

# EIKEV

46th of the 54 sedras;  
3rd of 11 in D'varim

231.83 lines in a Torah; rank: 14th

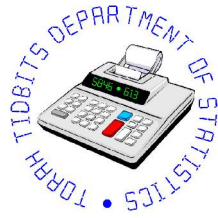
10 Parshiyot; 6 open, 4 closed

111 p'sukim - rank: 26th (4th in D'varim)  
Same number as Vayikra, but larger

1747 words - rank: 16th (3rd in D'varim)  
Same number as Ki Tavo; Ki Tavo has  
more p'sukim; Eikev has more letters

6865 letters - rank: 14th (3rd in D'varim)

Eikev's p'sukim are long - 3rd longest  
in the Torah in words and letters per  
pasuk. This accounts for rise in ranking  
in those categories.



## MITZVOT

8 of 613: 6 positives, 2 prohibitions



[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of  
a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:  
Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is  
the number of p'sukim in the parsha.  
Numbers in [brackets] are the Mitzva-  
count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's  
Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva);  
L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek and  
pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

## Kohen - First Aliya 25 p'sukim - 7:12-8:10

[P> 7:12 (5)] Moshe Rabeinu reiterates

the "simple" deal that HaShem offers  
us: If we observe the mitzvot then He  
will keep the promises that He made to  
our ancestors. He will love us, bless us,  
and see to it that we flourish. We will  
be the most blessed among all the  
nations.

It behooves us to consider this fact  
that G-d repeatedly presents us with  
the alternative results of our faithful-  
ness to Him and the opposite. This is  
what makes the second passage of the  
Sh'ma (see later in this sedra) so  
important to our daily routine.  
Although there is much overlap  
between the first two passages, it is the  
second one that states "the Deal", and  
it is supposed to be a (twice) daily  
reminder and warning.

Following this, Moshe issues another  
of the many warnings against idolatry.

**SDT** In the context of the opening  
p'sukim of the sedra, the word EIKEV  
means "on the heels of", "in the wake  
of..." (following G-d's words).

Rashi takes the word to indicate  
mitzvot that people belittle and crush  
under their heel. With the careful  
observance of these mitzvot, G-d will  
keep His side of the deal.

Baal HaTurim presents a mini-mussar  
lesson based on the choice of the word  
EIKEV. The heel represents humility...  
We must realize that humility is an  
important key in our following G-d's  
words. Thus, the opening words of the  
sedra can be saying: "If you are humble  
and follow G-d's commands, then..."

(Note also that the heels support the entire body.)

**[S> 7:17 (10)]** Do not wonder how it will be possible to prevail against the many nations in the Land and do not fear them. The miracles witnessed in Egypt (and in the Midbar) will be repeated with other nations. Conquest of Eretz Yisrael will be slow so that the Land will not be overrun by wild animals.

**Ponder this:** Commentators ask, could not G-d Who split the sea and performed countless other miracles, prevent the problem with animals without drawing out the period of conquest? They explain that the period from Yetzi'at Mitzrayim until entering the Land was supernatural, filled with miracles, but it was an unnatural time. Food from heaven, miraculous well-water, clothes that we did not outgrow, feet that did not blister or swell despite difficult walking conditions, and protection of the Clouds of Glory, all demonstrated G-d's special relationship with the People and helped develop within them a special faith in G-d, but was not to be their way of life. Just as the fetus is protected and provided for during gestation and then emerges from the womb into the less perfect but "natural" world, so too Israel is soon to emerge from its womb to face the reality of the natural, "real" world. Hence, the warning about the animals. One can say that by warning us about the length of the period of conquest, G-d is telling us that the period of open miracles is ending (not completely), but a more exciting, more alive, more "real" period is to come.

No one will be able to stand before Israel. [This is as it SHOULD be, but its happening in reality depends on our "behavior".] The idols of the nations shall be destroyed and we shall not desire their rich trappings. It is forbidden to derive benefit from the adornments of idolatry, even if they have not been worshiped **[428, L22 7:25]**. Nor may we have anything to do with idolatry, directly or even peripherally. We may not benefit from that which is consecrated to idolatry **[429, L25 7:26]**.

**[S> 8:1 (18)]** All that G-d commands us in the Torah is for the purpose of living... in Eretz Yisrael.

**SDT** This is an oft-repeated theme of Moshe's words to the new generation that is soon to cross the Jordan River. It emphasizes the interdependence and inseparable nature of the three fundamental events that define the Jewish People - the Exodus, Matan Torah, and entry into Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe next asks us to remember the experiences of the years of wandering, the miracles as well as the tribulations. That was a testing period which set the stage for real life in Eretz Yisrael.

The Land is beautifully described and the Seven Species are enumerated.

This gives prominence to grain products (bread, pastry, etc.) in the realm of brachot and gives priority to wine and the five special fruits (among the Seven Species - the first two are grains).

The Torah commands us to "bench" after meals [430, A19 8:10].

