



The Edible Torah
presents
A Condensed Guide
to the Weekly Torah Readings

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Donations Accepted.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Torah Readings – Genesis / Bereshit.....	5
Torah Readings – Exodus / Shemot.....	7
Torah Readings – Leviticus / Vayikra.....	9
Torah Readings – Numbers / Bamidbar.....	11
Torah Readings – Deuteronomy / Devarim.....	13
Special Holiday Readings.....	15
An Extremely Condensed Guide to Torah Readings.....	20
Appendix: Resources.....	22
Credits, Dedications, Notes and Copyrights.....	23
Credits.....	23
Dedications.....	24
Copyright and Licensing.....	25
Production Note.....	26

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

Moses said further to the whole community of Israelites: This is what the Lord has commanded: Take from among you gifts to the Lord; everyone whose heart so moves him shall bring them. (Exodus 35:4-5)

Like my first publication, "[The Edible Torah](#)", I decided that I would publish this bite-sized morsel free to the public. But this time I decided to make one small change: I am making this book "donationware", with all proceeds going to [Mazon: The Jewish Response to Hunger](#).

Whether you obtained this Guide directly from www.edibletorah.com or received a copy from a friend, please take a moment now to make a donation to this important cause.

<http://www.edibletorah.com/donate.html>.

Any amount is acceptable and appreciated.

Jewish tradition teaches that not even a single letter of the Torah is unnecessary

INTRODUCTION

Despite the title of this Guide, I have an admission to make right up front:

When you want to find out what's in the Torah, nothing beats actually reading the Torah.

There is no Cliff's Notes version, no Reader's Digest edition that is going to give the full depth and detail of this ancient, poetic, layered, multi-faceted text.

Jewish tradition teaches that not even a single letter of the Torah is extraneous or un-necessary, that each and every letter is necessary and carries meaning. Since the Torah has 304,805 letters, which make up 79,847 words, which in turn form 4,845 verses, that is A LOT of meaning. In fact, tradition teaches us that the Torah is "black fire written on white fire" - that what is NOT written, what is between the lines, is as important as the words themselves. And you can't get that from a summary.

So why am I bothering to write "A Condensed Guide to the Weekly Torah Readings", at all?

[The Edible Torah web site](#) is designed to help people create a unique, weekly pot-luck Shabbat experience where friends and family are invited to bring food which matches the themes of the weekly Torah reading. While the Torah itself (or at least a good translation) is a key resource, having a 100,000-foot view of the flow of the narrative is also helpful.

This Guide should give you a handy *amuse-bouche* for what can be found in each weekly Torah reading. If your spiritual appetite craves more than that, I refer you to the "Resources" section at the end.

Each section provides a summary of the entire book of Torah, and then the name of each portion, the chapter and verses it covers, and the main events it describes. I've also included a section for the special readings associated with various holidays. Because that has everyone *fahklumpt!*

“Bereshit”
means “In
the
beginning”

TORAH READINGS - GENESIS / BERESHIT

Book Summary

G-d creates the world, humans mess it up. The stories of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs - Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekkah, Jacob & Leah and Rachel (and Bilhah and Zilpah). The clan of Israel (Jacob) go down to Egypt. Jacob blesses his sons before his death.

Weekly Portions

Bereshit (1:1 - 6:8) Creation of the world; Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel.

Noach (6:9 - 11:32) A flood destroys the world. G-d's rainbow promises that the world will never again be destroyed in its entirety. The tower of Babel.

Lekh Lekha (12:1 - 17:27) Abraham leaves Ur and Haran for the Promised Land. Abraham father's Ishmael by Hagar, Sarah's handmaid. Abraham circumcises all the men in his household as part of the covenant with G-d.

Vayera (18:1 - 22:24) Abraham welcomes three angels into his tent and learns that his wife Sarah will give birth to a son. G-d destroys Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham takes Isaac up to Mount Moriah as a sacrifice, but G-d stops him at the last moment.

Chayyei Sarah (23:1 - 25:18) Sarah dies, and Abraham purchases the ancestral burial place at Macpeleh. Abraham's servant finds a suitable wife, Rebekkah, for Abraham's son Isaac.

