **pass over** these homes when He comes to kill the Egyptian firstborn.

The **roasted** meat of the offering is to be eaten that night together with **matzah** (unleavened bread) and **bitter herbs**.

The death of the firstborn finally breaks Pharaoh’s resistance, and he literally drives the children of Israel from his land. So **hastily** do they depart that there is no time for their dough to rise, and the only provisions they take along are unleavened. Before they go, they ask their Egyptian neighbors for **gold**, silver and garments—fulfilling **the promise made to Abraham** that his descendants would leave Egypt with great wealth.

The children of Israel are commanded to consecrate all firstborn, and to observe the anniversary of the **Exodus** each year by removing all **leaven** from their possession for seven days, eating matzah, and telling the story of their redemption to their **children**. They are also commanded to wear **tefillin** on the arm and head as a reminder of the Exodus and their resultant commitment to G-d.

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Beshalach

Soon after allowing the children of Israel to **depart from Egypt**, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves **trapped** between Pharaoh's armies and the sea. G-d tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the **sea splits** to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then closes over the pursuing Egyptians. **Moses** and the children of Israel **sing a song** of praise and gratitude to G-d.

In the desert the people suffer thirst and hunger, and repeatedly **complain** to Moses and Aaron. G-d miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth **water from a rock** by striking it with his staff. He causes **manna** to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and **quails** to appear in the Israelite camp each evening.

The children of Israel are instructed to gather a **double portion** of manna on Friday, as none will descend on **Shabbat**, the divinely decreed day of rest. Some disobey and go to gather manna on the seventh day, but find nothing. Aaron preserves a small quantity of manna in a **jar**, as a **testimony** for future generations.

In Rephidim, the people are attacked by the **Amalekites**, who are defeated by Moses' prayers and an army raised by **Joshua**.

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Yetro

Moses' father-in-law, **Jethro**, hears of the great **miracles** which G-d performed for the people of Israel, and comes from Midian to the Israelite camp, bringing with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro advises Moses to appoint a hierarchy of **magistrates and judges** to assist him in the task of governing and administering justice to the people.

The children of Israel camp opposite **Mount Sinai**, where they are told that G-d has **chosen** them to be His "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation." The people respond by proclaiming, "All that G-d has spoken, we shall **do**."

On the sixth day of the third month (Sivan), seven weeks after the **Exodus**, the entire nation of Israel assembles at the foot of Mount Sinai. G-d **descends** on the mountain amidst thunder, lightning, billows of smoke and the blast of the *shofar*, and summons Moses to **ascend**.

G-d proclaims the **Ten Commandments**, commanding the people of Israel to believe in **G-d**, not to worship **idols** or take G-d's **name** in vain, to keep the **Shabbat**, honor their **parents**, not to **murder**, not to commit **adultery**, not to **steal**, and not to bear false **witness** or **covet** another's property. The people cry out to Moses that the revelation is too intense for them to bear, begging him to receive the **Torah** from G-d and convey it to them.

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Mishpatim

Following the revelation at Sinai, G-d legislates a series of **laws** for the people of Israel. These include the laws of the **indentured servant**; the penalties for murder, kidnapping, assault and theft; civil laws pertaining to **redress of damages**, the granting of **loans** and the responsibilities of the “**Four Guardians**”; and the rules governing the conduct of justice by **courts** of law. Also included are laws warning against mistreatment of **foreigners**; the observance of the **seasonal festivals**, and the agricultural gifts that are to be brought to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; the prohibition against cooking **meat with milk**; and the mitzvah of **prayer**. Altogether, the Parshah of Mishpatim contains **53 mitzvot**—23 imperative commandments and 30 prohibitions.

G-d promises to bring the people of Israel to the **Holy Land**, and warns them against assuming the pagan ways of its current inhabitants.

The people of Israel proclaim, “**We will do and we will hear** all that G-d commands us.” Leaving **Aaron** and **Hur** in charge in the Israelite camp, Moses ascends Mount Sinai and remains there for **forty days and forty nights** to receive the Torah from G-d.

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Terumah

The people of Israel are called upon to contribute **thirteen materials**—gold, silver and copper; **blue-**, **purple-** and **red-**dyed wool; flax, goat hair, animal skins, wood, olive oil, spices and gems—out of which, G-d says to Moses, “They shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I shall **dwell** amidst them.”

On the **summit** of Mount Sinai, Moses is given detailed instructions on how to construct this dwelling for G-d so that it could be readily **dismantled, transported and reassembled** as the people journeyed in the desert.

In the Sanctuary’s inner chamber, behind an artistically woven curtain, was the **ark** containing the tablets of testimony engraved with the Ten Commandments; on the ark’s cover stood two winged **cherubim** hammered out of pure gold. In the outer chamber stood the seven-branched **menorah** , and the table upon which the “ **showbread** ” was arranged.