## MitzvaWatch

Chazal augmented this rule with a wide range of brachot to be recited before and after partaking of food, by which we express our appreciation and thanks to G-d for the bounty of His world. So too, the Sages required us to say brachot before mitzvot, as well as blessings of praise, request, and acknowledgment - to make us constantly aware of G-d and His role in the Creation and continuing maintenance of the world.

The gemara in Brachot (20b) relates a conversation (so to speak) between G-d and the heavenly angels. The angels said to G-d: Master of the World, You wrote in Your Torah that You are impartial and do not show favoritism or take bribes. Yet You definitely favor the Jewish people as evidenced by the blessings You bestow upon them via Birkat Kohanim. G-d answers them: And how should I not favor them? I commanded them to bless Me after they eat and are satisfied. And the Sages of Israel require Birkat HaMazon even after consuming a KAZAYIT and/or a K'BEITZA. (And they require a before-bracha on even the tiniest bit).

Based on the words of the command to say Birkat HaMazon, we are not only thanking G-d for the food, as would be expected, but also for the Land. This is reflected in the texts of Birkat HaMazon and "Al HaMichya" Since Birkat HaMazon is a mitzva which applies in

all places (not just in Israel), commentaries ponder the significance of the reference to the Land.

Ramban says that when one looks back at the oppression in Egypt and remembers the harshness of the Wilderness, and is now enjoying the bounty of the Land of Israel, there is special cause to thank G-d. Even during times of exile, the significance of the Land (and the Torah) to the life of the Jewish People must not be overlooked. To paraphrase a chassidic interpretation of the pasuk which commands us to "bench": One can eat anywhere and be satisfied physically, but to be spiritually satisfied as well - that happens only in THE natural environment of the Jew and his Torah - in Eretz Yisrael. Perhaps this is why Sefer HaChinuch speaks of the brachot for Torah-learning in the same context as Birkat HaMazon. "And you will eat and you will be satisfied..." - this refers to both physical and spiritual food - food of the body and food for the mind and soul.

The implication of Ramban's words is that only in Eretz Yisrael can one be genuinely fulfilled in the performance of mitzvot. One can keep (many) mitzvot outside of Israel, but there is something vital lacking under those circumstances.

## Levi - Second Aliya 13 p'sukim - 8:11-9:3

Until now, the People have periodically displayed lack of faith in G-d

in troubled times (hunger, thirst, fear). At this point, Moshe issues a very different kind of warning. When the People will enter the Land, successfully defeat the nations therein, and begin to benefit from the spoils of war and the bounty of the Land, the potential exists to discount G-d's role in their good fortune. Moshe warns: be careful to remember the One Who took us out of Egypt and fed us in the wilderness. Do not say: look what I accomplished with my own powers. Always remember that it is G-d who continuously keeps his promises to our ancestors.

**SDT** In the opening passage of Rosh Chodesh Benching we ask G-d to give us a long life, a life of peace, a life of... many different things. There is one thing that we ask for twice - A life that has in it YIR'AT SHAMAYIM, fear of G-d. Why do we ask for this twice?

One answer suggested is that after asking for YIR'AT SHAMAYIM, we ask for CHAYIM SHEL OSHER V'CHAVOD, a life of wealth and honor. In that case, we had better repeat our request for YIR'AT SHAMAYIM, since wealth often turns a person away from proper fear of G-d. This is similar to the warning that Moshe Rabeinu issues at this point in the sedra.

[Another 'answer' is that the type or level of Yir'at Shamayim for each time differs. Just look with what the Yir'at Shamayim is partnered each time. Once with Yir'at Cheit. And then with Ahavat Torah. Qualitatively different.]

[And one last point of interest: This introductory passage is modified for monthly use from a prayer composed by RAV, related to us in the Gemara (B'rachot 16:), originally intended by its composer for daily recital. The original has Yir'at Shamayim only once.

[P> 8:19 (2)] Know well that turning from G-d towards idolatry will result in annihilation, as it does for other nations.

[P> 9:1 (26)] Notwithstanding the might of the nations we are about to face, have confidence that G-d will lead us to victory.

**Note** that the words that Moshe uses to describe the nations that we will face in Eretz Yisrael are very similar to the words used by the Meraglim when they panicked the People with their evil report on the Land. Moshe is not glossing over the difficulties that lie ahead. He is rather instilling confidence in the People that will come from faith in G-d and His promise to fight on our behalf. If an enemy is strong, you don't mislead the people by saying that he is weak. You tell the truth and explain the special protection and help that we will have from G-d in battle.

## Sh'lishi Third Aliya 26 p'sukim - 9:4-29

Moshe next "put things in perspective". We must not think that we deserve all that G-d is giving us, but rather we must remember the many times we



angered G-d in the wilderness AND even at Sinai!

It is not that generation that deserves to enter Eretz Yisrael. Rather, it is a combination of the wickedness of the current inhabitants of the land and the promises that G-d made to our Avot.

