



SHABBAT ZEST

Parshat Devarim 9th Av 5776

Torah Reading / Haftara:

Artscroll – p.938/1195

Living Torah – p.866/1122

SHABBAT TIMES:

Candle Lighting:
7:35pm

Kabbalat Shabbat
Davening: 7:00pm

Pre Shacharit Parsha
Shiur: 8:45am

Shabbat Morning
Davening: 9:15am

Mincha: Following
Kiddush

Shabbat Ends 9:24pm

NEXT SHABBAT
VA'ESCHANAN
CANDLE LIGHTING
@ 7:35 PM

This week the
Haftorah will be
read by Rabbi
Portnoy

This week's
Kiddush is
sponsored by
Shirley and Lewis
Lane on the
occasion of Sderot
Visitors

Parsha In a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

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."

Haftorah

Isaiah 1:1-27

This week's haftorah is the third of a series of three "haftarot of affliction." These three haftarot are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

Isaiah relays to the Jews a G-dly vision he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against G-d, criticizing them for repeating their errors and not abandoning their sinful ways -- even after having been reprimanded and punished. "Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook G-d; they provoked the Holy One of Israel." Harsh words are employed, comparing the Jewish leaders to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. G-d states his distaste for their sacrifices and offerings which were flavored with pagan customs. "How has she become a harlot, a faithful city; it was once full of justice, in which righteousness would lodge, but now it is a city of murderers..."

Isaiah then speaks gentler words, encouraging the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of justice and kindness towards the needy, orphans and widows, and promising them the best of the land in return for their obedience. "If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow; if they prove to be as red as crimson dye, they shall become as wool." The haftorah concludes with a promise that G-d will eventually reestablish Israel's judges and leaders, when "Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitents through righteousness."

Note: The first word of the haftorah is "Chazon" ("The vision [of Isaiah]"). The Shabbat when this haftorah is read, the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, is thus called "Shabbat Chazon," the "Shabbat of the Vision." According to chassidic tradition, on this Shabbat the soul of every Jew is treated to a "vision" of the third Holy Temple that will be rebuilt with the coming of Moshiach.

UPCOMING EVENTS

6th September - Leslie Kleinman Talk - Reserve your place now by contacting the office with number of tickets to admin@loughtonsynagogue.com. £5 donation per ticket.

27th September - Rabbi Dr Rafi Zarum Talk - Reserve your place by contacting the office with number of tickets to admin@loughtonsynagogue.com. £5 donation per ticket.

30th October – Quiz Night - Prices TBC. Reserve Seats/Tables with the Office now.

12th November - Shabbat UK. Do not miss out!!! This is an extremely popular event so book fast!!! Reserve Seats/Tables with the Office now.

29th January 2017 - The return of Shir. The fabulous klezmer band are coming back for an encore. Reserve Tickets with the Office now.

Recurring Events

Cheder Closed – Resumes 4th September

Yahrzeits for the coming week 9th – 15th Av:

9. Sharon Young – Mother

12. Blanche Bensusan – Husband

12. Heather Lieberman - Mother

15. Stephen Freedman - Father

A Little Deeper – Something to Cry About

This week's portion recalls how the Jewish people cried when the 12 spies returned from scouting the Land of Israel (Deut. 1:45). They cried out of self-pity: "Israel is not going to be an easy land to conquer. To build and settle it will be even harder!" Instead of embracing the challenge, they cried.

As ever, the Torah is talking about something that is part of human nature. When things are tough, it's so much easier to wallow in our own self-pity than to embrace and overcome the challenge.

The Sages tell us that the date the spies returned was the 9th of Av. G-d decreed that because the Jewish people cried on this date for no reason, in future times - on this same date - He would give them good reason to cry. And so, on this date, both Holy Temples in Jerusalem were destroyed, the Jews were expelled from Spain, and many other tragedies befell the Jewish people.

At first glance, it may seem a bit harsh and even vindictive on G-d's part: "You cried for no reason, so I will give you something to cry about."

I believe the point is this: If you are going to cry anyway, then better that you have a reason to do so. In other words, it is better to cry from pain, than from self-pity.

In Jewish thinking, crying is usually considered an important expression of emotion. If you cry to express pain, be it physical or emotional, that's healthy. If you cry in frustration at being unable to achieve what you want, that's also healthy. But crying in self-pity, at your hopeless situation in life, can only be destructive. It undermines your resolve to face the challenges of this world. And so, if you must cry, better that you have good reason to do so.

This is what G-d said to the generation of the spies: If you are going to cry anyway, I will give you a reason to do so - so that your crying can at least be productive.

The same is potentially true for us. If we cry for no reason, G-d may just give us reason to cry. Having recently returned from the shul trip to Poland, a place where Jews had reason to cry for hundreds of years, this point was all the more poignant for me. Having read about the horrors of the holocaust is simply no comparison to walking on the graves of young children, seeing the vastness of the greatest graveyard in Europe with over a million at Auschwitz-Birkenau, it was a reminder for me today of just how good we have it. Surely we have nothing to cry about. Surely we should celebrate how good our lives are. Surely we should celebrate G-d and our faith in our lives.

Surely the Jews in the desert should have celebrated, too. But they chose to cry instead - just as we often choose to cry. And that is truly something to cry about.

Wishing you all a Good Shabbos