

NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Vzot Haberacha

(http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

Parsha Outline

- Moshe blesses the Tribes
- Moshe's death

Parsha Summaries

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/431190/jewish/VZot-HaBerachah-Roundup.htm

V'Zot HaBerachah Roundup

The *parshah* of V'Zot Haberacha, the final *parshah* in the Torah, is read on Simchat Torah. The name of the *parshah* means "and this is the blessing" because in it, Moses blesses the tribes of Israel before he passes away. Each tribe get its own blessing, just like Jacob blessed each tribe individually.

Reuven is blessed with life, Judah with success in battle, Levi with serving in the Temple and being teachers of Torah, Benjamin is "beloved" by G-d, Joseph is blessed with sweet fruits on his land, Zebulun with success in trade, Issachar with success in Torah study, Gad with a lot of land, Dan with the might of a lion, Naftali with fertile land and sea, and Asher with sons and olive oil.

After Moses finishes blessing the people of Israel, he goes up Mount Nebo and G-d shows him the whole Land of Israel. Then Moses, at 120 years old, passes away. He is buried by G-d, and until today, nobody knows his burial place. The Jews mourn Moses for thirty days, and then Joshuah becomes the new leader, and all the Jews follow and respect him just as they did Moses.

The *parshah*, and the entire Torah, ends by telling us what a great person Moses was: "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."

As soon as we finish reading the *parshah*, we immediately begin again from the beginning, reading from Bereishit about how G-d created the world. Tune in next week as we begin the *parshah* cycle again for another year of *parshah* adventures.

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/572376/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm

V'Zot HaBerachah Aliya Summary

General Overview: This week's Torah reading, *V'Zot Ha'Brachah*, which is read on the holiday of Simchat Torah, recounts the blessings Moses bestowed upon each of the tribes, the story of Moses' death, and describes the greatness of his personality, prophecy and deeds.

First Aliyah: Shortly before he passed away, Moses blessed the Tribes of Israel individually. Moses prefaced his blessings with praise for G-d -- how He descended from Heaven amidst myriads of angels to give His people the Torah on Mount Sinai -- and praise for the Israelites -- how they lovingly and unconditionally accepted G-d's gift. Reuben and Judah were the first two tribes to be blessed: Reuben with life in this world and the next one; Judah with success and victory in the course of his battles.

Second Aliyah: The holy tribe of Levi was next in line to be blessed. Moses extols their virtues, the only tribe to remain faithful to G-d throughout the various trials and tests the Israelites encountered during their desert sojourn. Therefore, Moses declares, "They will teach Your laws to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel; they will place incense before You, and burnt-offerings upon Your altar." Benjamin, then, is acknowledged as "G-d's beloved," the tribe which will be graced by the Holy Temple which will be situated in its portion of Israel.

Third Aliyah: This section is devoted to the blessing given to the Tribe of Joseph. Moses blessed Joseph with a bountiful portion that will be blessed with ample rain, dew, produce, and delicacies. Joseph is also blessed with unusual ox-like strength which he would use to vanquish his enemies.

Fourth Aliyah: Zebulun was blessed with success in his business endeavors and Issachar in his Torah studies. Gad was blessed with the strength of a lion -- who tears off the arm and head of his enemy with one blow -- and an expanding portion in the Holy Land. Gad is then praised for choosing a portion on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, opting to

settle in the proximity of Moses' final resting place, and for leading the troops in battle in the conquest of Canaan.

Fifth Aliyah: Dan, too, is blessed with the strength of a lion cub. Naftali's portion in Israel is lauded as one that "brings satisfaction to all its inhabitants, and is filled with G-d's blessing." Asher is blessed with sons and with an abundance of olive oil, to the extent that he will "immerse his feet in oil"! Moses concluded the individual blessings, and addressed the nation as a whole: "Your locks on your border towns are as strong as iron and copper, and the days of your old age will be like the days of your youth..."

Sixth Aliyah: Moses continues blessing/praising the Israelites. He notes that the G-d who dwells in the heavens is always ready to come to their assistance. "Fortunate are you, O Israel! Who is like you, O people saved by G-d!"