Some mitzva-counters consider this ZACHOR to be among the 613; Rambam and the Chinuch do not. This does not, however, minimize the significance of this command.

Moshe now tells the People about the devastating event of the Golden Calf. How glorious the events should have been when Moshe descended the Mount with the first Luchot. Moshe tells how G-d wanted to destroy the People and how he (Moshe) smashed the Luchot, interceded on behalf of the People, and returned to the mountain for another 40 days and nights of fasting and prayer.

Aharon too was subject to G-d's anger.

Rashi explains that G-d was angry at Aharon for "going along" with the People as far as he did. The implication, is that Aharon lost his sons as a result of G-d's anger with him. Moshe's prayers on behalf of his brother were partially successful - Aharon's other two sons lived.

Inter alia, Moshe mentions other places and events where the People angered G-d.

Moshe tells the People that he

smashed the Luchot when he saw the Golden Calf. He also tells them of the different "arguments" he put to HaShem to get His forgiveness.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 11 p'sukim - 10:1-11

[P> 10:1 (11)] Moshe continues by telling about the second set of Luchot and the ARON constructed to contain them.

He then tells of the travels of the People, the death of Aharon (again), and the succession of his son, Elazar. Moshe also tells of the special role given to the tribe of Levi as a result of the (improper) behavior of the rest of the People.

## Chamishi 5th Aliya 20 p'sukim - 10:12-11:9

[S> 10:12 (20)] "And now, People of Israel, what does G-d want from you? ONLY to revere Him, follow His ways, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart and soul. To fulfill all that He commands - for our own good."

Moshe says, even though G-d is the Master of all, He has a special relationship with our ancestors and with us. We must not be stubborn; we must be good, for G-d is truly great and not subject to bribery.

We are required to especially love the convert [431, A207 10:19] - we know

how being a stranger among others is (even though it isn't the same kind).

Revere (fear) G-d [432, A4 10:20], serve Him [433, A5 10:20], cling to Him (by adhering to Torah scholars) [434, A6 10:20], and swear in His Name [435, A7 10:20] when necessary to swear.

## MitzvaWatch

Rambam counts the commandment to pray daily as Biblical (needs further details to be understood properly), based on "and Him you shall serve" and "and to serve Him with all your heart" (and other similar texts), defining service of the heart as prayer. Ramban, on the other hand, holds that prayer is a rabbinic mitzva altogether, albeit inspired by the p'sukim in the Torah and stories of the Avot and others, who prayed on various occasions. At first look, it seems problematic that there is no specific command in the Torah "Thou shalt daven."

But if you think about it, SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART is the best way to command us to daven, because it tells us clearly the high value placed on KAVANA in respect to davening. With davening, kavana is the essential element, not just a component of the mitzva. This is so, specifically because the Torah did NOT command us to pray, but rather to serve G-d with all our hearts.

To further clarify the issue of T'FILA being a Torah law or Rabbinic. Everyone agrees that the number of

times a day, the timings of the different davenings, and what to say at each time - these are all by Rabbinic rules. The dispute is only on the level of the basic mitzva to pray - anything. When a mother has a son in the army and his unit is sent to the Gaza area, and she turns to G-d with a heartfelt plea to Him for her son's safety - this is an example of a basic prayer. The Rambam would hold that this prayer is a fulfillment of the Torah's requirement to pray. Ramban would consider it a Rabbinic mitzva. OTOH, saying Ashrei, the Amida, and Aleinu sometime between half of a halachic hour after halachic noon (the time known as Mincha Gedola) and sunset - this is the fulfillment of the Rabbinic mitzva to daven Mincha. (These were just examples.)

He is our G-d and He formed a mighty nation from a family of 70 souls. Love Him and do His mitzvot (do His mitzvot out of love for Him). Learn the lessons of Jewish history - the miracles and wonders of the Exodus, the crossing of the Sea, and the punishment of Datan and Aviram (here singled out for their arrogant, unforgivable insult to Eretz Yisrael, as opposed to Korach whom Moshe was able to forgive, sort of).

Again, Moshe emphasizes that the purpose and proper environment for Torah is Eretz Yisrael.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya 12 p'sukim - 11:10-21

[S> 11:10 (3)] The Land that the People are about to enter is a land that is "accountable to G-d" in obvious (and less obvious) ways. G-d is demanding of it and of its soon-to-be inhabitants (us). The main physical distinction mentioned is Israel's reliance upon rain.

G-d is demanding of the Land of Israel and of the People of Israel - always, from one end of the year to the other.

[S> 11:13 (9)] This Aliya concludes with a restating of the "deal" that opened the sedra. This parsha is the second passage of the Sh'ma. If we keep the mitzvot then we will have bountiful rain and abundant yields; if not, then...

T'filin, Torah learning, and Mezuzah are restated as is the correlation between mitzvot and long life in the Land. This second portion of the Sh'ma is one of the two passages in a Mezuzah and one of the four parshiyot in T'filin.