The Sanctuary’s three walls were fitted together from 48 upright wooden boards, each of which was overlaid with gold and held up by a pair of **silver foundation** sockets. The roof was formed of three layers of coverings: (a) tapestries of multicolored wool and linen; (b) a covering made of goat hair; (c) a covering of ram and *tachash* **skins** . Across the front of the Sanctuary was an embroidered screen held up by five posts.

Surrounding the Sanctuary and the copper-plated **altar** which fronted it was an enclosure of linen hangings, supported by 60 wooden posts with silver hooks and trimmings, and reinforced by **copper stakes** .

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Tetzaveh

G-d tells **Moses** to receive from the children of Israel pure **olive oil** to feed the “**everlasting flame**” of the menorah, which **Aaron** is to kindle each day, “from **evening** till **morning**.”

The priestly **garments**, to be worn by the *kohanim* (priests) while serving in the **Sanctuary**, are described. All *kohanim* wore: 1) the *ketonet*—a **full-length** linen tunic; 2) *michnasayim*—linen breeches; 3) *mitznefet* or *migba’at*—a linen turban; 4) *avnet*—a long sash wound above the waist. In addition, the **kohen gadol** (high priest) wore: 5) the *efod*—an apron-like garment made of blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool, linen and gold thread; 6) the *choshen*—a breastplate containing twelve precious stones inscribed with the names of the **twelve tribes** of Israel; 7) the *me’il*—a cloak of blue wool, with gold bells and decorative pomegranates on its **hem**; 8) the *tzitz*—a golden plate **worn on the forehead**, bearing the inscription “Holy to G-d.”

Tetzaveh also includes G-d’s detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons—**Nadav**, **Avihu**, **Elazar** and **Itamar**—into the priesthood, and for the making of the **golden altar**, on which the *ketoret* (**incense**) was burned.

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Ki Tisa

The people of Israel are told to each contribute exactly **half a shekel** of silver to the Sanctuary. Instructions are also given regarding the making of the Sanctuary's **water basin, anointing oil and incense**. "Wise-hearted" artisans **Betzalel** and **Aholiav** are placed in charge of the Sanctuary's construction, and the people are once again commanded to keep the **Shabbat**.

When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a **golden calf** and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but **Moses intercedes** on their behalf. Moses descends from the mountain carrying the **tablets of the testimony** engraved with the Ten Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he **breaks** the tablets, destroys the golden calf, and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: "If You do not forgive them, **blot me out** from the book that You have written."

G-d forgives, but says that the effect of their **sin** will be felt for many generations. At first G-d proposes to send His angel along with them, but Moses insists that G-d Himself accompany His people to the promised land.

Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d reinscribes the covenant on these **second tablets**. On the mountain, Moses is also granted a vision of the divine **thirteen attributes of mercy**. So radiant is Moses' face upon his return, that he must cover it with a **veil**, which he removes only to speak with G-d and to teach His laws to the people.

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Vayakahel

Moses **assembles** the people of Israel and reiterates to them the commandment to observe the **Shabbat**. He then conveys G-d's instructions regarding the making of the **Mishkan** (Tabernacle). The people **donate** the required materials in abundance, bringing gold, silver and copper; blue-, purple- and red-dyed wool; goat hair, spun linen, animal skins, wood, olive oil, herbs and precious stones. Moses has to tell them to **stop giving**.

A team of **wise-hearted** artisans make the Mishkan and its furnishings (as detailed in the previous Torah readings of **Terumah**, Tetzaveh and Ki Tisa): **three layers** of roof coverings; 48 gold-plated wall panels, and 100 silver foundation sockets; the *parochet* (**veil**) that separates between the Sanctuary's two chambers, and the *masach* (**screen**) that fronts it; the ark, and its cover with the **cherubim**; the table and its **showbread**; the seven-branched **menorah** with its specially prepared oil; the golden altar and the **incense** burned on it; the anointing oil; the outdoor altar for **burnt offerings** and all its implements; the hangings, posts and foundation sockets for the **courtyard**; and the basin and its pedestal, made out of copper **mirrors**.

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Pekudei

An **accounting** is made of the gold, silver and copper donated by the people for the making of the Mishkan. Betzalel, Aholiav and their assistants make the **eight priestly garments**—the **apron**, **breastplate**, **cloak**, **crown**, **hat**, **tunic**, **sash** and **breeches**—according to the specifications communicated to Moses in the **Parshah of Tetzaveh**.

The Mishkan is completed and all its components are brought to **Moses**, who erects it and anoints it with the holy anointing oil, and initiates **Aaron** and his four sons into the priesthood. A **cloud** appears over the Mishkan, signifying the Divine Presence that has come to **dwell** within it.