Seventh Aliyah: As per G-d's instructions, Moses ascended Mount Nebo. Once on top of the mountain, G-d showed him all of the Land of Israel. Moses then died, at the age of one hundred and twenty. Until his last moment, his eye never dimmed and his skin never dried. The Israelites mourned Moses for thirty days, and Joshua immediately assumed the mantle of leadership. The Torah concludes with a eulogy for Moses. He was the greatest prophet to ever live, and he performed incredible and awesome miracles before the eyes of all of Israel.

Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573788/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm

Lyrics:

MISSING

Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7078

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=1690

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

K-2

Questions

1. Who blesses Bnei Yisrael in this Parshah?
2. Who does the Torah refer to as Ish HaElokim (man of G-d)?
3. Which shevat as a whole, through out their years in Mitzrayim and the desert, did not stray from HaShem to worship strange gods?
4. As a result of this, this shevat was blessed to maintain its appointed position. What was that appointed position?
5. How were Zevulun and Yissachar blessed to work hand in hand?
6. Who is known as Eved HaShem?
7. Does anyone know exactly where Moshe is buried?
8. How old was he when he died?
9. Who took over for him?
10. What does the Torah say was unique about Moshe?

Answers

1. Moshe
2. Moshe
3. Levi
4. To serve HaShem and teach His laws to Bnei Yisrael
5. Zevulun was blessed with the lifestyle of a merchant, who goes out to conduct business; Yissachar was blessed in his endeavor to set up tents of learning Torah. A portion of the parnasah that Zevulun earned was used to help support the population of Yissachar in its endeavor to learn Torah. Zevulun shared in the mitzvah of learning Torah
6. Moshe
7. NO
8. 120 years old
9. Yehoshua
10. He saw HaShem Panim El Panim (face to face) and performed HaShem's miracles and mighty acts which no other navi was given the privilege and ability to do

3-4

Questions

1. Who blesses Bnei Yisrael in this Parshah?
2. At what point in his life does he bless them?
3. Who does the Torah refer to as Ish HaElokim (man of G-d)?
4. Which shevat was blessed first?
5. Which shevat as a whole, through out their years in Mitzrayim and the desert, did not stray from HaShem to worship strange gods?
6. As a result of this, this shevat was blessed to maintain its appointed position. What was that appointed position?
7. Which shevat is called Yedid HaShem (HaShem's beloved) and is blessed with HaShem dwelling in it?
8. How is this evident?
9. How were Zevulun and Yissachar blessed to work hand in hand?
10. Who is known as Eved HaShem?
11. Does anyone know exactly where Moshe is buried?
12. How old was he when he died?
13. How long did Bnei Yisrael mourn his death?
14. Who took over for him?
15. What does the Torah say was unique about Moshe?

Answers

1. Moshe
2. Right before he dies
3. Moshe
4. Reuven
5. Levi
6. To serve HaShem and teach His laws to Bnei Yisrael
7. Binyamin
8. Historically, HaShem's love for Binyamin is reflected in the fact that he was Yaakov's favorite and the Bet Hamikdash was eventually built in Binyamin's territory
9. Zevulun was blessed with the lifestyle of a merchant, who goes out to conduct business; Yissachar was blessed in his endeavor to set up tents of learning Torah. A portion of the parnasah that Zevulun earned was used to help support the population of Yissachar in its endeavor to learn Torah. Zevulun shared in the mitzvah of learning Torah
10. Moshe
11. NO
12. 120 years old
13. 30 days
14. Yehoshua

15. He saw HaShem Panim El Panim (face to face) and performed HaShem's miracles and mighty acts which no other navi was given the privilege and ability to do