Remember that four weeks after Parshat Eikev we will be reading Ki Tavo with the Tochacha. Essentially, the Tochacha says the same thing as the second passage of the Sh'ma from Eikev - but in a much more heavy-handed way. V'HAYA IM SHAMO'A is a firm but 'calmer' (not the best word) warning than what's coming in Ki Tavo. And, Ki Tavo is once a year (add

B'chukotai with the other Tochacha for twice a year) and Sh'ma is every day - twice a day. Maybe if we properly heed the daily reminder, we won't need the devastating warning of the Tochacha. And different people react differently to the different styles of reproach and warning.

## Sh'VII Seventh Aliya 4 p'sukim - 11:22-25

[S> 11:22 (4)] Once again, the "deal" that the sedra began with is repeated at its conclusion - If we will keep all the mitzvot, motivated by a love of G-d; if we follow in his footsteps (by performing acts of kindness) and cling to Him... then we will prevail against mightier nations than ourselves. Every place in Eretz Yisrael that we walk upon, will be ours. No one will stand up against us. The sedra concludes with promises of successful conquest of the Land - if we keep our side of the deal. That's all it takes.

These four p'sukim are not only Sh'vii, but they are reread for the Maftir, as well.

## Haftara 27 p'sukim Yeshayahu 49:14-51:3

2nd of the 7 Consolation Haftarot. G-d's message is that He has not forgotten Zion nor forsaken His People. Sometimes it might seem like that, but there will come a time when the People will return to their roots and be restored to their Land. There was never a "divorce" between G-d and the People of Israel. G-d will help in the battles against the mighty nations that oppress His People. G-d has (will) comforted Zion; the desolated areas will flourish...

### **PROBING the PROPHETS**

This week's haftara, the second in the series of seven haftarot of consolation that follow Tish'a b'Av (sheva d'nechemta), is taken from Sefer Yishayahu (as are all of these haftarot of comfort), a selection from the 49th and 50th prakim of the book. In it, the navi attempts to comfort a suffering people who believe that the destruction of the Beit Mikdash and their subsequent exile was proof that Hashem had given up on them and had, therefore, abandoned them. Yishayahu responds immediately with one of the most moving portrayals of Hashem's love of Israel: "Hatishkach isha ulah meirachem ben bitnah? - Can a woman forget her baby or not feel compassion for her child?" These startling words describe in simple

yet powerful terms G-d's everlasting love for His chosen nation. The navi teaches this people what Shlomo HaMelech expressed in Sefer Mishlei (3:12): "Ki et asher y'ohav Hashem yochiach", For those whom Hashem loves, He reprimands. Punishment does not mean rejection; exile does not mean abandonment.

Yishayahu then defines the future redemption not as great wealth or national power but as return to the land. In but a few verses the navi paints the picture of the future generations returning to Eretz Yisrael from all corners of the earth; an ingathering so remarkable that we will wonder from where these multitudes came as we regarded ourselves as being alone, deserted and abandoned. To which, Hashem responds, it will be the other nations and their leaders who will send our people back to the land. As to the land itself, our haftara closes with the prophet's words: "vayasem midbarah k'eiden", that G-d will comfort Zion and making her desert like the Garden of Eden (or, more correctly, "the Garden IN Eden").

HaRav Ya'akov Medan, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Hesder Har Etzion, suggested that "Eiden" is used at times as a synonym for Eretz Yisrael - the real "Gan Eiden". He points out that the borders of Gan Eiden as provided in the story of creation can be understood as the boundaries of Eretz Yisra'el as well, as the four rivers that are mentioned in Breishit



may very well be identical to the bodies of water that encompass Eretz Yisrael. Similarly, he explains, the usage of the term HA'aretz in the opening psukim of B'reishit, echoes with implications of THE land, often used to refer to Eretz Yisrael - an approach that helps us understand the first comment of Rashi, i.e. that the story of creation (Hashem created HA'aretz) was meant to undermine the argument of those who claim that Israel had "stolen" HA'aretz, Eretz Yisrael.

But perhaps most powerfully, when Adam HaRishon sinned he was EXILED from Eiden, just as the Jewish nation was as a result of their sins. Yishayahu drives home a message to the nation that would be exiled: you have been exiled for your sins, as Adam was, but you have not been abandoned, as Adam was not. And that carries another message as well: redemption is when you return to HA'aretz. When the land that was barren, that was a midbar, will become Eiden.

For, ultimately, we do return to Gan Eiden when we return to HA'aretz.

*Probing the Prophets, weekly insights into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

# R'EI

47th of 54 sedras;  
4th of 11 in D'varim

- 257.8 lines in a Torah (rank: 4th)
  - 20 Parshiyot; 5 open; 15 closed
  - 126 p'sukim - ranks 13 (1st in D'varim)
- Same number of p'sukim as Lech L'cha, but Lech L'cha ranks 23 in size, compared with 4th for R'ei. Interesting.