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Vayikra

G-d **calls** to **Moses** from the **Tent of Meeting**, and communicates to him the laws of the ***korbanot***, the **animal** and meal offerings brought in the Sanctuary. These include:

- The “ascending offering” (*olah*) that is wholly raised to G-d by the **fire** atop the altar;
- Five varieties of “meal offering” (***minchah***) prepared with fine flour, olive oil and frankincense;
- The “**peace offering**” (*shelamim*), whose meat was eaten by the one bringing the offering, after parts are burned on the altar and parts are given to the *kohanim* (priests);
- The different types of “sin offering” (*chatat*) brought to atone for **transgressions** committed erroneously by the high priest, the entire community, the king or the ordinary Jew;
- The “**guilt offering**” (*asham*) brought by one who has misappropriated property of the Sanctuary, who is in **doubt** as to whether he transgressed a divine prohibition, or who has committed a “betrayal against G-d” by swearing falsely to defraud a **fellow man**.

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Tzav

G-d instructs Moses to **command** Aaron and his sons regarding their duties and rights as *kohanim* (“priests”) who offer the ***korbanot*** (animal and meal offerings) in the Sanctuary.

The **fire** on the altar must be kept burning at all times. In it are burned the wholly consumed ascending offering; veins of **fat** from the peace, sin and guilt offerings; and the “**handful**” separated from the **meal offering**.

The *kohanim* eat the meat of the sin and guilt offerings, and the remainder of the meal offering. The peace offering is eaten by the one who brought it, except for specified portions given to the *kohen*. The holy meat of the offerings must be eaten by ritually pure **persons**, in their designated holy **place** and within their specified **time**.

Aaron and his sons remain within the Sanctuary compound for **seven days**, during which Moses **initiates** them into the priesthood.

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Shemini

On the **eighth day**, following the seven days of their inauguration, Aaron and his sons begin to officiate as *kohanim* (priests); a **fire** issues forth from G-d to consume the offerings on the altar, and the **divine presence** comes to dwell in the Sanctuary.

Aaron's two elder sons, **Nadav and Avihu**, offer a "strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not" and die before G-d. Aaron is **silent** in face of his tragedy. Moses and Aaron subsequently disagree as to a point of law regarding the offerings, but **Moses concedes to Aaron** that Aaron is in the right.

G-d commands the **kosher** laws, identifying the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption. Land animals may be eaten only if they have **split hooves** and also **chew their cud**; fish must have **fins and scales**; a list of non-kosher birds is given, and a list of kosher insects (four types of locusts).

Also in Shemini are some of the laws of **ritual purity**, including the purifying power of the **mikvah** (a pool of water meeting specified qualifications) and the **wellspring**. Thus the people of Israel are enjoined to "**differentiate** between the impure and the pure."

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Tazria

The Parshah of Tazria continues the discussion of the laws of *tumah v'taharah*, **ritual impurity** and purity. A **woman** giving **birth** should undergo a process of purification, which includes immersing in a *mikvah* (a naturally gathered **pool of water**) and bringing offerings to the Holy Temple. All male infants are to be circumcised on the **eighth day of life**.

Tzaraat (often mistranslated as “leprosy”) is a supra-natural plague, which also can afflict **garments**. If white or pink patches appear on a person’s skin (dark red or green in garments), a *kohen* is summoned. Judging by various signs, such as an increase in size of the afflicted area after a seven-day quarantine, the *kohen* **pronounces** it *tamei* (impure) or *tahor* (pure).

A person afflicted with *tzaraat* must dwell **alone** outside of the camp (or city) until he is healed. The afflicted area in a garment is removed; if the *tzaraat* spreads or recurs, the entire garment must be burned.

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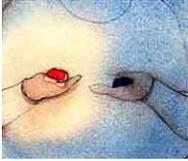


Metzora

Last week's Parshah described the signs of the *metzora* (commonly mistranslated as "**leper**")—a person afflicted by a spiritual malady which places him or her in a state of ritual impurity. This week's Torah reading begins by detailing how the recovered *metzora* is purified by the *kohen* (priest) with a special procedure involving **two birds**, **spring water** in an **earthen vessel**, a piece of **cedar** wood, a **scarlet thread** and a bundle of **hyssop**. A **home** can also be afflicted with *tzaraat* by the appearance of dark red or green patches on its **walls**. In a process lasting as long as nineteen days, a *kohen* determines if the house can be purified, or whether it must be **demolished**.

Ritual impurity is also engendered through a seminal or other discharge in a man, and menstruation or other discharge of **blood** in a woman, necessitating purification through **immersion** in a **mikvah**.