5-6

Questions

1. Who blesses Bnei Yisrael in this Parshah?
2. At what point in his life does he bless them?
3. Who does the Torah refer to as Ish HaElokim (man of G-d)?
4. Which shevat was blessed first?
5. What was his blessing?
6. Why was this blessing so important for them?
7. Who received the same blessing as Reuven?
8. Which shevat as a whole, through out their years in Mitzrayim and the desert, did not stray from HaShem to worship strange gods?
9. As a result of this, this shevat was blessed to maintain its appointed position. What was that appointed position?
10. Which shevat is called Yedid HaShem (HaShem's beloved) and is blessed with HaShem dwelling in it?
11. How is this evident?
12. How were Zevulun and Yissachar blessed to work hand in hand?
13. The Torah says that Moshe saw all the way to Yam HaAcharon. Which sea is this?
14. Which city is called Ir Tamarim, City of Dates?
15. Who is known as Eved HaShem?
16. Does anyone know exactly where Moshe is buried?
17. How old was he when he died?
18. How long did Bnei Yisrael mourn his death?
19. Who took over for him?
20. What does the Torah say was unique about Moshe?

Answers

1. Moshe
2. Right before he dies
3. Moshe
4. Reuven
5. Shevat Reuven should not die out
6. They already lost ten percent of their population in the desert. Also, in the time of Dovid Hamelech a lot of their territory was conquered by Moav
7. Yehudah
8. Levi
9. To serve HaShem and teach His laws to Bnei Yisrael

10. Binyamin
11. Historically, HaShem's love for Binyamin is reflected in the fact that he was Yaakov's favorite and the Bet Hamikdash was eventually built in Binyamin's territory
12. Zevulun was blessed with the lifestyle of a merchant, who goes out to conduct business; Yissachar was blessed in his endeavor to set up tents of learning Torah. A portion of the parnasah that Zevulun earned was used to help support the population of Yissachar in its endeavor to learn Torah. Zevulun shared in the mitzvah of learning Torah
13. The Mediterranean which borders Eretz Yisrael to the west
14. Yericho, which grows palm trees that yields dates
15. Moshe
16. NO
17. 120 years old
18. 30 days
19. Yehoshua
20. He saw HaShem Panim El Panim (face to face) and performed HaShem's miracles and mighty acts which no other navi was given the privilege and ability to do

Parsha Stories

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-V-zot-Habracha.pdf?docid=3674&ie=1&showobject=1>

LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

A SMALL FAMILY GATHERING

“Kinderlach, please come gather together in the Succah. We want to say farewell to our beloved Succah before the end of the *chag*.” “Abba, if today is the last day of Succos, then tomorrow is not Succos. Why is tomorrow called Shemini Atzeres – the eighth day? It sounds like it is a continuation – the eight day of Succos.” “That is a very astute question, Chaim. Shemini Atzeres is actually a completely separate holiday. When I make Kiddush tonight, I will b’ezras Hashem, say the *beracha* ‘*shehecheyanu*’. This *beracha* is only said on something new; therefore we see that Shemini Atzeres is a new holiday.” “Can you please explain the purpose of this holiday to us, Abba? Also, what is the connection between the holiness of the day, which is mentioned in the Torah, and the custom to finish reading the Sefer Torah, which originated in the time of the Gaonim?” “Your scholarly questions reflect a real desire to understand the depth of this *chag*, Avi. Rav Chaim Friedlander has a fascinating explanation of this very special day. It will answer all of your questions.” “We can hardly wait, Abba.” “Rashi’s commentary on the

Chumash (Bamidbar 29:35) states, 'Stay with Me a little longer.' We have come close to our Father in Heaven for the months of Elul and Tishrei. We have gained immeasurably from this intimate relationship. Now the last *chag* is coming to a close. Hashem expresses His affection, 'It is difficult for Me to part with you. Stay one more day.' This request is compared to a King making a big feast for all of his servants. The last day he says to his most beloved subject, 'Make a small private meal so that I can enjoy your company.'" "Abba, how does a small private meal make it easier to part ways? And how does it show the King's love more than a big feast?"

