

SAMPLE COPY

THE LOUIS WEISFELD EDITION

חומש שטיינזלץ

THE STEINSALTZ HUMASH



עם ביאורו של הרב עדין אבן-ישראל שטיינזלץ

COMMENTARY BY RABBI ADIN EVEN-ISRAEL STEINSALTZ

The Steinsaltz Humash

Humash Translation and Commentary

Commentary by

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz



Steinsaltz Center



KOREN

Koren Publishers Jerusalem



Steinsaltz Center

Executive Director, Steinsaltz Center

Rabbi Meni Even-Israel

Executive Editors

Rabbi Joshua Schreier
Rabbi Dr. Joshua Amaru

Editors

Rabbi Ayal Geffon, *Senior Content Editor*
Rabbi Yedidya Naveh, *Senior Editor*
Rabbi Michael Siev, *Senior Editor*
Rabbi Avi Grossman, *Senior Editor*
Rabbi Aryeh Sklar, *Content Curator*
Rabbi Alan Haber
Yisrael Kalker
Elisha Loewenstern
Rabbi Eli Ozarowski
Avi Steinhart
Rabbi David Strauss

Hebrew Edition Editors

Sara Friedland Ben Arza
Rabbi Yossi Ben Arza
Rabbi Meir Klein
Rabbi Daniel Eliav

Technical Staff

Tani Bednarsh
Adena Frazer
Shaltiel Shmidman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Jason Rappoport

Copy Editors

Caryn Meltz, *Manager*
Aliza Israel, *Consultant*
Ita Olesker, *Senior Copy Editor*
Debbie Ismailoff, *Senior Proofreader*
and Language Consultant
Chava Boylan
Suri Brand
Ilana Brown
Carolyn Budow Ben-David
Rachelle Emanuel
Shira Finson
Charmaine Gruber
Deborah Meghnagi Bailey
Deena Nataf
Dvora Rhein
Elisheva Ruffer
Ilana Sobel

Language Experts

Dr. Stéphanie E. Binder, *Greek & Latin*
Rabbi Yaakov Hoffman, *Arabic*
Shira Shmidman, *Aramaic*



Design & Typesetting

Avishai Magence, *Production Manager*
Eliyahu Misgav, *Art Director*
Bentzi Binder, *Design & Typesetting*
Estie Dishon, *Typesetting*

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Steinsaltz Humash	ix
Introduction by the Hebrew Editors	xi
Introduction by the Translators	xii
Blessings for Reading the Torah (Ashkenazic Custom)	xiv
Blessings for Reading the Torah (Sephardic Custom)	xvi

BOOK OF GENESIS

Bereshit	6
Noah	38
Lekh Lekha	62
Vayera	90
Hayei Sarah	116
Toledot	134
Vayetze	152
Vayishlah	176
Vayeshev	200
Miketz	220
Vayigash	242
Vayhi	260

BOOK OF EXODUS

Shemot	286
Va'era	312
Bo	332
Beshalah	356
Yitro	382
Mishpatim	402
Teruma	430
Tetzaveh	452
Ki Tisa	472
Vayak'hel	502
Pekudei	520

BOOK OF LEVITICUS

Vayikra	540
Tzav	566
Shemini	584
Tazria	606
Metzora	618
Aharei Mot	634
Kedoshim	652
Emor	670
Behar	696
Behukotai	708

BOOK OF NUMBERS

Bemidbar	730
Naso	750
Behaalotekha	778
Shelah	804
Korah	826
Hukat	844
Balak	864
Pinhas	882
Matot	906
Masei	922

BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Devarim	946
Va'ethanan	966
Ekev	988
Re'eh	1012
Shofetim	1042
Ki Tetze	1064
Ki Tavo	1094
Nitzavim	1114
Vayelekh	1122
Haazinu	1128
Vezot HaBerakha	1140

GENESIS HAFTAROT

Bereshit	1154
Noah	1156
Lekh Lekha	1158
Vayera	1160
Hayei Sarah	1162
Toledot	1166
Vayetze	1168
Vayishlah	1170
Vayeshev	1172
Miketz	1174
Vayigash	1176
Vayhi	1178

EXODUS HAFTAROT

Shemot	1180
Va'era	1184
Bo	1186
Beshalah	1188
Yitro	1192
Mishpatim	1194
Teruma	1196
Tetzaveh	1198
Ki Tisa	1200
Vayak'hel	1202
Pekudei	1206

LEVITICUS HAFTAROT

Vayikra	1208
Tzav	1212
Shemini	1214
Tazria	1218
Metzora	1220
Aharei Mot	1222
Kedoshim	1224
Emor	1226
Behar	1228
Behukotai	1230

NUMBERS HAFTAROT

Bemidbar	1232
Naso	1234
Behaalotekha	1236
Shelah	1238
Korah	1240
Hukat	1242
Balak	1244
Pinhas	1246
Matot	1248
Masei	1250