Toledot (25:19 - 28:9) Rebekkah gives birth to the twins Esau and Jacob. Isaac is tricked into giving the blessing of the firstborn to Jacob. Jacob leaves, fearing Esau will kill him.

Vayetze (28:10 - 32:3) Jacob's ladder. Jacob works fourteen years and marries Leah and Rachel. Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah give birth to 12 sons and one daughter. Jacob and his family return to their home in Canaan.

TORAH READINGS - GENESIS / BERESHIT (CONT'D)

Summary
of the
book of
Genesis:

G-d
creates
the world,
humans
make a
mess

Vayishlach (32:4 - 36:43) Jacob wrestles with another being and is renamed "Israel". Jacob and Esau reunite after twenty years. Dina is raped and her brothers take revenge. Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin and is buried on the road to Beth El.

Vayeshev (37:1 - 40:23) Out of jealousy, Joseph's brothers strip him of his coat of many colors and sell him into slavery. Joseph does well as a slave in Egypt, but ends up in jail. He begins interpreting dreams for two of Pharaoh's servants.

Miketz (41:1 - 44:17) Joseph successfully interprets Pharaoh's dreams about years of plenty and famine. Joseph is appointed viceroy of Egypt. Jacob's other sons travel to Egypt seeking relief from a famine in Canaan.

Vayigash (44:1 - 47:27) Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, who are dumbfounded. Joseph gathers the family to Egypt.

Vayechi (47:28 - 50:26) Jacob pronounces his blessings on his sons, including Manasseh and Ephraim (Joseph's sons). Jacob dies and is buried in Canaan. Joseph dies at end of book at age 110 and makes his family promise to carry his bones back to Egypt.

“Shemot”
means
“Names”

TORAH READINGS - EXODUS / SHEMOT

Book Summary

The Israelites are enslaved in Egypt. Moses is born, takes a stand, and leaves Egypt in a hurry. At Mt. Sinai he encounters G-d and is ordered back to Egypt. Moses and Aaron negotiate with Pharaoh for the release of the Israelites. The 10 plagues ensue. The Israelites leave, passing through the parting of the Red Sea in the process. Returning to Mt. Sinai, Israelites hear the 10 Commandments, and Moses receives the 2 tablets of the Law. The Israelites commit the sin of the golden calf, but also build the Tabernacle.

Weekly Portions

Shemot (1:1 - 6:1) The Israelites have lived in Egypt 400 years. Moses is born, saved by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in Egyptian court. Moses (now grown) strikes out against cruelty to the slaves, and has to leave Egypt. G-d appears to Moses at the burning bush. Moses returns to Egypt (meeting Aaron on the way). The two try to talk with Pharaoh, but have no luck getting freedom for the slaves.

Va'era (6:2 - 9:35) G-d brings plagues 1-7 upon the Egyptians. G-d hardens Pharaoh's heart and he refuses to let the Israelites go.

Bo (10:1 - 13:16) Plagues 9-10. Pharaoh lets Israelites leave. The laws of Passover are given.

B'shallach (13:17 - 17:16) The parting of the Red Sea. Miriam's Song of the Sea.

Yitro (18:1 - 20:23) Moses gets management advice from Yitro, his father-in law. G-d speaks the 10 commandments to all Israelites. Moses receives the 2 tablets of the law during 40 day stay on Mt. Sinai.

Mishpatim (21:1 - 24:18) Moses instructs the Israelites in the Law, giving more detail than the 10 commandments on everything from how to treat servants to lending to the Sabbatical and Jubilee observances.

TORAH READINGS - EXODUS / SHEMOT (CONT'D)

When you want to find out what's in the Torah, nothing beats actually reading the Torah.

Terumah (25:1 - 27:19) While on Mt. Sinai, G-d gives Moses detailed instructions on how to build the Tabernacle.

Tetzaveh (27:20 - 30:10) G-d tells Moses the details about the jobs of the Priesthood, their clothing, and offerings.