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Acharei Mot

Following the deaths of **Nadav and Avihu**, G-d warns against unauthorized entry “into the holy.” Only one person, the *kohen gadol* (“high priest”), may, but once a year, on **Yom Kippur**, enter the **innermost chamber** in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ***ketoret*** to G-d.

Another feature of the Day of Atonement service is the **casting of lots** over two goats, to determine which should be offered to G-d and which should be dispatched to carry off the **sins** of Israel to the **wilderness**.

The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing ***korbanot*** (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of **blood**, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual **relations**.

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Kedoshim

The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: “You shall be **holy**, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy.”

This is followed by dozens of **mitzvot** (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.

These include: the prohibition against **idolatry**, the mitzvah of **charity**, the principle of **equality** before the law, **Shabbat**, sexual **morality**, **honesty** in business, honor and awe of one’s **parents**, and the sacredness of **life**.

Also in Kedoshim is the dictum which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called a cardinal principle of Torah, and of which Hillel said, “This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary”—“**Love your fellow as yourself.**”

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Emor

The Torah section of Emor (“**Speak**”) begins with the special laws pertaining to the **kohanim** (“priests”), the **kohen gadol** (“high priest”), and the **Temple service**: A **kohen** may not become ritually impure through contact with a **dead body**, save on the occasion of the death of a **close relative**. A **kohen** may not marry a divorcee, or a woman with a promiscuous past; a **kohen gadol** can marry only a virgin. A **kohen** with a physical **deformity** cannot serve in the Holy Temple, nor can a deformed animal be brought as an offering.

A newborn **calf**, **lamb** or **kid** must be left with its mother for seven days before being eligible for an offering; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The second part of Emor lists the annual **Callings of Holiness**—the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly **Shabbat**; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day **Passover** festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley **harvest** on the second day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day **Counting of the Omer**, culminating in the festival of **Shavuot** on the fiftieth day; a “remembrance of **shofar** blowing” on 1 Tishrei; a solemn **fast day** on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival—during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the “Four Kinds”—beginning on **15 Tishrei**; and the immediately following holiday of the “eighth day” of Sukkot (**Shemini Atzeret**).

Next the Torah discusses the **lighting of the menorah** in the Temple, and the **showbread** (**lechem hapanim**) placed weekly on the table there.

Emor concludes with the incident of a man executed for **blasphemy**, and the penalties for murder (death) and for injuring one’s fellow or destroying his **property** (monetary compensation).

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Behar

On the mountain of Sinai, G-d communicates to Moses the laws of the **Sabbatical year**: every seventh year, all **work** on the land should cease, and its produce becomes free for the taking for all, **man and beast**.

Seven Sabbatical cycles are followed by a **fiftieth year**—the Jubilee year, on which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all **ancestral estates** in the Holy Land that have been sold revert to their original owners.

Behar also contains additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against **fraud** and **usury**

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Bechukotai

G-d promises that if the people of Israel will keep His commandments, they will enjoy **material prosperity** and dwell secure in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh “**rebuke**,” warning of the **exile**, persecution and other evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him.

Nevertheless, “Even when they are in the land of their enemies, **I will not cast them away**; nor will I ever abhor them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them; for I am the L-rd **their G-d**.”

The Parshah concludes with the rules on how to calculate the **values** of different types of pledges made to G-d, and the mitzvah of **tithing** produce and livestock.

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Bamidbar

In the Sinai **Desert**, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts **603,550** men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The **Levites** are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the **firstborn**, whose number they approximated, who were disqualified when they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel “ransom” to **redeem** themselves.

When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and **transported** the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the next encampment. They then erected their own tents around it: the Kohathites, who carried the Sanctuary’s vessels (the Ark, menorah, etc.) in their specially designed **coverings** on their shoulders, camped to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merari, who transported its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary’s **entranceway**, to its east, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons.

Beyond the Levite circle, the **twelve tribes** camped in four groups of three tribes each. To the east were Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400) and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad (45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200) and Benjamin (35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500) and Naphtali (53,400). This formation was kept also while **traveling**. Each tribe had its own *nassi* (prince or leader), and its own **flag** with its tribal color and emblem.

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Naso

Completing the headcount of the Children of Israel taken in the Sinai Desert, a total of 8,580 Levite men between the ages of 30 and 50 are counted in a tally of those who will be doing the actual work of transporting the Tabernacle.

G-d communicates to Moses the law of the *sotah*, the wayward wife suspected of unfaithfulness to her husband. Also given is the law of the nazir, who forswears wine, lets his or her hair grow long, and is forbidden to become contaminated through contact with a dead body. Aaron and his descendants, the *kohanim*, are instructed on how to bless the people of Israel.

