

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TAVO · 21 ELUL 5776 · SEP. 24, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 51

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE MAN WHO HAS IT ALL

“...you shall only be above and not below...” (28:13)

Someone who lives his life pampered by a brace of Bentley Continentals, a super-yacht, and an executive jet with its own Jacuzzi, is not going to be overly excited when he takes delivery of his third Bentley.

But give him a paradise island in the South Pacific with golden beaches, thousands of gently swaying palms, and year-round gorgeous climate, and he'll sense he really went up in the world.

On the other hand, someone who usually takes the bus to work will feel he really made it when takes deliv-

ery of his new Honda Accord.

It all depends on your expectations.

“...you shall only be above and not below”

The enormous spiritual and physical bounty that the Torah promises the Jewish People if we faithfully observe all its precepts will not be a merely incremental improvement, but it will be great enough to satisfy even the man who has it all.

• Sources: based on the *Bikurei Aviv* in *Mayana shel Torah*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

When *Bnei Yisrael* dwell in the Land of Israel, the first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the *kohen* in a ceremony expressing recognition that it is G-d who guides Jewish history throughout all ages. (This passage forms one of the central parts of the Haggadah that we read at the Passover Seder.) On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and seventh years of the seven-year *shemita* cycle, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner. With this *mitzvah*, Moshe concludes the commandments that G-d has told him to give to the Jewish People. Moshe exhorts them to walk in G-d's ways because they are set aside as a treasured people to G-d. When *Bnei*

Yisrael cross the Jordan River they are to make a new commitment to the Torah. Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them in the world's seventy primary languages, and they are to be covered with a thin layer of plaster. Half the tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim and half on Mount Eval, and the *levi'im* will stand in a valley between the two mountains. There the *levi'im* will recite 12 commandments and all the people will say “amen” to the blessings and the curses. Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon *Bnei Yisrael*. These blessings are both physical and spiritual. But if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

BAVA KAMA 114 - 119

“One should conclude Torah study with a ‘good word’.”

The concluding *sugya* in our *masechet* of Bava Kama teaches a way to determine when taking another’s property is considered theft and when it is not. The underlying principle is that when the owner is “*makpid*” about his property (meaning that he is not agreeable to another person taking his property), then it is considered theft if another person in fact takes it.

An example cited in a *beraita* at the conclusion of our Tractate is the case of unripe grains that were fit for animals to eat. Rabbi Yehuda states that it is not theft if another person takes some of it unless the owner is *makpid* and not agreeable to any taking. Ravina adds that the city of Masa Machsia was a place where the owners were not agreeable to taking their animal grain without permission. Rashi explains that the reason they were *makpid* regarding others taking their animal grain was because Masa Machsia was a place of many animals, and much of this grain was needed by the animal owners, since their animals required a “good pasture”.

The Maharsha points out that it would have been sufficient for Rashi to have written the word “pasture” without the word “good”. He suggests that Rashi adds the word “good” (*tov*) as the final word of his commentary on Bava Kama in order to end on a “good note”, after learning a Tractate that is virtually entirely dedicated to the negative topic of damages. Therefore, instead of ending his commentary with the word “pasture” (*mirah*), which in Hebrew ends with the word “bad” (*ra’ah*) at the end, Rashi ends with the word “good”, which is correct in the context of the case in the *gemara*, as well as “concluding Torah study with a ‘good word’”. In this case the “good word” is literally the word “good”, whereas in other cases it may be an optimistic or consoling message. Other Tractates actually conclude with a positive message, but since Bava Kama is, in a sense, part of the trilogy of Bava Kama, Bava Metzia, and Bava Batra, the Maharsha suggests that the *gemara* in Bava Kama does not conclude on a clear “good note” like other Tractates.

Although the *gemara* does not openly conclude on a good note or a good message, the Maharsha suggests that *gemara* actually concludes in a way that *hints* to a positive ending. He notes that the final four letters of the Tractate are *yod*, *heh*, *vav* and *alef*, which hint to three different names of our merciful G-d who is with us in exile. In addition, these four letters are considered “partner letters” for the Hebrew letters that spell “*Hatov* — the Good”. (As a footnote, the basic source for the principle of concluding with a good word seems to be the halacha to make sure to begin and end a section of a public Torah reading on a positive note as taught in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 138. Commentaries extend this idea beyond the public Torah reading to include *all* Torah study, and I have even heard of a great Rabbi who would occasionally add some words that were not seemingly connected to Torah at the end of a lecture in order to fulfill this principle of concluding Torah study with a “good word”.)

