

PARSHA SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS VAESCHANAN

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Note: The Shabbos Torah Reading is divided into 7 sections. Each section is called an Aliya [literally: Go up] since for each Aliya, one person "goes up" to make a bracha [blessing] on the Torah Reading.

Sefer Devarim is called "Mishneh Torah - The Review of the Torah" because it repeats over 100 mitzvos already mandated in the previous 4 Books. Rav S.R. Hirsch explains that of the 199 Mitzvos commanded in this book, more than 70 are new. The repeated mitzvos focus on areas that will be of greater immediate concern as they encounter the 7 Nations. For example, the prohibition against idol worship. Although already taught, it needed to be reiterated as the Jews would confront the inhabitants of Canaan, who were idolatrous. Those mitzvos whose application was the same, whether in the desert or in the Land, are not reviewed. In Parshas Vaeschanan Moshe continues his final instructions to the Bnai Yisroel.

1st & 2nd Aliyot: Moshe beseeched Hashem to enter the Land. However, he seemingly blamed the nation when his request was turned down. Moshe explained the foundation of our divine mission, which will be recognized by the other nations. Moshe stressed allegiance to Hashem and the consequences to ourselves and our children if we do not keep the law.

3rd & 4th Aliyot: Moshe designated the Cities of Refuge, and reviewed the entire experience of Revelation.

5th, 6th & 7th Aliyot: Moshe stressed the reaction of the nation after the giving of the Torah, and forewarned them not deviate from the Torah, either to the right or the to the left. The first paragraph of Shema is recorded. (6:10-15) Moshe warned the people about the dangers of prosperity, and directed them to keep the commandments and remember the Exodus. Moshe forewarned them about the dangers of assimilation and told them to always remember that they are the Chosen People.