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel each bring their offerings for the inauguration of the altar. Although their gifts are identical, each is brought on a different day and is individually described by the Torah.

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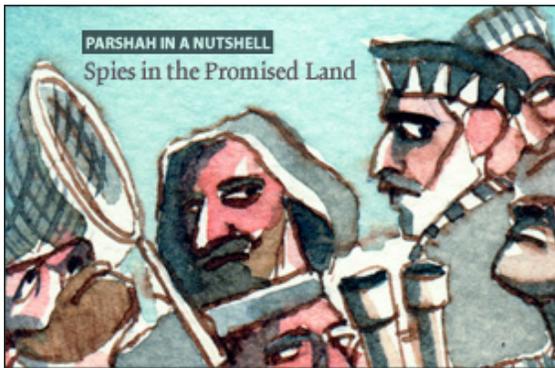
Behaalotecha

Aaron is commanded to **raise light** in the lamps of the **menorah**, and the **tribe of Levi** is initiated into the service in the Sanctuary.

A “**Second Passover**” is instituted in response to the petition “**Why should we be deprived?**” by a group of Jews who were unable to bring the Passover offering in its appointed time because they were ritually impure. G-d instructs Moses on the procedures for Israel’s **journeys** and **encampments** in the desert, and the people journey **in formation** from Mount Sinai, where they had been camped for nearly a **year**.

The people are **dissatisfied** with their “bread from heaven” (the manna), and demand that Moses supply them with **meat**. Moses appoints 70 elders, to whom he **imparts of his spirit**, to assist him in the burden of governing the people. **Miriam** speaks negatively of Moses, and is punished with leprosy; Moses prays for her healing, and the entire community **waits** seven days for her recovery.

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Shelach

Moses sends twelve **spies** to the land of Canaan. Forty days later they return, carrying a huge **cluster of grapes**, a pomegranate and a fig, to report on a lush and bountiful land. But ten of the spies warn that the inhabitants of the land are **giants** and warriors “more powerful than we”; only **Caleb** and **Joshua** insist that the land can be conquered, as G-d has commanded.

The people weep that they’d rather return to Egypt. G-d decrees that Israel’s entry into the Land shall be delayed **forty years**, during which time that entire generation will die out in the desert. A group of remorseful Jews storm the mountain on the border of the Land, and are routed by the **Amalekites** and Canaanites.

The laws of the *menachot* (**meal**, **wine** and **oil** offerings) are given, as well as the mitzvah to consecrate a portion of the dough (**challah**) to G-d when making bread. A man violates the Shabbat by **gathering sticks**, and is put to death. G-d instructs to place fringes (**tzitzit**) on the four corners of our garments, so that we should **remember** to fulfill the mitzvot (divine commandments).

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Korach

Korach incites a mutiny challenging Moses' **leadership** and the granting of the *kehunah* (**priesthood**) to Aaron. He is accompanied by Moses' inveterate foes, **Dathan and Abiram**. Joining them are 250 distinguished members of the community, who offer the sacrosanct **ketoret** (incense) to prove their worthiness for the priesthood. The **earth** opens up and swallows the mutineers, and a **fire** consumes the *ketoret*-offerers. A subsequent plague is stopped by Aaron's offering of *ketoret*. Aaron's staff miraculously blossoms and brings forth **almonds**, to prove that his designation as high priest is divinely ordained.

G-d commands that a *terumah* ("uplifting") from each crop of grain, wine and oil, as well as all firstborn sheep and cattle, and other specified **gifts**, be given to the *kohanim* (priests).

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Chukat

Moses is taught the laws of the red heifer, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.

After forty years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.

Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son Elazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people “speak against G-d and Moses”; G-d tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole, and all who will gaze heavenward will be healed. The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided them water in the desert.

Moses leads the people in battles against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og (who seek to prevent Israel’s passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie east of the Jordan.

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Balak

Balak, the king of Moab, summons the prophet **Balaam** to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is **berated by his donkey**, who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that G-d sends to block their way. Three times, from **three different vantage points**, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses; each time, **blessings** issue forth instead. Balaam also prophesies on the **end of the days** and the coming of **Moshiach**.

The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab, and are enticed to worship the idol **Peor**. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, **Pinchas** kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

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Pinchas

Aaron's grandson **Pinchas** is rewarded for his act of **zealotry** in killing the Simeonite prince **Zimri** and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: G-d grants him a **covenant of peace** and the priesthood.

A census of the people counts **601,730** men between the ages of twenty and sixty. Moses is instructed on how the Land is to be divided by **lottery** among the tribes and families of Israel. The five **daughters of Tzelafchad** petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; G-d accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's **laws of inheritance**.

Moses empowers **Joshua** to succeed him and lead the people into the Land of Israel.