1932 words - ranks 7th (first in D'varim)

7442 letters - ranks 7th (first in D'varim)

Relatively long p'sukim like most sedras in D'varim (hence, the jump in ranking from p'sukim to words and letters)

## MITZVOT

55 of 613; 17 positive, 38 prohibition  
Only Ki Teitzei & Emor have more

## Kohen - First Aliya 17 p'sukim - 11:26-12:1

[S> 11:26 (3)] After setting down the fundamentals of Judaism (including the formative history of the Nation, Aseret HaDibrot, Sh'ma, Brachot & Davening, and more) in the first three sedras of D'varim, Moshe Rabeinu proceeds with the "Tachlis" part of the Book - mitzvot. The sedras of R'ei, Shoftim, and Ki Teitzei contain 170 mitzvot, the greatest concentration for three consecutive sedras. They are 3 of the top 6 mitzva-sedras of the Torah.

Blessing = keeping the mitzvot; curse = not keeping them. These are the simple equations that Moshe presents here and that Yehoshua will again

present when the People stand on Har G'rizim and Har Eival.

**SDT** Note the phraseology in the opening p'sukim: the Blessing - THAT you will keep the mitzvot. The Curse - IF you won't... There is an implied "recommendation" to choose Blessing. (Similarly, "And you shall choose Life" in Nitzavim.) The Bracha, of course, WHEN you choose it... good things will happen. The curse, IF (not assumed) you are misguided enough not to choose the bracha and the path of Torah and mitzvot...

[S> 11:29 (23)] The Nation was born in Egypt, had its infancy in the wilderness, and will grow and flourish in the Promised Land. "These are the mitzvot to be preserved in the Land..."

Note that not all of the mitzvot that follow are Israel-related, yet it is possible to suggest - as Rashi and Ramban do, very strongly - that ALL mitzvot were meant to be observed in Eretz Yisrael.

Ramban goes further and states clearly: You must keep mitzvot meticulously in Chutz LaAretz so that they will not be new (unknown) to you upon your return to the Land. The means that a Jew living outside Eretz Yisrael who is totally Shomer Shabbat, meticulous in observance, tends to be machmir in many areas of Shabbat (and other mitzvot)... is basically practicing how to keep Shabbat so that when he comes to live in Eretz Yisrael he will be able to keep Shabbat in the PLACE that it was meant to be kept.

To put it differently... Why would a very

talented baseball player with the opportunity to play in the majors, choose to play for a class A minor league team? (or even Triple-A team like the NY Fivetowners.) Especially when he is major league level where the salaries (reward) are amazingly greater than the minors.

Carrying the analogy a bit further, let's say that the player has a strong reason to play in the minors - for example, he has elderly parents whom he must be close to and help when called upon, and a major league commitment and schedule would make that difficult. Would such a player at least dream and aspire to the time when things might change and allow him to accept the major league offers?

Sites, altars, idols, etc. of the nations in Eretz Yisrael are to be destroyed [436, A185 12:2]. However, we must be careful not to do the same to G-d [437, L65 12:4] - this mitzva includes the prohibition of erasing G-d's Holy Names.

While their places are to be eliminated, THE Place (site of the Mikdash) is to be the focal point of Jewish spiritual life and energy. All sacrifices and offerings are to be made there and only there, at the first festival encountered [438, A83 12:5]. It is on those occasions (the Shalosh Regalim) that sacred foods (such as Ma'aser Sheni, Neta Reva'i) are eaten in Jerusalem. Things won't be as "do your own thing" as they are in the wilderness. Soon we will be entering the Land for a more "permanent",

down to earth life.

## MitzvaWatch

There is a fairly common situation among the Torah's mitzvot, of a positive command and a prohibition basically saying the same thing. We have a mitzva to fast on Yom Kippur and a prohibition of eating and drinking. Same thing. We may not do Melacha on Shabbat and we must abstain from Melacha on Shabbat. Same thing. In R'ei, we are commanded to "cancel" uncollected loans at the end of Sh'mita year. We are forbidden from collecting loans after the Sh'mita year has past. Same thing. There are many examples of these "two-sides of the same coin" mitzvot. And there are reasons for the positive mitzva and a "partner" prohibition.

But let's take a look at another aspect of mitzva pairs. Less common than the perfectly matched positive mitzva and prohibition, is the pair of mitzvot that overlap, but not completely. Take a look at [438], the mitzva to fulfill a pledge of a korban or other donation to the Beit HaMikdash. There is a partner prohibition (in Ki Teitzei) which forbids delaying the fulfillment of a pledge to the Mikdash. These mitzvot do not perfectly align. To fulfill the positive mitzva, one must "pay up" by the next Regel. However, one is not in violation of the prohibition unless three Regalim have past since the pledge. This means that a pledge to the Beit HaMikdash made during Aseret Y'mei T'shuva, for example, should be fulfilled on Sukkot. If so, then the person is fulfilling an ASEI and also not in violation of a LAV. If he

doesn't fulfill the pledge until Pesach, then he has NOT fulfilled the positive mitzva, but neither has he violated the prohibition. If Isru Chag Shavuot comes and he still hasn't fulfilled the pledge, then he is in violation of the LAV (because three chagim have passed).