DEUTERONOMY HAFTAROT

Devarim	1254
Va'ethanan	1256
Ekev	1258
Re'eh	1260
Shofetim	1260
Ki Tetze	1262
Ki Tavo	1264
Nitzavim	1266
Vayelekh/Shabbat Shuva	1268
Haazinu	1270
Vezot HaBerakha	1274

SPECIAL HAFTAROT

Rosh Hodesh Eve	1276
Rosh Hodesh	1278
Hanukkah 1	1280
Hanukkah 2	1282
Shekalim	1282
Zakhor	1284
Para	1288
HaHodesh	1290
Shabbat HaGadol	1292

Introduction to the Steinsaltz Humash

Scholars and lay readers alike are aware that writing a new commentary on the Bible requires assistance and blessings from Above, as well as substantial effort from below. Two fundamental challenges stand before one who seeks to write a commentary on the Torah: First, the aspiration to relate to the loftiest and holiest text and to explain it faithfully risks hubris. Second, a huge number of commentaries on the Bible have been composed over the course of the past three thousand years by the greatest people in our history. Who has the audacity to attempt to join this holy assembly or even grasp its coattails?

Sanction for undertaking this daunting task can be found in Rashi's statement to his grandson Rashbam, himself the author of an important commentary on the Torah. Rashbam reports Rashi to have said that if he had had the strength, he would have written another commentary in accordance with the "plain meanings that are renewed every day" (Rashbam, Genesis 38:2).

In every generation and on each passing day, fresh light can be shed on the verses of the Bible and new perspectives can be found. Not only are new answers offered to old questions, but in every era additional questions are raised by students of the Bible, due to both the diversity of the personalities, and the differing interests and perspectives, of each era. Throughout the ages, the great commentaries have discussed a wide range of different issues. To this day, thank God, there are many scholars and students of the Bible raising unique questions and challenges that require attention, analysis, and investigation. All these illuminate the eternal words of the Torah through a range of viewpoints and give rise to "plain meanings that are renewed every day."

This commentary seeks to offer the reader the plain meaning of the text, the *peshat*. Ostensibly, this is the simplest level of interpretation, but the elucidation of the plain meaning is actually the most difficult type of interpretation. Other kinds of interpretation, based on allusion [*remez*], midrashic hermeneutics [*derash*], or esoteric, mystical traditions [*sod*] are free to forge links between the text and the sources from which they draw and are not constrained by the language and concepts of the Bible. In contrast, discovering the plain meaning of the text requires the interpreter to adhere closely to the literal meaning of the words while paying attention to syntax and context. The best way to go about this has always been a matter of debate, and the elucidation of the plain meaning of the Torah as a holistic entity will never be fully achieved (see, e.g., Ibn Ezra's introduction to his commentary on the Torah).

Finally, there is a fundamental problem that is unique to interpretation of the Torah: The aim of finding the plain meaning is related to the author's intent, yet the infinite consciousness of the Giver of the Torah is unfathomable and boundless (see Ramban's introduction to the Torah).

Although this commentary includes references to many other commentaries, it is not an anthology. It was not intended to provide a comprehensive array of interpretations from across the generations. The aim of the references is to show that a suggested interpretation is based on earlier sources or discusses a similar question. Moreover, this work does not aspire to be revolutionary or novel. Rather, it aims to present what might be called a "transparent" commentary, one whose explanations should go almost unnoticed and serve only to give the reader and student the sense that there is no barrier between him or her and the text. The aim is to let the Torah speak for itself, to allow the prophets to prophesy and the wise men to impart their wisdom. In order to enable the "voice" of the verses to be heard, the annotations are brief, serving as a thin, barely perceptible screen rather than a heavy, concealing coat of armor.

At Mount Sinai, the entire Jewish people heard "a great voice" (Deuteronomy 5:18), which the Sages interpret to mean a voice that has never ceased (*Targum Onkelos*; *Sanhedrin* 17a). It is my hope that this project will help people hear the voice of the Torah even in our busy, noisy world.

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz

Introduction by the Translators

ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH

The English translation of the *Steinsaltz Commentary on the Humash* includes a completely new translation of the Humash based on Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz's Hebrew commentary. Translation is necessarily an act of interpretation. In general, we have done our best, at Rabbi Steinsaltz's behest, to stay as close as possible to the original Hebrew verses so that the English reader will encounter the complexities of the text directly. In the course of translating, we have consulted other English translations, as well as relying heavily upon Onkelos' Aramaic translation and the classic medieval Jewish commentaries of the Torah: Rav Se'adya Gaon, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and Rashbam. Our goal throughout has been to produce a translation that is true to the original Hebrew text and commentary, yet at the same time is readable and accessible to a broad range of readers, from those who are familiar with Hebrew and seek to deepen their understanding of the Torah to those who will gain access to the text only by reading it in English. The commentary and notes are written in modern American English. In the spirit of the Hebrew edition, we have tried to preserve the lofty register of the biblical text while providing a commentary that is relevant and inspiring to our own generation. We hope that the Author of the Torah has aided us in achieving this goal.