• Bava Kama 119b

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

RAMBAM — LEGEND OF A BURIAL

Although Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (RaMbaM) lived most of his life in Egypt, tradition has it that he was buried in Tveriah.

A report of this burial is found in a sixteenth-century source that describes the events leading up to it. Bandits attacked the company transporting the



Rambam’s casket to Eretz Yisrael and tried to throw the casket into the ocean. Although these more than thirty villains tried to lift the casket they did not succeed. This led them to the conclusion that a holy man was inside, and they accompanied the casket to burial in Tveriah.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. When historically did the obligation to bring *bikkurim* begin?
2. *Bikkurim* are from which crops?
3. How does one designate *bikkurim*?
4. Who shakes the basket containing the *bikkurim*?
5. What does “*v’anita v’amarta*” mean?
6. Which Arami “tried to destroy my father?”
7. When during the year may *bikkurim* be brought? Until when are the special verses recited?
8. Someone declaring that he separated *terumah* and *ma’aser* says: “And I didn’t forget.” What didn’t he forget?
9. What were the Jewish People to do with the 12 stones on Mount Eval?
10. Six tribes stood on Mount Eval and six on Mount Gerizim. Who and what were in the middle?
11. Who “causes the blind to go astray”?
12. How does one “strike another secretly”?
13. Eleven curses were spoken on Mount Eval. What is the significance of this number?
14. Why are sheep called “*ashterot*”?
15. How is the manner of expressing the curses in *Parshat Bechukotai* more severe than in this week’s *parsha*?
16. What is meant by “the Jewish People will become a proverb”?
17. Why did all the curses expressed in 48:16-44 befall the Jewish People?
18. “In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were (last) evening’ and in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were (this) morning.’” Why?
19. To which tribe did Moshe give the Torah first?
20. How long does it take to understand the depth of one’s teacher’s wisdom?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 26:1 - After the Land was conquered and divided.
2. 26:2 - The seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, olives, figs, dates, and pomegranates.
3. 26:2 - When he sees the first fruit ripen on a tree, he binds a piece of straw around it to mark it as *bikkurim*.
4. 26:4 - The *kohen* places his hands under the hands of the one bringing it, and they wave the basket together.
5. 26:5 - Speak loudly.
6. 26:5 - Lavan.
7. 26:11 - *Bikkurim* are brought from Shavuot until Chanukah. The verses are recited only until Succot.
8. 26:13 - To bless G-d.
9. 10. 27:2 - Build an altar.
10. 27:12 - *Kohanim*, *levi'im* and the Holy Ark.
11. 27:18 - Any person who intentionally gives bad advice.
12. 27:24 - By slandering him.
13. 27:24 - Each curse corresponds to one of the tribes, except for the tribe of Shimon. Since Moshe didn’t intend to bless the tribe of Shimon before his death, he did not want to curse them either.
14. 28:4 - Because they “enrich” (*m’ashiro*) their owners.
15. 28:23 - In *Bechukotai* the Torah speaks in the plural, whereas in this week’s Parsha the curses are mentioned in the singular.
16. 28:37 - Whenever someone wants to express the idea of extraordinary suffering, they will use the Jewish People as an example.
17. 28:47 - Because they did not serve G-d with gladness when everything was abundant.
18. 28:67 - Because the curse of each hour will be greater than that of the previous hour.
19. 29:3 - To the Tribe of Levi.
20. 29:8 - 40 years.

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

Love of the Land, written by Rav Mendel Weinbach, zt”l • Parsha Insights written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

© 1992 - 2016 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

Ki Tavo

STONES WITH A SPECIAL MESSAGE

In Devarim, chapter 27, Moshe tells the people to set up large stones immediately after having crossed the Jordan River into the Land of Israel. When other nations, such as the Romans, conquered foreign territory they established physical signs of their presence, such as monuments, and renamed streets and cities to glorify their power and domination. The Jewish People, on the other hand, are instructed to erect a monument to the glory and honor of G-d who gave them the Land. Moshe tells them not to make a simple list of the *mitzvot* on the stones, but rather to inscribe a recounting of how G-d took them out of Egypt, and how G-d sustained them in the wilderness and defeated their enemies in order to bring them into the Land of Israel. The people would have naturally erected such a monument; Moshe is simply instructing them to emphasize the true meaning of their conquest.