## Levi - Second Aliya 18 p'sukim - 12:11-28

There, a special place will be designated for the bringing of all offerings. There, spiritual rejoicing will take place, and there, we shall help the Levite and the less fortunate to also have cause to rejoice. It will be forbidden to bring sacrifices anywhere else [439, L89 12:13]. All Korbanot are to be brought only at the Mikdash [440, A84 12:14] (this is another matched mitzva-pair). Only those consecrated animals that become unfit for the Altar due to blemishes must be redeemed [441, A86 12:15] (without an invalidating blemish, a consecrated animal may NOT be redeemed) and then may be eaten as "regular" meat. The animals' blood, of course, may not be consumed.

It is forbidden to eat Ma'aser Sheni outside Yerushalayim, neither of grain [442, L141 12:17], nor of wine (or grapes) [443, L142 12:17], nor olive oil (or olives) [444, L143 12:17]; nor to eat sacred firstborn animals outside of Yerushalayim [445, L144 12:17], nor the more sacred sacrificial meat outside of the Temple courtyard [446, L145 12:17], nor eat the meat of an

Olah (completely-burnt offering) at all [447, L146 12:17], nor other korbanot before their blood is properly sprinkled on the Altar [448, L147 12:17], nor eat First Fruits before they are placed in front of the Altar [449, L149 12:17].

Deep breath. The previous paragraph lists 8 mitzvot that all come from a single pasuk (12:17). Here too is an example of how we would be lost in trying to understand all that this pasuk is commanding us, without the Oral Law. It is important to remember that this is not rabbinic interpretation nor extension that we are dealing with; it is Torah as much from HaShem as Matza on the Seder night or Shofar on Rosh HaShana. That which we are taught from the Oral Law is part of Torah MiSinai, just like the Written Word.

All of the above-mentioned foods are to be eaten where they are supposed to be eaten. Be careful not to forget the Levi, the gifts due him, and other forms of help [450, L229 12:19].

[S> 12:20 (9)] "When G-d will expand your borders as promised..."

If and when we desire to eat meat (other than sacred meat of korbanot), we may do so anywhere we choose, but we must properly slaughter the animals we eat first [451, A146 12:21].

**SDT** In the pasuk commanding Sh'chita, G-d says "(slaughter the animal) as I have commanded you". Yet we do not find the details of Sh'chita in the Written Torah. This is one of the sources for the concept that the Torah consists of a written portion and an



Oral Law - both the Word of G-d.

Non-sacred meat does not have the same restrictions as sacred meat (i.e. ritual impurity - yours or the animal's - is not an impediment to eating it). Many other halachot, of course, do apply.

An animal must be killed before its meat is taken. This is the universal prohibition (it is both one of our 613 and one of the 7 Noahide Laws) of "Limb from a living animal" [452, L182 12:23], EIVER MIN HACHAI. Blood must be removed from meat before we may eat it.

Korbanot shall be brought from all over (even from outside of Israel) to the "Place of G-d's choosing" - the Mikdash [453, A85 12:26]. These korbanot shall be offered on the Mizbei'ach, the blood sprinkled thereon, the meat (when permitted) to be eaten there.

Be careful to do all that G-d asks, so that things will be good for us and our children.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya 22 p'sukim - 12:29-13:19

[S> 12:29 (4)] Repeat warning: Do not get interested in the idolatrous practices of the nations whom we will replace in the Land, lest we too anger G-d and be punished by Him.

We shall do all that we are commanded, neither adding to [454, L313 13:1], nor diminishing from [455, L314 13:1] Torah & mitzvot.

[P> 13:2 (5)] If (when) there arises among us a prophet or dreamer - even one who performs miracles or signs to back up his words - who prophesies in the name of idolatry, it is forbidden to listen him [456, L28 13:4]. This is to be viewed as a test by G-d of our faith in Him. We must be true to G-d, follow Him, revere Him, keep His mitzvot, serve Him, and cling to Him. The above-mentioned false prophet shall be put to death for his attempts to turn us away from G-d. We thus uproot evil from our midst.

[S> 13:7 (6)] If any fellow Jew (even a close relative or beloved friend) tries to entice us to idolatry of any type, we must show no love to such a person [457, L17 13:9], nor overcome our hatred of him [458, L18 13:9], nor rescue him from danger [459, L19 13:9], nor speak on his behalf in court [460, L20 13:9] nor refrain from speaking against him [461, L21 13:9].

But rather, the enticer shall be put to death by stoning (after trial and conviction), the accusing witnesses initiating the execution. And (it almost goes without saying that) it is forbidden to entice a fellow Jew to leave G-d and worship idols [462, L16 13:12].

