

A Weekly Message of Torah from Rabbi Rheins

What Now?

In this week's Torah portion, *Ki Tavo* (Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8), we find important passages with lessons that guided our ancestors as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. Many of these passages contain detailed lists of blessings and curses; consequences for actions. The laws and norms were to be written and posted for all to see on large plastered stones. Most significantly, the instruction was to write the words "*Ba'eir hei'teiv, clearly, distinctly-- בְּאֵר הֵיטִיב* (Deut. 27:8)."

Throughout the ages, sages and scholars have disagreed as to what was written on the stones. Some said it was the entire Torah, others that it was just the 613 commandments of the Torah. The Talmud focuses on the phrase *Ba'eir hei'teiv* and concludes that whatever was written on the stones was written in seventy languages so everyone could understand them (TBSota 32a).

This week on Tuesday, Israelis went to the polls to vote. Now, just because there was an election does not mean that we'll know which parties will form the ruling coalition in the Knesset. There are 120 members in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and a ruling coalition needs at least 61 in order to pass legislation and govern effectively. Last April, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not able to gather 61 members to his coalition so new elections had to be called and were held on Tuesday. Since there is no clear winner, we all expect that the negotiations will carry on for some time. The uncertainty causes a great deal of drama and concern. But let's be honest, it's not as though we are unfamiliar with election uncertainty in the United States!

What's most important is to focus on the question: What now? And for all of our intense interest in the ultimate results of the elections (here in the United States and in Israel), the Torah emphasizes that the real significance rests with each of

us; our individual lives and our actions. That is why the ancestral message was written clearly in multiple languages. Each person has a vital role to play. Our personal decisions and choices are going to determine the direction and quality of our lives---and ultimately our nation. Our sense of well-being, our health, our self-esteem, our reputation, the strength of our relationships and our legacy are all influenced by how we answer: What now?

This is the time for each of us to reflect on the past, reaffirm more intently our values, and renew our commitment to going forward in to the New Year with clarity and a sense of purpose. To help that reflection and renewal process, please consider attending the *Selichot* program and service this Saturday night. Here's more information:

Selichot Program & Service, Saturday, September 21 at 7:00 pm

The *Selichot* program and service help us to prepare ourselves emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually for a transformative experience during the High Holy Days. This year's *Selichot* is on Saturday evening, September 21. The study program will introduce the new initiative Colorado Clean Speech: a joint effort by several Jewish organizations to address the problem of *leshon hara*, hurtful gossip, slander and inflammatory speech.

After the program we will join together for a meaningful *Selichot* service which concludes with the sounding of the shofar and the dressing of our Torah scrolls in their High Holy Day white covers. The *Selichot* program and service are open to all and free to all. Please invite your friends to join us!

Study Program	7:00 – 7:45 pm
Refreshments	7:45 – 8:00 pm
Service	8:00 – 8:45 pm

Shabbat Shalom v'Shanah Tovah!

Rick

Rabbi Rick Rheins