Ki Tissa (30:11 - 34:35) Bezalel is named chief artisan for building the Tabernacle. 2 tablets of the law are finished and Moses returns. Israelites built a golden calf to worship. Moses shatters the Tablets, and punishes idol worshipers. Moses goes back for 40 more days to create 2 new Tablets. Moses sees G-d. Moses returns 2 new Tablets and his face radiant from having seen G-d.

Vayakhel (35:1 - 38:20) The building of the Tabernacle begins. Moses calls for donations and the people bring so much that he then has to ask them to stop.

Pekudei (38:21 - 40:38) All the materials used to build the Tabernacle are accounted for. Aaron and his 4 sons are anointed as priests. G-d's presence descends as a cloud and occupies the Tabernacle.

“Vayikra”
means
“And G-d
called”

TORAH READINGS - LEVITICUS / VAYIKRA

Book Summary

The rules about priests, sacrifices, conduct, food, and behavior are described. Details are given about the Land of Israel and various festivals.

Weekly Portions

Vayikra (1:1 - 5:26) The laws of sacrificial offerings are described, along with adjustments for economic situations and what is not covered by sacrifices (ie: making compensation to the person you sinned against).

Tzav (6:1 - 8:36) Moses prepares Aaron and his sons for the priesthood. They are anointed and a 7-day celebration begins.

Shemini (9:1 - 11:47) Aaron and his sons perform their first sacrifice as priests. Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu bring forth “strange” fire and are consumed by fire from G-d. Laws describing kosher and non-kosher animals are enumerated.

Tazria (12:1 - 13:59) Laws about ritual purity are given - especially in relation to childbirth. Description are given of how to identify and handle tzaarat (deadly disease).

Metzora (13:1 - 15:33) More laws regarding tzaarat are given, along with ritual purity as it relates to various normal body functions versus lesions and other physical conditions.

Acharai Mot (16:1 - 18:30) Aaron and all of Israel grieve the death of Nadab and Abihu (consumed by fire in parsha Shemini). The ritual of Azazel (scapegoat) is described, putting the sins of all Israel on an animal and setting it free in the wilderness.

Kedoshim (19:1 - 20:27) Laws of holiness are covered, including caring for the vulnerable in society. "Love your neighbor as yourself." is given. The laws of inappropriate relationships are given.

TORAH READINGS - LEVITICUS / VAYIKRA (CONT'D)

Vayikra:
The rules
about
priests,
sacrifices,
conduct,
food, and
behavior

Emor (21:1 - 24:23) The special laws applying to priests are given, including whom they can and cannot marry and even the expected behavior of family members of priests. The laws about Festivals are described in detail. Payment for various crimes is outlined.

Behar (25:1 - 26:23) The sabbatical and jubilee years are discussed, with relation to property ownership, servants, and the use of land

Bechukkotai (26:3 - 27:34) A detailed list of blessings and curses are given, along with the 3 kinds of gifts which can be brought to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Vayakhel (35:1 - 38:20) The building of the Tabernacle begins. Moses calls for donations and the people bring so much that he then has to ask them to stop.

Pekudei (38:21 - 40:38) All the materials used to build the Tabernacle are accounted for. Aaron and his 4 sons are anointed as priests. G-d's presence descends as a cloud and occupies the Tabernacle.

“Bamidbar means “in the wilderness” but could also imply “LOST in the wilderness”

TORAH READINGS – NUMBERS / BAMIDBAR

Book Summary

Traveling through the wilderness, this book provides several accountings (census) of the population, as well as describing several uprisings and mis-steps the Israelites make on the 40 year wandering to the Promised Land.

Weekly Portions

Bamidbar (1:1 - 4:20) This portion begins with a census of the people, then another census for the Levites, and then a list of all the stopping points the Israelites made while traveling from Egypt to the Promised land.

Naso (4:21 - 7:89) More on the census of various segments of Israelites. The test for a woman suspected of adultery is given. Rules for people who wish to become Nazarites are provided. The three-fold priestly benediction also appears in this, the longest portion in the Torah.

Behaalotekha (8:1 - 12:16) Passover instructions are given. Israelites complain and are punished. Israelites crave meat, and G-d sends quail until people become sick and die (the “Graves of Craving”). Moses appoints 70 elders to help him lead. Aaron and Miriam speak out against Moses and are punished by G-d.