[S> 13:13 (7)] If we find out that an entire city is being enticed to idolatry, we must very carefully investigate the matter. This command is generalized to require thorough examination and questioning of witnesses in all types of cases [463, A179 13:15]. If the charges are substantiated, the population of the "city gone astray" is to be killed by sword, the possessions of the people

are to be burned, and the city itself destroyed [464, A186 13:17]. The city may not ever be rebuilt [465, L23 13:17] (unless security considerations determine otherwise). No one may benefit from anything from the city [466, L24 13:18] so as not to provoke G-d's anger. Proper fulfillment of these and other mitzvot will find favor in G-d's eyes.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 21 p'sukim - 14:1-21

[S> 14:1 (2)] As "G-d's children", it is forbidden to gash oneself (for idolatrous purposes or to mourn the dead) [467, L45 14:1] nor tear out one's hair in grief [468, L171 14:1]. [Mitzva [467] also prohibits factionalization of the community when it is detrimental to Jewish unity - two totally different mitzvot attributed to the same source.]

It is our destiny to be the chosen from among the nations of the earth.

[S> 14:3 (6)] It is forbidden to eat "any abomination", defined here as the meat of a korban that had become "disqualified" [469, L140 14:3].

The Torah next lists 10 types of mammals that are kosher (3 domestic, 7 wild), and then gives signs to determine a kosher animal (split hoof, cud-chewing). Then four examples of animals we may not eat.

The kosher domesticated animals are very familiar to us: Cow, Goat, Sheep. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan z"l identifies the 7 wild kosher animals (Chayot T'hortot) as gazelle, deer, antelope, ibex, chamois, bison (or wild ox, maybe

water buffalo), giraffe. In his footnotes, he brings different opinions about the Hebrew terms for different animals.

[S> 14:9 (2)] Fish with scales and fins are permitted to be eaten; that which has no scales (or fins) is forbidden to us. Scales (that are easily scraped off without damaging the skin of the fish) determine the kashrut of a fish.

[S> 14:11 (11)] We may eat kosher birds. We are therefore obligated to examine and determine the kosher status of a bird we would like to eat [470, A150 14:11] (The corresponding mitzvot for the other types of animals have been counted as mitzvot from Shmini.)

The Torah lists 21 types of birds (flying animals) that are forbidden.

The characteristics of kosher and non-kosher birds are NOT mentioned in the Torah (unlike those of mammals and fish)... Basically, we do not trust ourselves to be able to properly identify the birds named in the Torah. If we have a tradition in our communities that a particular type of bird is kosher, then we will eat it. Otherwise we take the cautious position of SAFEK (doubt).

It is also forbidden to eat non-kosher locust and other winged insects [471, L175 14:19].

Even though we may eat meat, it is forbidden to eat of an animal that died other than by sh'chita. This is the prohibition of N'VEILA [472, L180 14:21]. Benefit may be derived from N'VEILA but not from milk-meat mixtures (cooked together).

## Chamishi 5th Aliya 8 p'sukim - 14:22-29

[P> 14:22 (6)] (Approx. 2% of the yield of a crop is given to a Kohen as T'ruma. One tenth of the remainder is separated as Ma'aser to be given to a Levi.) One tenth of what is left is separated as Ma'aser Sheni [473, A128 14:22], which remains the possession of the owner but is sacred and must be brought to Yerushalayim and eaten (t)here in a state of ritual purity. If the amount of Ma'aser Sheni is great, a person is permitted to redeem the produce for fair market value plus a fifth (i.e. 1/4 is added, that amount becoming 1/5 of the total). If one redeems the Maaser Sheni of his neighbor, no one adds one fifth. The proceeds of the redemption are to be spent on food and drink in Yerushalayim. Again the Torah reminds us to care of the Levi, who has no property of his own. (Ma'aser Sheni applies in years 1, 2, 4, 5 of the Shmita cycle.)

[S> 14:28 (2)] In the 3rd (& 6th) year of a Shmita cycle, the second tithe is to be given to poor people [474, A130 14:28]. This generous act of tzedaka will be rewarded by G-d's blessings. (Note the ratio of years of Maaseir Sheni and Maaseir Oni. And the order.)

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya 18 p'sukim - 15:1-18

[S> 15:1 (6)] If Shmita year passes,

repayment of personal loans may not be demanded [475, L230 15:1]. This rule applies when both lender and borrower are Jewish. Loans due from a non-Jew must be collected [476, A142 15:3], but it is a mitzva to cancel the personal debt of a fellow Jew following Shmita year [477, A141 15:3]

If the Jewish People follow the Torah and mitzvot properly, we will be blessed by not having poverty among us. We will also dominate among the nations of the world.

[S> 15:7 (5)] However, when we are confronted with poverty, we must not hold back generous support of those in need [478, L232 15:7]. Rather it is a great mitzva to give tzedaka and support those less fortunate than ourselves in a giving and dignified manner [479, A195 15:8]. Be very careful not to withhold loans to the poor because the Shmita year is approaching [480, L231 15:9]; if the poor person cries out to G-d, He will hold you accountable for not helping. Be generous in areas of tzedaka and Chessed, thereby meriting blessing from G-d. Poverty will be a "fact of life" under normal circumstances; give tzedaka freely.

