



## Parshas Beha'aloscho

For the week ending 14 Sivan 5759 (Inside Israel) / 21 Sivan 5759  
(Outside Israel)  
28 & 29 May 1999 (Inside Israel) / 4 & 5 June 1999  
(Inside Israel)

### Overview

**A**haron is taught the method for kindling the menorah. Moshe sanctifies the levi'im to work in the Mishkan. They replace the firstborn, who were disqualified after sinning through the golden calf. The levi'im are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, Hashem commands Moshe concerning the korban Pesach. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, allowing a "second chance" to offer the korban Pesach one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements. The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified. Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the eruv rav — the mixed Egyptian multitude who joined the Jewish People in the Exodus — some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. Hashem tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. Hashem sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. Hashem explains that Moshe's prophecy is superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with tzara'at as if she had gossiped about her brother. (Because Miriam is so righteous, she is held to an incredibly high standard). Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

### Insights

#### THE RIGHT PLACE

**"According to the word of Hashem they would encamp, and according to the word of Hashem they would journey" (9:23)**

**A**baby traveling in its mother's arms. The ultimate feeling of security. The world beyond those arms may be dangerous. A thousand threats may lurk beyond those arms, but the baby feels only the warmth and security of its mother's love.

When G-d created the world, He employed thirty-nine types of creativity. Those thirty-nine types of creative activity find their parallel in the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tent of Meeting) which the Jewish People took with them during their wanderings in the Sinai desert.

When we keep Shabbat we are refraining from those thirty-nine categories of creative endeavor. The definition of what the Torah calls *melacha* (inaccurately translated as "work") derives from the paradigm of the *Mishkan*.

There's a fascinating problem which the Talmud addresses in Tractate Shabbat: We know that on Shabbat there is a prohibition against demolishing a building. However, there are certain limitations to this prohibition. The Torah prohibition of demolition on Shabbat is limited to when the intention of the demolition is to rebuild on the same spot. If you intended to rebuild the same building down the block, you would not have transgressed a Torah law.

Now, here's the problem. As we know, the Jewish People didn't stay in one place during their 40 years in the desert. They made 42 different stops. Some were for a few hours, whereas some were for years. If the Torah prohibition of demolition is derived from the *Mishkan*, why is it prohibited only to demolish with the intention to rebuild in the *same place*? The law doesn't

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fit the paradigm. The paradigm of life in the desert was that the *Mishkan* was demolished, broken down into its parts and reassembled *somewhere else*. According to the principle that *melacha* parallels the paradigm of the *Mishkan*, the Torah prohibition against demolition on Shabbat should apply even if the intention is to build in another place, not just on the same spot.

The Talmud answers "According to the word of Hashem they would encamp and according to the word of Hashem would they journey."

The "place" of the Jewish People in the desert was "according to the word of Hashem." The entire Creation is nothing more than the expression of G-d's Will — His Word. The fact of "place" is nothing more than the expression of G-d's Will. Nowhere exists except because G-d wills it to be, because there is no existence outside the Will of G-d. Thus, wherever G-d wills the Jewish People to be defines their place. When they moved "by the word of Hashem," in ultimate terms they stayed in the same place.

A baby in its mother's arms, traveling on a train from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The mother has traveled many miles. Relative to the mother, however, the baby hasn't moved.

Sometimes we look at our lives and think "I'm in the wrong place." "If only I lived in Bel Air." "If only I had a million dollars." "If only I was taller/shorter/cleverer/better looking/more famous." "If only I had a Porsche instead of a Subaru." If we really thought about it, we'd realize that we're just where we're supposed to be.

In G-d's arms.

#### THE SEVEN BOOKS OF MOSES

**"When the Ark would journey, Moshe said 'Arise Hashem, and let Your enemies be scattered'...And when it rested, he would say, 'Return, O, Hashem the myriad thousands of Israel'" (10:35-36)**

Everyone knows that there are five books of the Torah. The Pentateuch. Or are there?

The Talmud tells us that there are actually *seven* books of the Torah. Not only that, but the above two verses constitute an entire book by themselves. What we know as the book of Bamidbar really consists of *three* separate books.

How can it be that just two verses can have the status of an entire book of the Torah?