The Parshah concludes with a detailed list of the **daily offerings**, and the additional offerings brought on **Shabbat**, **Rosh Chodesh** (first of the month), and the festivals of **Passover**, **Shavuot**, **Rosh Hashanah**, **Yom Kippur**, **Sukkot** and **Shemini Atzeret**.

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Matot

Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel.

War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

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(c) Sarah Kranz **Massei**

The forty-two **journeys** and **encampments** of Israel are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moab across the river from the land of Canaan. Also in **Massei**: The **boundaries** of the Promised Land are given, and **cities of refuge** are designated as havens and places of exile for **inadvertent murderers**. The **daughters of Tzelafchad** marry within their own tribe of Manasseh, so that the **estate** which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe.

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Devarim

On the first of Shevat (thirty-seven days before his passing), **Moses** begins his **repetition of the Torah** to the assembled **children of Israel**, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their **forty-year journey** from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, **rebuking** the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an **eternal heritage**, into which they shall cross after his death.

Moses recalls his appointment of judges and magistrates to ease his burden of meting out **justice** to the people and teaching them the word of G-d; the journey from Sinai through the **great and fearsome desert**; the sending of the **spies** and the people's subsequent spurning of the Promised Land, so that G-d decreed that the entire generation of the Exodus would die out in the desert. "Also against me," says Moses, "was G-d angry for your sake, saying: **You, too, shall not go in there.**"

Moses also recounts some more recent events: the refusal of the nations of **Moab and Ammon** to allow the Israelites to pass through their countries; the **wars** against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og, and the settlement of their lands by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh; and Moses' message to his successor, **Joshua**, who will take the people into the Land and lead them in the battles for its conquest: "**Fear them not**, for the L-rd your G-d, He shall fight for you."

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Va'etchanan

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored G-d to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but G-d refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land.

Continuing his “review of the Torah,” Moses describes the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, declaring them unprecedented events in human history. “Has there ever occurred this great thing, or has the likes of it ever been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire . . . and live? . . . You were shown, to know, that the L-rd is G-d . . . there is none else beside Him.”

Moses predicts that in future generations the people will turn away from G-d, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations; but from there they will seek G-d, and return to obey His commandments.

Our Parshah also includes a repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith: the unity of G-d (“Hear O Israel: the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one”); the mitzvot to love G-d, to study His Torah, and to bind “these words” as tefillin on our arms and heads, and inscribe them in the mezuzot affixed on the doorposts of our homes.

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Michael Muchnik

Eikev

In the Parshah of Eikev (“**Because**”), Moses continues his closing address to the children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (**mitzvot**) of the Torah, they will prosper in the **Land** they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with G-d’s promise to their forefathers.

Moses also **rebukes** them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the **Golden Calf**, the rebellion of **Korach**, the sin of the **spies**, their angering of G-d at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah (“**The Graves of Lust**”). “You have been **rebellious** against G-d,” he says to them, “since the day I knew you.” But he also speaks of G-d’s forgiveness of their sins, and the **Second Tablets** which G-d inscribed and gave to them following their repentance.

Their forty years in the desert, says Moses to the people, during which G-d sustained them with daily **manna** from heaven, was to teach them “that man does not live on **bread** alone, but by the **utterance of G-d’s mouth** does man live.”

Moses describes the land they are about to enter as “flowing with **milk** and **honey**,” blessed with the “seven kinds” (**wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil** and **dates**), and as the place that is the **focus** of G-d’s **providence** of His world. He commands them to destroy the **idols** of the land’s former masters, and to beware lest they become **haughty** and begin to believe that “my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this **wealth**.” A key passage in our Parshah is the second chapter of the **Shema**, which repeats the fundamental mitzvot enumerated in the Shema’s first chapter, and describes the **rewards** of fulfilling G-d’s commandments and the adverse results (famine and **exile**) of their neglect. It is also the source of the precept of **prayer**, and includes a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the **messianic age**.

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Re'eh

“**See**,” says Moses to the people of Israel, “I place before you today a **blessing** and a **curse**”—the blessing that will come when they fulfill G-d’s commandments, and the curse if they abandon them. These should be proclaimed on **Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal** when the people **cross over** into the Holy Land.

A **Temple** should be established in “**the place that G-d will choose to make dwell His name there**,” where the people should bring their **sacrifices** to Him; it is forbidden to make offerings to G-d in any other place. It is permitted to slaughter animals elsewhere, not as a sacrifice but to eat their **meat**; the blood (which in the Temple is **poured upon the altar**), however, may not be eaten.

A **false prophet**, or one who entices others to worship idols, should be put to death; an idolatrous city must be destroyed. The identifying signs for **kosher** animals and fish, and the list of non-kosher birds (first given in Leviticus 11), are **repeated**.