Moshe then instructs the people to bring the stones to Mount Eval. They were to use them to build an altar for sacrificial offerings. The altar was then to be dismantled and given a new inscription. Some commentators say that the entire Torah was to be inscribed, while others say that only the Book of Devarim was inscribed. In any case, by setting up the stones immediately upon crossing the Jordan River, using them for an altar, and finally setting them up as a permanent monument, these stones are a physical testimony to the entire purpose of the conquest of the Land of Israel. In his grammatical analysis of these few verses Abarbanel emphasizes a concept that occurs many times in the Torah's narratives. Moshe took the natural inclinations of the people to commemorate their conquest, and steered them into focusing on their relationship with G-d and the importance of the Land of Israel.

NOW AVAILABLE ON WWW.OHR.EDU - AUDIO LIBRARY

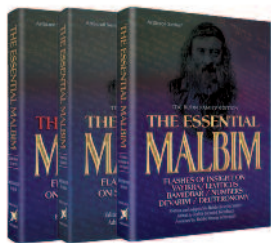


Rav Bulman *zt"l* on the Torah Portion of the Week

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY IS PROUD TO PRESENT

THE ESSENTIAL MALBIM

K O H N F A M I L Y E D I T I O N



**NOW
AVAILABLE!**

In a **3** Volume Set

Flashes of Insight
ON CHUMASH

PUBLISHED BY ARTSCROLL - MESORAH

AVAILABLE AT YOUR JEWISH BOOKSTORE OR WWW.OHR.EDU

MIRIAM

From: Maria

Dear Rabbi,
I am wondering about Miriam. Who was she and what does the name Miriam mean?

Dear Maria,

Miriam was the daughter of Amram, the leader of the Israelites in ancient Egypt, and of Yocheved, both from leading families of the Tribe of Levi (Ex. 2:1, Sota 12a). As such, she was also the sister of Aaron and Moses. The Torah refers to her as “Miriam the Prophetess” (Ex. 15:20) and the Talmud (Megilla 14a) names her as one of the seven major female prophets of Israel. Scriptures describes her alongside of Moses and Aaron as delivering the Jews from bondage in Egypt: “For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam” (Micha 6:4). According to the Midrash (Targum Micha 6:4), just as Moses led the men out of Egypt, so did Miriam lead the women. Similarly, just as Moses taught Torah to the men, so too, Miriam taught Torah to the women.

Miriam was the oldest child of Amram and Yocheved, her being three years older than Aaron and seven years older than Moses (Ex. Rabba 1:13). Although there are various opinions throughout Talmudic sources as to Miriam’s own family relations, the most commonly accepted one is that she was the wife of Calev and the mother of Hur (Ex. Rabba 1:17; Sota 11b; Targum on I Chron. 2:19, 4:4; Rashi, Ex. 17:10). Since Calev’s wife is also identified as Efrat (I Chron. 2:19), suggesting that Miriam had at least two names (she actually had many), when naming a girl Miriam both names are traditionally conjoined to be “Miriam Efrat”.

There are several meanings behind the name Miriam, spelled ‘mem’, ‘reish’, ‘yud’, ‘mem’ in Hebrew, which various Jewish sources relate to either “bitter”, “water”, “rebellion” or “elevation” as follows:

One meaning is based on the letters ‘mem’, ‘reish’ of her name spelling “mar” which means “bitter”. This connotes the fact that Miriam was born during the beginning of Pharaoh’s bitter decrees, as in the verse (Ex. 1:14): “And

the [Egyptians] embittered [the Jews’] lives with hard labor” (Megillat Ta’anit; Abarbanel, Ex. 2:1).

However, another meaning of “mar” is “water”, as in the verse (Is. 40:14): “The nations are as a drop of water (c’mar) from a bucket”. Miriam’s strong association with water includes her involvement in saving Moses at the Nile (Ex. 2:4,7-9), singing praise to G-d after crossing the Sea of Reeds (Ex. 15:20-21) and the special well or spring of water called the “Well of Miriam”. In her merit, this well miraculously provided water for the Jews by accompanying them throughout their wanderings in the wilderness. (Ex. 17:6; Ta’anit 9a)

In addition, since water is associated with “chesed” — kindness — this meaning behind Miriam connotes her special acts of kindness in serving as a midwife, devoting herself to the needs of her suffering people and sparing Jewish infants from Pharaoh’s evil decree. (Iyun Ya’akov on Ta’anit 9a; Kli Yakar)

Another meaning behind Miriam is related to the letters ‘mem’, ‘reish’, ‘yud’ of her name, spelling “meri”, which means “rebellion”. This connotes the way she rebelled against Pharaoh’s orders that the Jewish midwives kill all male infants (Ex. 1:16-17). She even rebelled against her father who initially exacerbated the decree by causing couples to separate so they wouldn’t have children. He did this in the name of sparing Jewish infants from death, until Miriam convinced him otherwise (Ex. Rabba 1:13). (There, the Midrash associates this “rebelliousness” with another of her names, Puah, but the idea is the same).