Shelach Lekha (13:1 - 15:41) Twelve spies are dispatched to survey the land of Canaan. Two of the spies return with a positive report but the other 10 are negative. The Israelites lose hope. G-d punishes the lack of faith by commanding a 40 year wandering in the desert.

Korach (16:1 - 18:32) Korach refuses to accept the leadership of Moses and Aaron. He and those close to him are swallowed by the earth. The leadership of Moses and Aaron is confirmed by G-d.

Chukat (19:1 - 22:1) Miriam dies and the people cry out for water. Moses strikes the rock (instead of speaking to it, as G-d commands) and water comes out, but Moses and Aaron are punished. Aaron dies and the people mourn 30 days.

TORAH READINGS - NUMBERS / BAMIDBAR (CONT'D)

Balak (22:2 - 25:9) Balak, king of Moab, sends the prophet Bilaam to curse the Israelites. Instead, G-d causes Bilaam to bless them. Next, Balak sends Moabite women to tempt Israelites to commit adultery. G-d sends a plague against the Israelites because of this.

Pinchas (25:10 - 30:1) Pinchas acts to stop the plague. Another census is taken. The daughters of Zelophechad argue for their father's inheritance. Moses names Joshua as his successor.

Mattot (30:2 - 32:42) Moses describes the laws for vows (women's and men's). The Israelites strike back at the Midianites and win.

Masei (33:1 - 36:13) Another list of the stops made on the trip from Egypt to the Promised Land is given. The cities of refuge are specified. Details are provided about how marriage affects land owned by Zelophechad's daughters.

The Torah
contains
exactly
4,845
verses.

“Devarim”
means
“words”.

So read
together,
all the
books of
Torah say:

In the
beginning:
names.
And G-d
called:
words.

TORAH READINGS - DEUTERONOMY / DEVARIM

Book Summary

Moses gives his final farewell to the Israelites. He reviews most of the laws from the other parts of Torah, along with a few of his own blessings and warnings.

Weekly Portions

Devarim (1:1 - 3:22) Moses recaps the places and events that brought people to the edge of the Promised Land, and why it's taken 40 years to get there.

Va'etchanan (3:23 - 7:11) Moses repeats the Ten Commandments (although with slight variations) and the rules about the cities of refuge. The first section of the Shema appears here, along with the V'ahavta.

Ekev (7:12 - 11:25) The second paragraph of the V'ahavta is found here. Moses reminds the Israelites of some of their poor choices, including the Golden Calf, the spies, and the complaints about food.

Re'eh (11:26 - 16:17) Moses reiterates that the people have a choice between a blessing and a curse. Kosher law is repeated, along with rules about Sabbatical years, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot.

Shoftim (16:18 - 21:9) Moses warns the people against idolatry, sorcerers, and false prophets. He orders the Israelites to set up fair courts of law once in the Land. The rules for conducting war ethically are given.

Ki Tetze (21:10 - 25:19) Moses reviews a variety of laws intended to strengthen family life and human decency in Israel. Those laws refer to lost property, the educational responsibility of parents to their children, and kindness to animals, among other things. The law regarding tzitzit is given.

Ki Tavo (26:1 - 29:8) This portion repeats the detailed blessings and curses (“Tochechah”), along with rules about tithes and first fruits. Moses tells the people to set up 12 stones and write this instruction on it in all the languages known at the time.

TORAH READINGS - DEUTERONOMY / DEVARIM (CONT'D)

Nitzavim (29:9 - 30:20) Moses continues his farewell speech, explaining that the covenant is made not just with people who are there, but with who have died and those not yet born. Moses predicts that the people will stray from G-d, and will be punished, but will return to G-d and be blessed again.

Vayelekh (31:1 - 30) Joshua is appointed successor to Moses. Moses completes the writing of the Torah. This leads into a farewell poem given by Moses.

Ha'azinu (32:1 - 32:52) Moses teaches a poem/song which will be a guide to the Israelites in the future.