A tenth of all produce is to be eaten in Jerusalem, or else exchanged for **money** with which food is purchased and eaten there. In certain years this **tithe** is given to the poor instead. **Firstborn** cattle and sheep are to be offered in the Temple, and their meat eaten by the *kohanim* (priests).

The mitzvah of **charity** obligates a Jew to aid a needy fellow with a gift or loan. On the **Sabbatical year** (occurring every seventh year), all loans are to be forgiven. All indentured servants are to be set free after six years of service.

Our Parshah concludes with the laws of the three **pilgrimage** festivals—**Passover**, **Shavuot** and **Sukkot**—when all should go to “**see** and **be seen**” before G-d in the Holy Temple.

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Shoftim

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint **judges** and law enforcement officers in every city. “**Justice, justice** shall you pursue,” he commands them, and you must administer it without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously **investigated** and evidence thoroughly examined—a minimum of two credible **witnesses** is required for conviction and punishment.

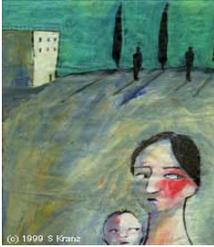
In every generation, says Moses, there will be those entrusted with the task of **interpreting and applying** the laws of the Torah.

“According to the law that they will teach you, and the judgment they will instruct you, you shall do; you shall not turn away from the thing that they say to you, to the **right nor to the left.**”

Shoftim also includes the prohibitions against **idolatry** and **sorcery**; laws governing the appointment and behavior of a **king**; and guidelines for the creation of “**cities of refuge**” for the **inadvertent murderer**. Also set forth are many of the rules of **war**: the exemption from battle for one who has just built a **home, planted a vineyard, married**, or is “**afraid** and soft-hearted”; the requirement to offer **terms of peace** before attacking a city; and the prohibition against wanton **destruction** of something of value, exemplified by the law that forbids to cut down a **fruit tree** when laying siege (in this context the Torah makes the famous statement, “**For man is a tree of the field**”).

The Parshah concludes with the law of the **eglah arufah**—the special procedure to be followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field—which underscores the **responsibility** of the community and its leaders not only for what they do, but also for what they might have prevented from being done.

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Ki Teitzei

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (**mitzvot**) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitzei. These include the laws of the **beautiful captive**, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, **burial** and dignity of the dead, returning a **lost object**, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a **safety fence** around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of **kilayim** (forbidden plant and animal hybrids).

Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who **falsely accuses** his wife of **infidelity**. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a *mamzer* (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of **Moabite** or Ammonite descent; a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian.

Our Parshah also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an **escaped slave**; the duty to pay a worker on time, and to allow anyone working for you—man or animal—to “**eat on the job**”; the proper treatment of a **debtor**, and the prohibition against charging **interest** on a loan; the laws of **divorce** (from which are also derived many of the laws of **marriage**); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for *yibbum* (“**levirate marriage**”) of the wife of a deceased childless brother, or *chalitzah* (“removing of the shoe”) in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to **remember** “what **Amalek** did to you **on the road**, on your way out of **Egypt**.”

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Ki Tavo

Moses instructs the people of Israel: When you **enter the land** that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the **first-ripened fruits** (*bikkurim*) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your **gratitude** for all that G-d has done for you. Our Parshah also includes the laws of the **tithes** given to the Levites and to the poor, and detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the **curses** on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival—as discussed in the beginning of the Parshah of **Re'eh**. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d's **chosen people**, and that they, in turn, have chosen **G-d**.

The latter part of Ki Tavo consists of the Tochachah (“Rebuke”). After listing the blessings with which G-d will **reward** the people when they follow the laws of the Torah, Moses gives a long, harsh account of the **bad things**—illness, famine, poverty and **exile**—that shall befall them if they abandon G-d’s commandments. Moses concludes by telling the people that only today, **forty years** after their birth as a people, have they attained “a **heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear.**”

\$500



Nitzavim

Moses instructs the people of Israel: When you **enter the land** that G-d is giving to you as your eternal heritage, and you settle it and cultivate it, bring the **first-ripened fruits** (*bikkurim*) of your orchard to the Holy Temple, and declare your **gratitude** for all that G-d has done for you. Our Parshah also includes the laws of the **tithes** given to the Levites and to the poor, and detailed instructions on how to proclaim the blessings and the **curses** on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival—as discussed in the beginning of the Parshah of **Re'eh**. Moses reminds the people that they are G-d's **chosen people**, and that they, in turn, have chosen **G-d**.

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Moses concludes by telling the people that only today, **forty years** after their birth as a people, have they attained “a **heart to know, eyes to see** and **ears to hear**.”