A last meaning is based on all of the letters of the name Miriam, ‘mem’, ‘reish’, ‘yud’, ‘mem’, spelling the word “merim”, which means “elevate”, and connotes the fact that Miriam, from whom King David issued, was elevated to “house” the Davidic Dynasty that is destined to elevate the Jewish People and the perfected community of humanity to Redemption and the World-to-Come (Ex. Rabba 1:17 on Ex. 1:21). This might be consistent with an idea which, although not found in Jewish sources, is based on the suggestion that “mri” in ancient Egyptian means “beloved”.

PASSING IN FRONT OF SOMEONE IN PRAYER

It is forbidden to pass within four amot (about 6 feet) of a person praying the Shemoneh Esrei. This rule applies specifically to passing in front of the person. However, it is permitted to pass or stand on the side of the worshiper. (Shulchan Aruch 102:4)

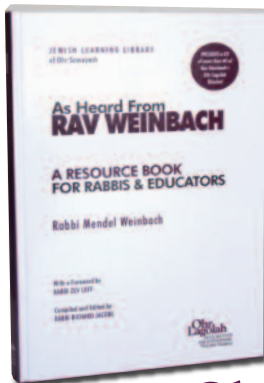
The Mishnah Berurah mentions two reasons for the above ruling: 1) Passing in front of one who is praying disturbs the concentration of the worshiper. According to this reason one is not permitted to pass in front even if there is a glass partition separating him from the worshiper since he will still be disturbed (Kaf HaChaim in the name of several halachic authorities). 2) One who passing causes a separation between the Divine Presence (*Shechina*) and the worshiper. According to this reason, even if his face is completely covered by his *tallit*, and he will not be disturbed, it is still forbidden to pass in front of him. (Kaf HaChaim)

Even though the Shulchan Aruch writes that is permitted to pass or stand on the *side* of one praying the Shemoneh Esrei, the Mishnah Berurah writes that according to the Zohar it is forbidden. (The Mishnah Berurah writes at the end of the first halacha that it is possibly forbidden to stand

within four *amot* of someone praying since it disturbs his concentration. Yet, from what he writes above (in halacha 4) in the name of the Zohar, it would seem that it is certainly forbidden to stand within four *amot* in front of someone praying. This is so since it is unlikely that the rule of standing in front can be more lenient than standing to the side.)

The Kaf HaChaim adds that according to the Zohar it is forbidden to pass in front of one praying as far as the eye can see, except in a pressing situation. It is interesting to note that both the Magen Avraham and Shulchan Aruch HaRav, like the Mishnah Berurah, mention the ruling of the Zohar forbidding passing on the sides, but do not mention passing in front as far as the eye can see.

The halachic authorities write that just as it is forbidden to pass in front of someone praying, it is also forbidden to pass in front of one reciting the verse “Shema Yisrael” (Eliya Rabbah, Mishnah Berurah, Kaf HaChaim). The Kaf Hachaim writes in the name of Teshuvot HaGeonim and other *poskim* that it is forbidden to pass in front of the *shaliach tzibur* who leads the prayers, even during parts of prayer other than the Shemoneh Esrei.



**Ohr
Lagolah**

HERTZ INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
TEACHER TRAINING

As Heard From **RAV WEINBACH**

A RESOURCE BOOK FOR RABBIS & EDUCATORS

INCLUDES a CD of more
than 40 of Rav Weinbach's
Ohr Lagolah Shiurim!



JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY
of Ohr Somayach - Tanenbaum College

Now Available in Jewish Bookstores!
Order online at www.menuchapublishers.com

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

A TALE OF TWO ARKS

We are all familiar with two very different arks that are mentioned in the Bible: The Ark of Noah and the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of Noah was a large wooden boat which Noah constructed for housing his family during the floods of the Great Deluge (Gen. 6-9), while the Ark of the Covenant was a wooden box coated in gold in which the tablets of the Ten Commandments and a Torah Scroll were stored. While in English both of these somewhat dissimilar items are conveniently labelled “arks”, the discerning reader might notice that in Hebrew two different words are used. The Ark of Noah is called a *teivah*, and the Ark of the Covenant is called an *aron*. The two words clearly refer to types of storage implements, but since they are two different words they cannot mean the exact same thing. What then is the difference between the words *teivah* and *aron*, which can justify translating both words as “ark”, yet show that the two words actually bear different connotations?