Vezot HaBerakhah (33:1 - 34:12) The end of Moses' final blessing to each tribe of Israel, along with the description of Moses' death on Mount Nebo. Israel now turns to Joshua for leadership.

There are
79,847
words in
the Torah

SPECIAL HOLIDAY READINGS

During various holidays, different parts of the Torah are read instead of the regular sequence. Here is a list of holidays and the Torah readings assigned to them. Please note that (based on my informal research), there are approximately 2,783,543.76 special readings. I believe this is a mystical figure related to the number of Jewish mothers who's hearts will be broken when their sons don't become doctors.

Never the less, I had to do a little bit of editing. I decided to omit listing days when less than a full Torah reading was given, or when the special Torah reading was only for a part of the overall reading - meaning the regular reading was still "there", but (for example) there might be an extra or different maftir reading.

Rosh Hashana (Genesis 21:1 - 21:34 & Numbers 29:1 - 29:6)

(Genesis) Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah. Hagar and Ishmael are sent into the wilderness, where G-d makes a covenant to make him a mighty nation also. Abraham and Abimelech make a pact of peace and cooperation. (Numbers) The laws for Rosh Hashana are described.

Yom Kippur Morning (Leviticus 16:1 - 16:34 & Numbers 29:7 - 29:11)

(Leviticus) The laws for making atonement - both for the high priest himself and for the priest on the part of the nation of Israel - are given. This includes the ritual of Azazel where the sins of the nation are placed on the head of a goat, which is set loose in the wilderness. (Numbers) Details about when to celebrate Yom Kippur and how to mark that time are given.

Each and every Torah contains 304,805 letters

SPECIAL HOLIDAY READINGS (CONT'D)

Sukkot, day 1 and 2 (Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44 & Numbers 29:12 - 29:16)

(Leviticus) Laws about sacrifices are given, along with sacred times - Shabbat, Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. The ritual of using the Lulav (willow, hadar, and palm) is described.

(Numbers) The sacrifice for the first day of Sukkot is described.

Sukkot, day 3 (Chol ha-Moed Day 1) (Numbers 29:17 - 29:22)

The sacrifice for the second day of Sukkot is described

Sukkot, day 4 (Chol ha-Moed Day 2) (Numbers 29:20 - 29:25)

The sacrifice for the third day of Sukkot is described

Sukkot, day 5 (Chol ha-Moed Day 3) (Numbers 29:23 - 29:28)

The sacrifice for the fourth day of Sukkot is described

Sukkot, day 6 (Chol ha-Moed Day 4) (Numbers 29:26 - 29:31)

The sacrifice for the fifth day of Sukkot is described

Sukkot when Shabbat falls on days 3-6 (Exodus 33:12 - 34:26 & Numbers 29:x - 29:x)

(Exodus) Moses asks to see G-d. The second set of Tablets of Law are created. Various commandments for festivals, sacrifices and "first fruits" are discussed. (Numbers) See the description from the specific day 3-6 above)

Sukkot, last day "Hoshana Raba" (Numbers 29:26 - 29:34)

The sacrifice for the fifth day of Sukkot is described

SPECIAL HOLIDAY READINGS (CONT'D)

Shmini Atzeret (Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17 & Numbers 29:35 - 30:1)

(Deuteronomy) Laws are given on tithes, the Sabbatical year (including freeing servants), and the 3 ingathering festivals: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. (Numbers) Details the activities for the 8th day of Sukkot.

Simchat Torah (Deuteronomy 33:1 - 34:12 & Numbers 29:35 - 30:1)

Recounts Moses final blessing on the tribes of Israel, which appears as a song or poem. Then the last moments of Moses' life are recounted.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY READINGS (CONT'D)

Pesach, Day 1 (Exodus 12:21 - 12:51 & Numbers 28:16 - 28:25)

(Exodus) The first Pesach offering is described, while the Israelites were still in Egypt. Their departure is also detailed. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

Pesach, Day 2 (Leviticus 22:26 - 23:44 & Numbers 28:16 - 28:25)

(Leviticus) The appropriate age of a sacrificial animal is given. Laws for the "fixed times" are described including Shabbat, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

