

Torah Weekly



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Parshas V'zos Habracha

For the week ending 20 Tishrei 5756
13 & 14 October 1995

Summary

The Torah draws to its close with V'zos Habracha, which is the only Parsha in the Torah not read on a Shabbos. Rather, V'zos Habracha is read on Shmini

Atzeres/Simchas Torah, when everyone in the synagogue gets called up to the Torah for an *aliyah* – even boys who are not yet Bar Mitzvah. The Parsha is repeated until everyone has received an *aliyah*.

Moshe continues the tradition of Yaakov by blessing the Tribes of Yisrael before his death. Similar to the blessings bestowed by Yaakov, these blessings are also a combination of the description of the Tribe's essence, together with a definition of its role within the nation of Israel. The only Tribe that does not receive a blessing is Shimon, because they were central to the mass immorality of worshipping the idol *ba'al pe'or*. Another explanation is that this Tribe's population was small and scattered throughout the south of the Land of Israel, and would therefore receive blessings together with the host Tribe amongst whom they would live; i.e., Yehuda. Moshe's last words to his beloved people are of reassurance, that Hashem will more than recompense His people for all of the suffering they will endure. Moshe ascends the mountain and Hashem shows him prophetically all that will happen to *Eretz Yisrael* in the future, both in tranquillity and in times of oppression. Hashem also shows him all that will happen to the Jewish People until the time of the Resurrection. Moshe dies there by means of the "Divine Kiss." To this day, no one knows the place of his burial, in order that his grave should not become a shrine for those who wish to make a prophet into a god. Of all the prophets, Moshe was unique in his being able to speak to Hashem whenever he wanted. His centrality and stature are not a product of the Jewish People's "blind faith," but on events that were witnessed by an entire nation – at the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, and constantly during forty years of journeying through the desert.

Commentaries

"And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of G-d, bestowed on the Children of Israel before his death" (33:1).

The previous Parsha concludes "...but you shall not enter in there, into the Land that I give to the children of Yisrael." The Torah tells us (*Devarim* 3:26) that it was really the Jewish People who were responsible for Moshe not entering the Land of Israel, and were therefore unworthy to receive his blessing. Nevertheless, Moshe

harbors no resentment against them, and blesses them with a full heart. That is why the Torah calls him "*the man of G-d*" – just as Hashem is Merciful and forgives our transgressions, likewise Moshe by being merciful brought himself so close to Hashem, by emulating His Mercy in overlooking transgression.

(Tsrer Hamor in *Mayana Shel Torah*)

**"The Torah is
our
heritage,
not our
inheritance..."**

"And this is the blessing that Moshe, the man of G-d, bestowed on the Children of Israel before his death" (33:1).

Moshe Rabbeinu blessed the Jewish People that each one of them in every generation would have the opportunity to achieve spiritual affinity with Hashem – i.e., to be a "man of G-d". This is hinted to in this verse: Moshe's blessing was that each of them would be a "*man of G-d, before his [own] death*".

(Ohr Tzadikim)

COMING
NEXT WEEK: *Sing, My Soul!*

Insights into Shabbos Zemiras

“The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov” (33:4).

There is a great difference between an inheritance and a heritage. An inheritance is the sole possession of the one who inherits it — it is his to do with as he pleases — to consume, to invest, or to squander. However, a heritage must be cherished and preserved and passed on to the next generation intact. The Torah is our heritage, *not* our inheritance. We must pass it on to the next generation as we found it, and not abridged, altered, or adulterated.

(Heard from Rabbi Nachman Bulman)

“...before the eyes of all Yisrael” (34:12).

These are the final words of the Torah. The entire Jewish People were witnesses to all the miracles that were wrought through Moshe Rabbeinu. With their own eyes they saw, and “seeing is believing.” In other words, their *believing* came from *seeing*. Their faith in Moshe came from daily contact with miracles which were witnessed not by a small number of people who then convinced others through charisma or coercion. Rather, their faith was a result of the fact that the entire nation — “the eyes of all Yisrael” were witnesses to the dividing of the Red Sea, the Assembly at Sinai, and the miraculous food which descended in just the right measure to sustain for one day only, except on Friday when there would be found a double portion that was enough for Shabbos as well. This was a miracle that was experienced by all the Jewish People every day for forty years! This was the “seeing” that served as foundation for the rock-like faithfulness of the Jewish People throughout the long night of exile. With their own eyes they saw that Moshe, the prophet of Hashem, was authentic — and that his Torah, the Torah of the Living G-d, was Truth.

(Based on the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh)

HOSHANA RABA

ALL NIGHTER

SATURDAY NIGHT OCTOBER 14

Classes and lectures from 8:30pm until dawn

Rav Nachman Bulman • Rav Nota Schiller
Rav Mendel Weinbach

Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb • Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz
Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram • Rabbi Saul Mandel

Sunrise at the Kotel

REFRESHMENTS SERVED ALL NIGHT

At The Ohr Somayach Main Campus,
22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Jerusalem

Haftorah for Shmini Atzeres/Simchas Torah: Yehoshua 1:1-18

Immediately upon finishing reading the Torah, we start again “In the beginning of G-d’s creating the heavens and the earth....” In this way we remind ourselves that immersing ourselves in the Truths of the Torah is an eternal task, without beginning or end. The Haftorah says: “*And Hashem spoke to Yehoshua bin Nun, Moshe’s lieutenant, saying: ‘Moshe my servant is dead. You arise and cross over the Jordan....’*” This reminds us that the Torah is not the possession of any single human being, not even the greatest, but it is Hashem’s teachings that began with the revelation at Sinai, and its accomplishment is not dependent on the personality and life of any individual man, however great and sublime he may be.

(Rabbi Mendel Hirsch, based on Rabbi S.R. Hirsch)

Due to the Holiday of Sukkos and the completion of the cycle of reading the Torah, the order of the Torah readings is slightly more complicated than normal. The chart below should help make all of this a little clearer.



- ☆ On the Shabbos during Sukkos Chol Hamoed (14 Oct 1995), we read Shemos 33:12-34:26. This is part of Parshas Ki Sisa.
- ☆ In Israel, we read V’zos Habracha and the first few verses of Bereishis (1:1-2:3) on Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah on both the evening of the 15th and the morning of the 16th of October 1995.
- ☆ Outside of Israel, we read Devarim 14:22-16:17 on Shemini Atzeres (16 October 1995). This is part of Parshas Re’eh. On Simchas Torah we read V’zos Habracha and the first few verses of Bereishis (1:1-2:3) on both the evening of the 16th and the morning of the 17th of October 1995.
- ☆ On Shabbos, 21 October 1995, we read the entire Parshas Bereishis. Look for *Torah Weekly* on this Parsha next week.

Most *Chumashim* and *Siddurim* list these special readings, and the special accompanying *Maftir* and *Haftorah* portions.

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This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.