"Excellent question, Shoshie. Let us compare the big feast to a wedding. The *baalei-simcha*, the parents of the *chossan* and *kallah*, invite all of their friends and family to a huge *seudah*. One of the purposes is to strengthen their connections with the friends and distant relatives. Contrast this with the small *seudas sheva berachos*. This is very often just for close family members. They do not need a big fancy meal to strengthen the love between them. They are already beloved, and get together to share the warmth of their relationship. Similarly, it is the intimacy of the small *seudah* of Shemini Atzeres that celebrates the great love between Hashem and His chosen nation." "Wow, Abba. I never realized that Shemini Atzeres was such a special day. However, does this small *seudas preida* (meal of separation) really ease the sorrow of parting ways after so much time together? And what is the connection to finishing the Torah?" "Leah, the answers to both of your questions are one. What forges that close intimate connection that we have with our Creator? The Torah. We say this every night in the evening prayers. 'With an eternal love You have loved the House of Israel. (Therefore) Torah and commandments, decrees and judgments You have taught us.' The Torah is the purpose of our life; it is the source of our connection to Hashem. He revealed His will to us, and therefore He delights (so to speak) in our learning and fulfilling it. Speaking and understanding the holy words of the Torah has a direct powerful influence from the Almighty onto our *neshamos* (souls). Therefore, the connection between Shemini Atzeres and finishing the Torah is clear. By finishing the Torah with great celebration and *simcha*, we demonstrate our great love for Hashem by rejoicing with the very thing that brings us close to Him. It is clear that the *seudah* of Shemini Atzeres is not a *seudas preida* at all! Our Sages say, '*Yisrael, vi'Oraysa, vi'Kudshu Breech Hu, chad hu* – Klal Yisrael, the Torah, and The Holy One, Blessed be He, are One!' We cling to Hashem by learning His Torah! We finish it, and commit to learning it anew with a deeper understanding. This will forge a deeper connection between us and our Father in Heaven."

Kinderlach . . .

What a special day! Shemini Atzeres is the day when we gather everything that we have gained since Rosh Chodesh Elul, rejoice over it with the Torah, and use it to propel us into a revitalized, closer relationship with Hashem in the new year. See how much we can accomplish in this day! See how happy this day is! See how this day is full of a deep love between us and Hashem! Enjoy Shemini Atzeres, kinderlach. Enjoy your closeness to HaKadosh Boruch Hu.

YEDID HASHEM

“To Binyamin he (Moshe Rabbeinu) said, ‘*Yedid Hashem...*’” (Devarim 33:12). What is this blessing of *Yedid Hashem* that the tribe of Binyamin received? The spelling of the word “*yedid*”, *yud-daled-yuddaled*, reveals its meaning. The word “*yad*” (hand) is spelled *yud-daled*. “*Yedid*” is the word “hand” repeated twice. A handshake, one hand clasping the other, is a sign of closeness between two people. Hand clasping hand; that is the symbol of the closeness to Hashem that Binyamin was blessed with.

The Sifrei expounds on this idea. Binyamin was dear to Hashem. We see that he was called *yedid*. The King has many people that He cherishes, however the *yedid* is the most beloved of all. There are six who are called *yedidim*...Yisrael are called *yedidim*. We, the Jewish people, have this special status of being beloved to Hashem.

Does this sound familiar? It should. The month of Elul is spelled *aleph-lamed-vuvlamed*. Those letters form an acronym of the words of the verse, “*Ani li’dodi v’dodi li*” [I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine] (Shir HaShirim 6:3). The word “*dodi*” has the same root as “*yedid*” - beloved. Our Beloved One is Hashem. We are beloved to Him, and He is Beloved to us. This has been the theme of our Avodas Hashem since the beginning of the month of Elul. We are His *yedidim*; therefore, we have the opportunity to become very close to Him. The door is open. We only need to walk in. He will receive us with open arms. For every small step that we take closer to Hashem, He takes giant steps closer to us. For we are limited physical beings, and our steps are small. He is the Almighty, who has unlimited power to give. We have worked on becoming closer to Hashem through *teshuva*, *tefillah*, *mitzvos*, and celebration of the Holy Days, our appointed times with Him. These are not merely external actions, but ways to bring Hashem deep into our hearts. That is the true avodah.

Kinderlach . . .