Pesach Shabbat, when it falls on days 3-6 (Exodus 33:12 - 34:26 & Numbers 28:19 - 28:25)

(Exodus) Moses asks to see G-d. The second set of Tablets of Law are created. Various commandments for festivals, sacrifices and "first fruits" are discussed. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

Pesach, Day 7 (Exodus 13:17 - 15:26 & Numbers 28:19 - 28:25)

(Exodus) The parting of the Red Sea is described, along with Miriam's Song of the Sea and the sweetening of the waters at Marah. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

Pesach, Day 8 (Deuteronomy 15:19 - 16:17 & Numbers 28:19 - 28:25)

(Deuteronomy) Laws are given on the Sabbatical year (including freeing servants), and the 3 in-gathering festivals: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

Pesach, Day 8 if it falls on Shabbat (Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17 & Numbers 28:19 - 28:25)

(Deuteronomy) Laws are given on tithes, the Sabbatical year (including freeing servants), and the 3 in-gathering festivals: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. (Numbers) Details of Passover observance in the land of Israel are given.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY READINGS (CONT'D)

Shavuot, Day 1 (Exodus 19:1 - 20:23 & Numbers 28:26 - 28:31)

(Exodus) The revelation at Mt. Sinai is described, including the 10 commandments. (Numbers) The details for "the feast of weeks" is given.

Shavuot, Day 2 (Deuteronomy 15:19 - 16:17 & Numbers 28:26 - 28:31)

(Deuteronomy) Laws are given on the Sabbatical year (including freeing servants), and the 3 in-gathering festivals: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. (Numbers) The details for "the feast of weeks" is given.

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AN EXTREMELY CONDENSED GUIDE TO TORAH READINGS

Genesis / Bereshit

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B'shallach (13:17 - 17:16) The parting of the Red Sea. Miriam's Song of the Sea.

Yitro (18:1 - 20:23) Moses gets advice from Yitro, his father-in law, to appoint judges so as to ease his burden. G-d speaks the 10 commandments to all Israelites. Moses receives the 2 tablets of the law on Mount Sinai.

Mishpatim (21:1 - 24:18) Moses instructs the Israelites in the Law, giving more detail than the 10 commandments on everything from how to treat servants to lending to the Sabbatical and Jubilee observances.

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Ki Tissa (30:11 - 34:35) Bezalel is named chief artisan for building the Tabernacle. 2 tablets of the law are finished and Moses starts down the mountain. Meanwhile, the Israelites have built a golden calf to worship. Moses sees it and shatters the tablets of the law, and proceeds to kill the idol worshipers. Moses goes back up the mountain with 2 more tablets, but asks to see G-d as part of the process. Moses returns from the mountain with 2 new tablets of the law and his face radiant from having seen G-d.

Vayakhel (35:1 - 38:20) The building of the Tabernacle begins. Moses calls for donations and the people bring so much that he then has to ask them to stop.

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Leviticus / Vayikra

Vayikra (1:1 - 5:26) The laws of sacrificial offerings are described, along with adjustments for economic situations and what is not covered by sacrifices (ie: making compensation to the person you sinned against).

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Tazria (12:1 - 13:59) Laws about ritual purity are given – especially in relation to childbirth. Description are given of how to identify and handle tzaarat (like leprosy).

Metzora (13:1 - 15:33) More laws regarding tzaarat are given, along with ritual purity as it relates to various normal body functions versus lesions and other physical conditions.

Acharai Mot (16:1 - 18:30) Aaron and all of Israel grieve the death of Nadab and Abihu (consumed by fire in parsha Shemini). The ritual of Azazel (scapegoat) is described, putting the sins of all Israel on an animal and setting it free in the wilderness.

Leviticus / Vayikra (cont'd)

Kedoshim (19:1 - 20:27) Laws of holiness are covered, including caring for the vulnerable in society. "Love your neighbor as yourself." is given. The laws of inappropriate relationships are given.

Emor (21:1 - 24:23) The special laws applying to priests are given, including whom they can and cannot marry and even the expected behavior of family members of priests. The laws about Festivals are described in detail. Payment for various crimes is outlined.