[S> 15:12 (7)] If a Jew becomes an indentured servant to a fellow Jew, he shall work no more than six years and he shall be freed in the seventh. One must not send the freed EVED IVRI away empty-handed [481, L233 15:13] but rather he shall be given a generous allotment upon discharge [482, A196 15:14] (again, a double-sided mitzva). We are to remember that we were AVADIM in Egypt and that G-d

redeemed us and expects us to be sensitive to those less fortunate than ourselves. If the EVED IVRI does not want to be released, his ear is ceremonially pierced and he remains in his master's service until Yovel. Do not be stingy with the servant, for he has served you hard and long.

## Sh'VIII Seventh Aliya 22 p'sukim - 15:19-16:17

[S> 15:19 (5)] Firstborns of cow, goat and sheep - if they are male - are sacred (if unblemished); they may neither be worked [483, L113 15:19] nor benefited from [484, L114 15:19], such as shearing the wool for personal use. They are to be given to a Kohen as one of his Torah-granted gifts (after 30 or 50 days of age, depending upon the type of animal). They are to be eaten by the kohen and his family after being brought as a korban - within a year, unless "unfit for the Altar", in which case they are the Kohen's property, to do with as he pleases.

[P> 16:1 (8)] Preserve the spring month and bring Korban Pesach. This is a reiteration of the mitzva to adjust the calendar when necessary, by adding a month - a second Adar - to keep Pesach in the spring.

Chametz is forbidden on Erev Pesach afternoon [485,L199 16:3]. This is a separate prohibition, and of a lesser status (based on comparing punishments for violation), to the prohibition of Chametz on Pesach itself. The Chagiga cannot be left over

beyond two days [486, L118 16:4]. KP cannot be brought on a private altar [487,\* 16:5]. This mitzva is not on Rambam's list - the ONLY mitzva on the Chinuch's list that Rambam does not count. The other shoe drops in Haazinu.

[P> 16:9 (4)] Count seven weeks until Shavuot; this is the OTHER Omer mitzva (in addition to counting 49 days - it's why we count days & weeks). Next, a mention of Sukkot and then the command to rejoice on the Festivals [488, A54 16:14]. Appear in the Mikdash and bring korbanot on Chagim [489, A53 16:15]; don't appear there empty-handed [490, L156 16:16].

## Maftir in 2nd Torah 7 p'sukim, Bamidbar 28:9-15

Notice that the Musaf of Shabbat is an expanded version of the weekday sacrifices and Rosh Chodesh's Musaf is like those of the Chagim. This is logical, when you think about it. Six days... and on the 7th - Shabbat is one of the days of the week and the unique and special one among them. The Chagim belong to the Jewish calendar, which is based on the months and Rosh Chodesh.

## Haftara 24\* p'sukim Yeshayahu 66:1-24

The Haftara for Shabbat-R"Ch, the last chapter of Yeshayahu, preempts the regular Haftara (usually). R'ei's haftara will be tacked on to Ki Teitzei's - they are continuous in the Navi.



## **PROBING the PROPHETS**

The connection of this special R"Ch reading to the day itself is found in the final psukim where the navi foretells of a time when "midei chodesh b'chod'shi umidei Shabbat b'shabbato" on each Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh (or "weekly and monthly") all flesh will come to the Bet HaMikdash to worship G-d.

And yet, we are hard-pressed to accept that it is only the "fleeting" mention of Rosh Chodesh and Shabbat at the very end of the haftara that led Chazal to select this prophecy as being a fitting choice for this day. In truth, however, as we are still experiencing post-Tish'a B'Av emotions, our haftara truly is fitting. Rav Yehuda Shaviv points out that on Shabbat Chazon, we read the first perek of Yishayahu in which the prophet cries out: "Chodsheichem Umo'adeichem san'a nafshi," that G-d "hates" your Rosh Chodesh, He rejects your sacrifices, He regards your visits to the Mikdash as "trampling" His courtyards. But in this final chapter, the navi ends his book with the vision of ALL mankind gathering to the Mikdash, there to sacrifice to Hashem! R"Ch, no longer "hated"; our sacrifices, no longer rejected...

Words of comfort that grant us solace during these weeks. Indeed, if we study the entire chapter we would find that it is completely a prophecy of comfort, replete with visions of a glorious future and of new beginnings.

The navi closes his nevu'a and book. He speaks of a "new", revitalized and refreshed heaven and earth and, therefore, declares that on the new month, when the moon is renewed and we begin the monthly cycle once more, on these Roshei Chodesh, all mankind will gather to worship G-d.

R"Ch is an opportunity of self-renewal and revitalization.

This is the true message of our haftara and the true message of Rosh Chodesh. It is a message that helps explain why it 'bumps' the usual haftara on consolation.

For that is the very message of this haftara as well.