Today is the last day - Shemini Atzeres. Today is the culmination of our special time with Hashem, which began on RoshChodesh Elul. Today we dance, sing, and rejoice with the Torah, Hashem’s most precious gift to His most precious people. Today is our final chance to show our yedidus. The matter is identified by its ending. How will you “sign off” the Yemei Ratzon? Kinderlach, show Hashem how much you love Him, how you cannot bear to part with Him. End on a strong note today, and take the inspiration with you into the winter months ahead.

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=54&eventName=V%26%2339%3BZot+HaBracha>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Family_Parsha_VZot_HaBracha.asp

V'Zot HaBracha (Deuteronomy 33-34)

Family Parsha V'Zot HaBracha

From this week's Torah Portion

It's not always easy to see things come to an end, especially if we are used to the way they are. But life sometimes brings changes that must be faced.

In this week's Torah portion, the Jewish people have to face the reality of Moses, the only leader they ever knew, leaving the world and Joshua coming to take his place.

Besides this, they have to prepare for a new type of life as they leave their wanderings in the desert and prepare to settle in the Land of Israel.

But every ending also heralds a new beginning. It's not coincidence that this Torah portion, the last in the yearly cycle, is read on Simchat Torah at the same time that we start to read Parshat Breishit, the very first portion.

This is yet another reminder that every ending also brings with it a new beginning to look forward to.

Story

In our story a boy has to face making a big change and discovers how each ending is also a new beginning.

"CHANGES OF ATTITUDE"

If Daniel's neighborhood was anything, it was quiet. It sat on the edge of town far from the downtown bustle, and about the only noises people were used to hearing there were the chirping of birds by day, crickets by night, and of course, the happy laughter of the neighborhood kids.

Daniel and his friends would play for hours after school, running around the quiet side streets and playgrounds that were as familiar to them as their own backyard.

But one morning, that quiet was rudely disturbed by the loud rumble of a diesel engine and the hiss of hydraulic brakes as a big truck slowly backed itself into Daniel's driveway.

"It's here!" squealed Daniel's younger brothers and sisters as they excitedly ran to the big window in the living room to watch the moving truck park and its burly moving crew clamber out. "Come see!" they called out to their older brother.

But Daniel stayed put sitting cross-legged on his bed with his favorite comic book. "I might as well enjoy my last few minutes before we have to *move*," he said, almost spitting out the last word.

Daniel wasn't excited at all about the Friedman family's moving day. In fact, he had been dreading it. He had felt that way ever since his dad had called all the kids into the living room two weeks earlier, announcing how they would all be moving across the state to Waterville County, where Mr. Friedman would be starting a new job.

And now the dreaded day had come.

Daniel was sitting lost in his thoughts until his reverie was disturbed by a knock at the door. He got up to open it and found his mother standing there, looking busy but cheerful. She was holding a lamp. "C'mon downstairs Danny," she said. "The movers are here and they'll need to get into your room. I made you some of your favorite blueberry muffins to snack on while we're waiting," she added, expecting to bring a smile to her son's face. But she was surprised to see instead tears welling up in the corner of Daniel's eyes.

"Mom, I don't want to move!" he burst out. "I like it here. I like my room and I like my friends. And I even like my school."

Mrs. Friedman raised her eyebrows at this last comment, as Daniel had been complaining about school the whole year.

"Now we're ... we're leaving everything!" he went on, tears streaming down his cheeks.

His mom took a deep breath, put down the lamp and sat down next to Daniel at the edge of his bed. "I understand how you must feel," she said softly. "It seems to you like everything's falling apart, doesn't it?"

The boy nodded.

"But Danny, you can look at it another way. While it's true that this is our last day in our old neighborhood, it's also the first day in our new neighborhood! There you'll meet *new* friends, live in a beautiful new house and have all sorts of new parks and playgrounds to explore that you might even like better than the ones here."

Daniel looked up. "I know Mom. But it's just that nothing's going to be the same. I'm scared."

Mrs. Friedman gave her son a reassuring smile. "Not *everything* is going to be different, you know. First of all, your dad and I are going to be with you, and so will your brothers and sisters. Also we'll have almost all the same furniture and you can even set up your room just like it is now. And then there's the most important thing of all.."