Behar (25:1 - 26:23) The sabbatical and jubilee years are discussed, with relation to property ownership, servants, and the use of land.

Bechukkotai (26:3 - 27:34) A detailed list of blessings and curses are given, along with the 3 kinds of gifts which can be brought to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Vayakhel (35:1 - 38:20) The building of the Tabernacle begins. Moses calls for donations and the people bring so much that he then has to ask them to stop.

Pekudei (38:21 - 40:38) All the materials used to build the Tabernacle are accounted for. Aaron and his 4 sons are anointed as priests. G-d's presence descends as a cloud and occupies the Tabernacle.

Numbers / Bamidbar

Bamidbar (1:1 - 4:20) This portion begins with a census of the people, then another census for the Levites, and then a list of all the stopping points the Israelites made while traveling from Egypt to the Promised land.

Naso (4:21 - 7:89) More on the census of various segments of Israelites. The test for a woman suspected of adultery is given. Rules for people who wish to become Nazarites are provided. The three-fold priestly benediction also appears in this, the longest portion in the Torah.

Behaalotekha (8:1 - 12:16) Passover instructions are given. Israelites complain and are punished. Israelites crave meat, and G-d sends quail until people become sick and die (the "Graves of Craving"). Moses appoints 70 elders to help him lead, and 2 begin to prophesy. Aaron and Miriam speak out against Moses and are punished by G-d.

Shelach Lekha (13:1 - 15:41) Twelve spies are dispatched to survey the land of Canaan. Two of the spies return with a positive report but the other 10 are negative. The Israelites lose hope. G-d punishes everyone by commanding a 40 year wandering in the desert.

Korach (16:1 - 18:32) Korach refuses to accept the leadership of Moses and Aaron. He and those close to him are swallowed by the earth. The leadership of Moses and Aaron is confirmed by G-d.

Chukat (19:1 - 22:1) The laws regarding the red heifer are given. Miriam dies and the people cry out for water. Moses strikes the rock (instead of speaking to it, as G-d commands) and water gushes forth but Moses and Aaron are punished. Aaron dies and the people mourn 30 days.

Balak (22:2 - 25:9) Balak, king of Moab, sends the prophet Bilaam to curse the Israelites. Instead, G-d causes Bilaam to bless them. Next, Balak sends Moabite women to tempt Israelites to commit adultery. G-d sends a plague against the Israelites because of this.

Pinchas (25:10 - 30:1) Pinchas acts to stop the plague. Another census is taken. The daughters of Zelophechad argue for their father's inheritance. Moses names Joshua as his successor.

Mattot (30:2 - 32:42) Moses describes the laws for vows (women's and men's). The Israelites strike back at the Midianites and win.

Masei (33:1 - 36:13) Another list of the stops made on the trip from Egypt to the Promised Land is given. This portion also explains the cities of refuge to be built. Details are provided about how land given to Zelophechad's daughters.

Deuteronomy / Devarim

Devarim (1:1 - 3:22) Moses recaps the events that brought people to the edge of the Promised Land, and why it's taken 40 years to get there.

Va'etchanan (3:23 - 7:11) Moses repeats the Ten Commandments (although with slight variations) and the rules about the cities of refuge. The first section of the Shema appears here, along with the V'ahavta.

Ekev (7:12 - 11:25) The second paragraph of the V'ahavta is found here. Moses reminds the Israelites of some of their poor choices, including the Golden Calf, the spies, and the complaints about food.

Re'eh (11:26 - 16:17) Moses reiterates that the people have a choice between a blessing and a curse. Kosher law is repeated, along with rules about Sabbatical years, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot.

Shoftim (16:18 - 21:9) Moses warns the people against idolatry, sorcerers, and false prophets. He orders the Israelites to set up fair courts of law once in the Land. The rules for conducting war ethically are given.

Ki Tetze (21:10 - 25:19) Moses reviews a variety of laws intended to strengthen family life and human decency in Israel. Those laws refer to lost property, the educational responsibility of parents to their children, and kindness to animals, among other things. The law regarding tzitzit is given.

