



# תורתנו

# Our Torah

June 2007  
Sivan / Tammuz 5767

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## Torah Portions This Month

**2 JUNE: BEHA'ALOT'CHA**  
**NUMBERS 8:1-12:16**



**9 JUNE: SH'LACH L'CHA**  
**NUMBERS 13:1-15:41**



**16 JUNE: KORACH**  
**NUMBERS 16:1-18:32**



**23 JUNE: CHUKKAT**  
**NUMBERS 19:1-22:1**



**30 JUNE: BALAK**  
**NUMBERS 22:2-25:9**



Aaron prepares the menorah. The Israelites complain before God, who causes a fire to break out and destroy the outskirts of the camp. Moses is upset by their complaints and cries to God that he cannot cope with such a people by himself. God tells Moses to gather 70 elders to aid him. Two of them, Eldad and Medad, begin to prophesy in the camp. Joshua advises Moses to restrain them, but Moses says, "Would that all the people of Adonai were Prophets, [and] that Adonai would set the divine spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29).

Miriam and Aaron speak ill of Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married. As punishment, Miriam is stricken with leprosy. Aaron pleads with Moses to intercede with God. Moses does so, and God agrees to limit her punishment to seven days only. The Israelites next set up camp in the wilderness of Paran.

Sh'lach L'cha tells the story of the 12 spies sent by Moses to spy out the land. They return after 40 days with a huge cluster of grapes. Ten of them bring a bad report of the land, saying that the Israelites would be unable to conquer it. Two of them, Joshua and Caleb, bring a good report. The people are disheartened by the bad report and God punishes that whole generation to wander in the wilderness for 40 years and die there. The next generation will conquer the land.

In the wilderness, the Israelites come across a man gathering wood on Shabbat. He is brought before the whole community and stoned to death.

Korach tells of the rebellion of Korach, Datan and Abiram against Moses and Aaron. God causes the earth to open and swallow Korach and his followers. The other rebels are destroyed by fire.

Moses puts the twelve tribal standards inside the Sanctuary. The following morning, Aaron's rod has blossomed, confirming the Levites' status.

In Chukat, 38 years pass and Miriam dies. Once again, the people are without water, and rail against Moses and Aaron. God tells them to take the rod and order the rock to yield water. Moses, however, strikes the rock twice. Water comes forth, but God declares that the actions of Moses and Aaron demonstrate a lack of faith. Therefore, they will not enter the Promised Land.

At Mount Hor, Aaron dies. The Israelites mourn his death for 30 days. Eleazar, Aaron's son, succeeds him as High Priest.

The Israelites defeat Arad at Hormah. On the journey around Edom, the people again protest against God and Moses. God sends a plague of serpents upon them. Many die. Moses makes a bronze seraph figure, which promotes healing when looked at. The plague abates.

The Israelites do battle with Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, the King of Bashan.

Finally, this month, Balak tells the story of the seer, Balaam, summoned by Balak, king of Moab, to curse the Israelites. After adventures along the road with his ass, which God causes to talk, God makes Balaam bless the Israelites, including the words, "How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel."

## Forthcoming Services

02/06/2007	11:00. Shabbat Service. This service will include the Bat Mitzvah of Susannah Taylor
09/06/2007	11:00. Shabbat Service. This service will include the Benei Mitzvah of Jessica and Rory Wood.
16/06/2007	11:00. Shabbat Service. This service will include the Aufruf for the forthcoming wedding of Joanna Rouse and David Newland.
22/06/2007	20:15. Shabbat Service. Guitar led, Jacqui Winter.
23/06/2007	11:00. Shabbat Service. This service will include the Bat Mitzvah of Joanna May Sutton-Klein
24/06/2007	14:30. Wedding of Joanna Rouse and David Newland.
30/06/2007	11:00. Shabbat Service. This service will include the Bar Mitzvah of Justin Fox, and will be followed by a Lunch & Learn.

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*Four Benei Mitzvah and a Wedding this month. Almost sounds like the name of a film!*

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## Our Prayers

The Shema is the Jewish declaration of faith in the One God. Often, the ע in שמע and the י in יהוה are enlarged. Together, they spell out the word 'Eyd' which means 'witness'. So, by saying the Shema we witness to God's unity.

A legend tells that when Jacob (Israel) lay on his deathbed, he called his twelve sons around him to reassure him that they would continue his belief in the one God. They replied, 'Hear, O father Israel, Adonai is our God too, the one God.' Jacob was so relieved that he murmured, 'Praised for ever be God's glorious majesty.' This second, non-Biblical line of the Shema is often said quietly, to remember this story.

The Talmud comments (TB Berachot 54a):

We are obligated to praise God for bad things just as we praise God for good, as it is said: (Deut. 6) You shall love your Eternal God with all your heart, etc.

With all your heart – with your two inclinations, the good inclination and the evil inclination.

And with all your soul – even if God takes away your soul

And with all your might – with all your possessions, or another explanation is that for every measure God metes out to you, you must thank God...

Rabbi Eliezer says: Why does it need to say both with all your soul and with all your might? So that for people who value their lives more than their possessions it says, with all your soul, but for people who value their possessions more than their lives it says, with all your might.

Rabbi Akiva says: With all your soul means even if God takes away your soul.