\$500



Vayelech

The Parshah of Vayelech (“**and he went**”) recounts the events of Moses’ last day of earthly life. “I am one hundred and twenty years old **today**,” he says to the people, “and **I can no longer** go forth and come in.” He transfers the leadership to Joshua, and writes (or concludes writing) the Torah in a scroll which he entrusts to the Levites for safekeeping **in the Ark** of the Covenant.

The mitzvah of *hak’hel* (“**gather**”) is given: every seven years, during the festival of Sukkot of the first year of the **shemittah cycle**, the entire people of Israel—men, women and children—should gather at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where the **king** should read to them from the Torah.

Vayelech concludes with the prediction that the people of Israel will turn away from their covenant with G-d, causing Him to **hide His face** from them, but also with the promise that the words of the Torah “**shall not be forgotten** out of the mouths of their **descendants**.”

\$500



Haazinu

The greater part of the Torah reading of Haazinu (“Listen In”) consists of a 70-line “**song**” delivered by Moses to the people of Israel on the last day of his earthly life. Calling **heaven** and **earth** as witnesses, Moses exhorts the people, “**Remember** the days of old / **Consider** the years of many generations / **Ask your father**, and he will recount it to you / Your **elders**, and they will tell you” how G-d “found them in a desert land,” made them a people, **chose** them as His own, and bequeathed them a bountiful land. The song also warns against the pitfalls of plenty—“Yeshurun grew **fat** and kicked / You have grown fat, thick and rotund / He forsook G-d who made him / And spurned the Rock of his salvation”—and the terrible calamities that would result, which Moses describes as G-d “**hiding His face**.” Yet in the end, he promises, G-d will avenge the blood of His servants, and be reconciled with His people and land.

The Parshah concludes with G-d’s instruction to Moses to ascend the summit of **Mount Nebo**, from which he will behold the Promised Land before dying on the mountain. “For you shall see the land opposite you; but you shall not go there, into the land which I give to the children of Israel.

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V'Zot HaBerachah

The Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret Torah readings are from Leviticus 22-23, Numbers 29, and Deuteronomy 14-16. These readings detail the laws of the *moadim* or "**appointed times**" on the Jewish calendar for festive celebration of our bond with G-d; including the mitzvot of dwelling in the **sukkah** (branch-covered hut) and taking the "**Four Kinds**" on the festival of Sukkot; the **offerings** brought in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem on Sukkot, and the obligation to journey to the Holy Temple to "to see and be seen before the face of G-d" on the three annual **pilgrimage festivals** — Passover, Shavuot and **Sukkot**.

On **Simchat Torah** ("Rejoicing of the Torah") we conclude, and begin anew, the **annual Torah-reading cycle**. First we read the Torah section of **Vezot Haberachah**, which recounts the blessings that Moses gave to each of the twelve tribes of Israel before his death. Echoing **Jacob's blessings** to his twelve sons five generations earlier, Moses assigns and empowers each tribe with its **individual** role within the **community** of Israel.

Vezot Haberachah then relates how Moses ascended Mount Nebo from whose summit he **saw the Promised Land**. "And Moses the servant of G-d died there in the Land of Moab by the mouth of G-d... and no man knows his burial place to this day." The Torah concludes by attesting that "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like **Moses**, whom G-d knew face to face... and in all the mighty hand and the great **awesome things** which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel."

Immediately after concluding the Torah, we **begin** it anew by reading the first chapter of Genesis (the beginning of **next Shabbat's Torah reading**) describing G-d's creation of the world in **six days** and His ceasing work on the seventh—which He sanctified and blessed as a day of **rest**.

\$500

Bereisit	Shemot	Vayikra	Bamidbar	Devarim
Bereishit	Shemot	Vayikra	Bamidbar	Devarim
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Noach	Va'eira	Tzav	Naso	Va'etchanan
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Lech Lecha	Bo	Shemini	Behaalotecha	Eikev
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Vayeira	Beshalach	Tazria	Shelach	Re'eh
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Chayei Sarah	Yitro	Metzora	Korach	Shoftim
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$3600	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Toldot	Mishpatim	Acharei	Chukat	Ki Teitzei
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Vayeitzei	Terumah	Kedoshim	Balak	Ki Tavo
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800
Vayishlach	Tetzaveh	Emor	Pinchas	Nitzavim
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800
Vayeishev	Ki Tisa	Behar	Matot	Vayelech
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1800
Mikeitz	Vayakhel	Bechukotai	Massei	Haazinu
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$1500	\$500-\$2600
Vayigash	Pekudei			V'Zot
\$500-\$1800	\$500-\$1800			HaBerachah
Vayechi				\$500-\$3600
\$500-\$1800				