In the Bible, the word *teivah* appears in two contexts: the Ark of Noah and the basket wherein the infant Moshe was placed before his mother left him on the Nile River (Ex. 2:3). The word *aron* is also used in two contexts in the Bible: the Ark of the Covenant and the coffin within which the body of the deceased Joseph was placed (Gen. 50:26). The usage of these terms in the Bible may help us determine the differences between them.

Based on the contexts in which these two words are invoked, we may argue that the difference between them is in *where* the arks are used. The word *teivah* is only used for a storage device kept afloat on the water, while the word *aron* refers to storage place that need not necessarily involve floating on water. So, it seems that the difference between the types of containers meant by *teivah* and the types meant by *aron* is that the former is only used for storing something atop a body of water, while the latter is not.

Alternatively, we may suppose that the distinction between these two forms of storing lies in *what* is being stored. In the Biblical examples the word *teivah* refers specifically to “storing” a live person, i.e. Noah and his family or the baby Moshe. Rabbi Aharon Marcus (1843-1916) points out that the word *teivah* is related to the word *bayit*

(house) because they both contain the same letters. This implies that a *teivah*, in some ways, is like a person’s home. The word *aron*, on the other hand, refers to other types of storage — even storing inanimate articles like the Tablets or Joseph’s corpse.

All of this explains the difference between the words *teivah* and *aron* in the Biblical sense. However, when we include rabbinical usage of the words the matter becomes far more complicated. In Rabbinic Hebrew, we find the words *teivah* and *aron* used almost interchangeably. For example, one Mishna (Ta’anit 2:1) tells about how on communal days of fast the *teivah* would be taken outside to the city plaza in a show of public outcry, and another Mishnah (*Megillah* 3:1) rules that money received from selling a synagogue building can only be used for purchasing a *teivah* or something holier than a *teivah*. What does the Mishna mean when it refers to a *teivah* in these cases? The commentators discuss whether the Mishna refers to the Holy Ark of a synagogue which houses the Torah Scrolls, or to the table (known as *bimah*) upon which the Torah Scrolls are placed while being read. Either way, the word *teivah* in the language of the Mishna does not refer exclusively to something floating on the sea or housing a live person, which defeats the definition given above.

Likewise, the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Shekalim* 6:1) explains the structure of the Ark of the Covenant — which the Bible calls an *aron*. It explains that the Ark was actually made up of three *teivahs* (in this context, boxes), two golden and one wooden. The wooden box was placed inside one of the golden boxes and the other golden box was placed inside the wooden box so that all exposed surfaces were golden with the wood hidden underneath. Thus, this three-*teivah* structure made up what is known as the *aron*. This passage, as well, disproves our prior assumptions about the nature of the differences between the words *teivah* and *aron*.

Finally, modern Hebrew offers a clear delineation between the two terms (although historically its distinction may not be well-grounded), because in modern Hebrew the word *teivah* refers to a storage chest, and the word *aron* refers to a closet.

LISTEN NOW TO RABBI SINCLAIR’S PARSHA PODCASTS

at <http://ohr.edu/podcast>

BY RABBI SHLOMO SIMON

RABBI YITZHOK BECKER

Age: 33 - Born: Rochester, NY - Raised: Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Telshe Stone, Israel
Education: Hebron Yeshiva, Yeshivas Toras Moshe, Mir Yeshiva - Smicha: Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowits
Director of Recruitment and Student Liaison — Ohr Somayach Jerusalem

The newest addition to the staff of Ohr Somayach, while American by birth, has lived most of his life in Israel. His parents made *aliyah* from the Chofetz Chaim-WITS-community in Milwaukee to Telshe Stone when Yitzhok was nine years old. He acclimated quickly to Israel, and went on to learn in the famous Hebron Yeshiva in Jerusalem. After some years there he went on to spend two years each in Toras Moshe and the Mir Yeshivah. When Yitzhok decided on pursuing a career in *kiruv* (outreach) and *rabbanut* in the English-speaking world, he chose to enroll in The Jerusalem Kollel of Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowits, from where he received *smicha* (rabbinical ordination).



He married another American-Israeli from Har Nof in Jerusalem, Shani Leebhof. They settled in Har Nof, where they lived for eight years. After obtaining his *smicha* he joined the Edmonton Community Kollel, which specializes in *kiruv*. They spent the last two years there. As their four children were growing, he and his wife felt that their destiny was in their Jewish homeland, and not in the frozen tundra of Alberta. Their chance to return came when Ohr Somayach called. They moved the family back home to Jerusalem about a month ago.

Bo'achem l'shalom.

We expect to see great results from their efforts!

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”