Ki Tavo (26:1 - 29:8) This portion repeats the detailed blessings and curses ("Tochechah"), along with rules about tithes and first fruits. Moses tells the people to set up 12 stones and write this instruction on it in all the languages known at the time.

Nitzavim (29:9 - 30:20) Moses continues his farewell speech, explaining that the covenant is made not just with people who are there, but with who have died and those not yet born. Moses predicts that the people will stray from G-d, and will be punished, but will return to G-d and be blessed again.

Vayeilekh (31:1 - 30) Joshua is appointed successor to Moses. Moses completes the writing of the Torah. This leads into a farewell poem given by Moses.

Ha'azinu (32:1 - 32:52) Moses teaches a poem/song which will be a guide to the Israelites in the future.

VeZot HaBerakha (33:1 - 34:12) The end of Moses' final blessing to each tribe of Israel, along with the description of Moses' death on Mount Nebo. Israel now turns to Joshua for leadership.

APPENDIX: RESOURCES

As I mentioned at the very start of this Guide, there is really no substitute for actually reading the Torah. Which is not to say that's a trivial task or the work of one afternoon whilst tanning leisurely on the beach.

A key (in my opinion) is having a translation or two that you find accessible and readable. Another key is having a few sources of insight or questions that can focus your reading on specific parts of the text, and can help understand the deeper meanings and connections to other themes, stories and elements.

Books

- [Artscroll Interlinear Chumash](#)
- [Commentary on the Torah](#) by Richard Friedman
- [Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary](#)
- [Teaching Torah](#) by ARE press
- [The Five Books of Moses...](#) " translation by Everett Fox
- [The Torah: A Women's Commentary](#)

Websites

- Aish HaTorah - <http://www.aish.com/tp/>
- Chabad - http://www.chabad.org/parshah/default_cdo/jewish/Parshah.htm
- Hillel Torah Commentary - <http://www.hillel.org/jewish/archives/default>
- JTS Commentary - http://www.jtsa.edu/Conservative_Judaism/JTS_Torah_Commentary.xml
- My Jewish Learning - http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Weekly_Torah_Portion.shtml
- The Velveteen Rabbi - <http://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/VR-divrei-torah.html>
- URJ Torah Commentary - <http://urj.org/learning/torah/>

CREDITS, DEDICATIONS, NOTES AND COPYRIGHTS

I almost put this at the beginning of the guide. Then I realized that it would annoy those who would only skip over it anyway, and I didn't want to annoy anyone who might otherwise appreciate and gain from this guide; and anyone who wanted to read this part would be happy to flip to the back anyway.

So here you are. You are probably a friend of mine already. If not, I consider you one now. Drop me a line and let me know how you are doing. We probably ought to catch up.

Credits

I cannot say it better than Fred Rogers did in 1997, as he accepted a lifetime achievement award: "All of us have special ones who have loved us into being..." Listing all the people who have loved me (and taught me, and in some cases dragged me against my will) to this point in my life would be impossible.

Specific to this project,, however, there are a few people who deserve mention:

- Naomi Chase for being the creative spark behind this entire process; for being patient enough to continue to listen to my ideas and wait for me to learn a fraction of what she already knows; and for being generous enough to allow me to take this idea, one of her children, and run with it.
- Rabbi Susan Stone for providing insight and being a reliable reality check as the web site and this guide took shape. And for offering to serve as editor when it was clearly a task nobody else wanted.
- Phil Setnik for providing motivation, feedback, and a halachic "reality check" that has become indispensable. We don't hold in the same place, but I'm proud to be standing on the bridge with you.

Take from
among
you gifts
to the
Lord;
everyone
whose
heart so
moves
him shall
bring
them

[they] said
to Moses,
"The
people are
bringing
more than
is needed
for the
tasks [...] to be
done.

Dedications

To Debbie:

As with anything I have ever done that mattered, this is dedicated to my best friend and my closest confidant. Even after a score of years, you still mean more to me than everything else.

And to the Fink Family:

Beyond the fact that this *Guide* was created based on your insight, your dedication and determination as a family are an inspiration. It is a privilege to be part of your Jewish Journey.

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