These two verses are like a history book of the Jewish People, a microcosm of everything that will happen: "When the Ark would journey..." The Jewish People have spent more time in exile, *journeying* from one land to another, than we have spent in our homeland. It is to this phase of Jewish history that Moshe addresses his prayer "Arise Hashem and let Your enemies be scattered." When the Jewish People are hounded from one country to

another, in peril of their lives, Moshe prays that Hashem will not let His people be destroyed.

"And when it rested..." When the Jewish People do find calm and rest, we face another and more pernicious enemy. Rest brings complacency. We forget Who it is who really protects us, placing our trust instead in politicians, in mere mortals who cannot save us. With regard to this period of Jewish history Moshe prays "Return, Hashem, the myriad thousands of Israel." In the seeming calm of post-war acceptance, there will be a generation of people who have no desire to be Jewish, and no idea what it means to be Jewish. It is to this generation that Moshe turns his prayer to G-d, beseeching Him to return the myriad thousands who have been swallowed up and assimilated amongst the nations.

Sources:

*The Right Place* - Talmud Shabbat 31b, Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz - Sichot Mussar 5733/Essay 23, Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

*The Seven Books Of Moses* - Talmud Shabbat 117, Rabbi M.Z. Zachs in *Iturei Torah*

## Haftarah: Zecharya 2:14 - 4:7

This Haftarah, describes Zecharia's prophetic vision of an allegorical menorah. Thus, it is in keeping with this week's Parsha, which describes the command to prepare and light the candles of the menorah in the Sanctuary.

Zecharia's prophecy begins with Yehoshua, the *kohen gadol*, who served in the early years of the Second Temple. Then he receives a vision of a golden menorah with a large vessel of oil situated above it, from which oil is pouring into the seven lamps of the menorah. Two olive trees grow there, one on each side of the menorah.

This prophecy is associated with the building of the Second Temple after Babylonian exile. At the time of this prophecy, the building of the Second Temple had been halted. The prophet is told that this vision means that the building will commence by the good will of Darius, and not by conflict. According to some commentaries, the menorah represents the house of the Hasmoneans who would reign in the second half of the period, after the miracle of Chanuka.

In the beginning of the Haftarah G-d proclaims "Sing and rejoice, O Daughter of Zion, for I will appear and dwell among you."

This means that we will "sing and rejoice" as a result of perceiving the coming of the future salvation. Happiness and rejoicing is a preparation towards the Divine revelation we will experience at the time. Happiness and contentment are fundamental conditions for the Divine presence. Some people think that the Torah demands the gloomy life we see in other religions. The truth is just the opposite: In Jewish perspective, happiness is a requirement. On a hot day, eating an ice cream is a tool by which we worship G-d, because with happiness and good spirit we can nurture our love and compassion towards G-d.

Teshuvah M'Ahava

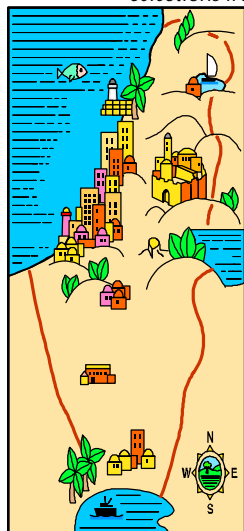
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# LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



## AKKO

Although this ancient coastal city is not mentioned in Tanach, its name comes up often in Talmudic and Midrashic literature. In Bereishet (1:10) Rashi cites the Midrashic explanation for the Torah's plural term "seas" to describe the inter-connected mass of water forming the earth's seas and oceans: "The taste of a fish caught in Akko is not the same as that of a fish in Aspamia" — a reference to the fishing done in Akko, which even visitors to the city today can appreciate.

Akko as a port appears in the Talmudic narrative of Nikanor's gate for the Beit Hamikdash, which was cast overboard in a storm and miraculously surfaced as the boat reached Akko (Mesechta Yoma 38a). This city was also designated as Eretz Yisrael's northern border regarding the laws of an agent bringing a divorce document from husband to wife (Mesechta Gittin 2a), and Tosefot suggests that one part of the city was actually outside the border.

This Old Town of Akko, its walls a reminder of Napoleon's failed attempt to conquer the city as a stepping stone to establishing an Eastern Empire, is a popular tourist attraction. It contains the Citadel, erected by the Turks at the end of the 18th century on Crusader foundations of the 13th century, where the British imprisoned and executed Jewish underground fighters. It now serves as a monument to the struggle for liberation.

The New Town is populated mostly by immigrants who arrived after statehood, but also has a sizable Arab community.

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Production Design: Lev Seltzer ∞