"What's that?" Daniel piped in with a new curiosity.

"You're going to be the same 'you,'" said his mom, smiling. "Remember that no matter where you go and whatever happens, that's one thing that will never change."

Daniel smiled as his mom gave him a hug. He felt much better and thought that just maybe it would be fun to move, after all.

Discussion Questions

Ages 3-5

Q. How did Danny feel when he found out that he had to move to a new home?

A. He was upset and scared.

Q. Why?

A. He didn't want to leave his familiar house and friends.

Q. How did he feel after he spoke to his mom?

A. Better, since he realized some things would be the same even in his new house, and that it could be fun to go to a new place.

Ages 6-9

Q. Why didn't Daniel want to move?

Q. Imagine coming home one day really hungry and your mom gives you a choice of eating either something you have eaten many times before, or something new she'd made for the first time which she says is very delicious. Which of these do you think you would choose? Why?

A. There are certain times people prefer to play it safe and go with what they know, even if they don't like it that much. In our story when Daniel claimed that he liked his school even though he had been complaining about it, he was really saying that he preferred the familiar to the unknown.

Q. Can you think of a time when you did something new, or made a change and it ended up being a good thing even if you were hesitant at first? Why do you think you were hesitant at first?

Ages 10 and Up

Q. Our sages teach us that "All beginnings are difficult." What do you think that means? How can knowing this motivate us to grow?

A. We learn from this a fascinating insight. Besides whether a situation itself is difficult or not there is an additional factor that will make us feel that it is. Simply the fact that it is a new situation will by itself make it seem hard. Knowing this can be a big help in trying and sticking with something new if we feel that it will be good for us. We can gain the courage to "stick it out" and see something through if we realize that it's likely to get easier as time goes on.

Q. Sometimes it seems that companies are constantly coming out with products called "new and improved" even when there didn't seem to be any problem with the old product. Why do you think that is? Why do you think people are interested to buy it?

A. While in a sense people prefer what is familiar to them, there is also a feeling of excitement about something "new." Companies try to capitalize on this feeling to increase sales. The feeling itself may be motivated by a vague dissatisfaction in people's lives which they hope the new product will remedy. However, more likely than not this doesn't work. Rather, when a person focuses himself on a more meaningful and spiritually fulfilling lifestyle, he or she will begin to feel more and more satisfied.

Parsha Games

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

K-2

We celebrate that we have finished the reading of our precious Torah and are starting it again

Middah/ Jewish Value

- **Celebrating Simchat Torah**

Activity

This is a time when children join in the main synagogue service, so on the Shabbat before, Shabbat Chol Hamoed, describe what will happen on

Simchat Torah and act out the Hakafot, using mini Torah scrolls.

On Simchat Torah we finish reading the Torah and start to read it again. We are happy that we will be able to start reading it all over again in the coming year.

In the evening and the morning of Simchat Torah we take the Sifrei Torah out of the Aron Kodesh/Ark and carry them around the shul seven times, whilst the congregation join in singing and dancing This is called the 'Hakafot'. Children make flags which they hold as they join in the Hakafot procession.

3-4

We complete the yearly cycle of reading the Torah with this, the final parashah in the Torah. When we have finished reading V'zot Habrachah we immediately follow with a reading of part of parashat Bereishit

Middah/ Jewish Value

- Knowing the names of all the Parashot in the Book of Devarim

Activity

V'zot Habrachah is the last Parashah in the Book of Devarim. Have the children state the order of these parshiyot. Use a tune to sing them.

5-6

We complete the yearly cycle of reading the Torah with this, the final parashah in the Torah. When we have finished reading V'zot Habrachah we immediately follow with a reading of part of parashat Bereishit

Middah/ Jewish Value

- Knowing the names of all the Parashot in the five books of the Torah

Activity

V'zot Habrachah is the last Parashah in the Book of Devarim. Have the children state the order of all 54 parshiyot in the Torah/ Use a tune to sing them.