

Parashat Re'eh

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Taught By:

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SUMMARY

The Torah portion of *Re'eh* begins with Moshe reminding the Israelites of the choice that is set before them. They may choose a path of blessing by doing *mitzvot* or they may choose not to follow G-d's directions which G-d tells them will lead to curses.

Moshe tells them that when they enter the promised land, half the tribes will stand on top of Mount *Gerizim* and loudly recite blessings and the other tribes will say "amen." Then the other tribes--while standing on Mount *AyvaI*--will recite the curses and the tribes on top of *Gerizim* will recite "amen!"

Moshe also warns the Israelites about praying to idols and false prophets and calls for them to worship G-d in just one place. He reviews laws for the eating of animals, for supporting the poor, for the Sabbatical year, for the festivals, and for the freeing of slaves.

Deuteronomy 13:5 reminds us to follow just our one G-d and not other gods. It says:

Walk behind A-donai, your G-d, and be amazed by G-d, and keep G-d's *mitzvot* , and listen to G-d's voice, and serve G-d, and stick with G-d.

What do you think it might mean to "walk behind A-donai your G-d"? If they were amazed by G-d?

SHAUNI: "Walking behind G-d" means we should follow G-d's rules, but carve our own paths. I think that the Torah is telling us to follow the *mitzvot* that G-d has given us, and to do these *mitzvot* in ways that help other people or serve G-d. Being amazed by G-d could mean to show *kavod* or respect for G-d. G-d sometimes makes choices that I don't agree with--like the flood or like testing Avraham. Being amazed by G-d means trying to understand that G-d has good reasons for what G-d does, even if we don't always understand them. I also think that being amazed by G-d could mean being curious and paying attention to what people and the world need and trying to help.

In this same *parasha* Deuteronomy 15:7 says:

If there should be a needy person among your brothers and sisters, within any of your gates, in your land that A-donai your G-d is giving to you, do not harden your heart and do not shut your hand to your needy sister or brother.

Shouldn't it be obvious that we need to help out poor people? Why do you think the Torah gives us this as a rule?



SHAUNI: I think it is good that there is a rule that we have to help poor people. People might know that it is the right thing to help, but sometimes they don't because they feel like all of their money or food belongs to them and they don't need to share, or they just get busy and forget to share. I actually think there should be a law that people get ticketed or fined if they can help a poor person and they don't. The money that is collected from these fines could then go towards helping diaper banks or food banks or community gardens around the world.