THE LAYOUT OF THIS EDITION

On the left-hand side of each set of facing pages is the Hebrew text of the Bible with the traditional cantillation marks, meticulously edited over decades by the team at Koren Publishers, Jerusalem. Below it is Rashi's classic commentary in Hebrew, also fully vocalized and punctuated. The text of Rashi's commentary reproduced here is also taken from the Koren edition of the Bible, drawing from the most reliable manuscripts. On the facing page, the Steinsaltz translation of the Bible appears in boldface with the commentary interspersed between the words of the text in non-bold typeface. This enables the reader to easily follow either the direct translation alone or the translation augmented by the elucidated text.

Three traditional divisions of the Torah are marked: the weekly portion, the *aliyot* of the Torah reading on both the Hebrew and English sides, where the reading is paused on Shabbat morning, and the "open" and "closed" sections [*parashot*] as they appear in a Torah scroll. The weekly readings from the Prophets, the *haftarot*, are printed at the end of the Humash, accompanied by a direct translation of the verses and an introduction before each *haftara* that offers a connection between the *haftara* and the weekly Torah reading. To preserve space, the Steinsaltz commentary to the *haftarot* is not included.

The notes at the foot of the page are divided into two categories. Discussion notes provide background material, internal biblical parallels, alternative explanations, and a wealth of midrashic and philosophical ideas from Jewish commentaries over the generations. Background notes provide linguistic, historical, archaeological, and scientific information that is relevant to places, nations, flora and fauna, and other realia mentioned in the verses. Integrated into both the commentary and the notes are pictures, maps, and other graphics to aid the reader in grasping the biblical text.

References and sources for the commentary appear as endnotes, while the references and sources for the notes are interspersed throughout the notes themselves in parentheses. These references and sources, compiled by the Hebrew editors, include citations of other verses in the Bible, commentary elsewhere in the Bible, insights of the rabbinic Sages in the Talmud and *midrashim*, interpretations of the classical biblical commentaries, and citations of philosophical works and responsa by the early authorities [*rishonim*].

The translation of the verses of the Torah and most of the *haftarot* was undertaken by Rabbi Joshua Schreier and reviewed meticulously by Rabbi Dr. Joshua Amaru. The verses of the *haftarot* from Jeremiah and Ezekiel were reviewed by Rabbi Ayal

Introduction by the Translators

Geffon. Many talented editors and translators participated in the translation of the commentary and notes as listed in the credits. We thank Matthew Miller, Avishai Magence, and the devoted and gifted team at Koren Publishers. We are grateful to Rabbi Meni Even-Israel, Executive Director of the Steinsaltz Center, whose wisdom and guidance have made the publication of this Humash possible. We also thank Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin of the Biblical Museum of Natural History in Beit Shemesh for his help in identifying some animals and providing suitable images.

TRANSLITERATION

In general, we have tried to keep transliteration to a minimum and have relied upon it only for proper nouns and in places where a point of commentary relates to a Hebrew term. In the case of proper nouns, we have sought a middle ground between a rigorous adherence to Hebrew phonology and the use of anglicized versions of names taken from earlier translations of the Bible. For familiar names of both places and people, where encountering a transliteration would be jarring to many readers, we have used the well-known anglicized versions, such as Canaan, Egypt, Abraham, and Moses. Otherwise, proper nouns are transliterated according to the rules listed below. These transliterations offer the English reader an experience that is closer to that of the Hebrew reader.

Of course, determining which names count as familiar and which are not is not an exact science; the policy has been to use the anglicized names of familiar figures from the early chapters in Genesis, the names of prophets and books of the Bible, and some other well-known characters and place-names. The transliteration scheme generally follows modern Israeli Hebrew pronunciation, but note the following points:

- For proper nouns and names of the *parashot*, no special characters are used to designate sounds that do not exist in English. For example, the name אֶחֶזְרָאֵל will not be rendered Aḥiez̄er (with a diacritic for the letter *het* that is used for the transliteration of Hebrew terms that are not proper nouns) but rather Ahiezer. Consequently, the letter א is rendered as *h* (like the letter ה).
- The letter *h*, representing the Hebrew letter ה, has been omitted at the end of a word unless its omission could lead to mispronunciation. For example, שֶׁלָה is written Shela, while נִנְוֶה is written Nineveh.
- The soft letter ך is rendered as *kh*.
- No distinction has been made between a letter containing a *dagesh hazak* (elsewhere represented by a double consonant) and one without. For example, it is Hukat as opposed to Hukkat.
- Apostrophes indicating glottal stops are employed only where a name could be mispronounced without them. For example, it is Se'ir as opposed to Seir.
- We have maintained a more technical transliteration scheme for citations, including the diacritic *h* and consonant doubling for cases of a *dagesh*. For example, in the citation *Tanḥuma, Korah 5*, *Tanḥuma* retains the diacritic *h*, whereas *Korah* does not.

On behalf of the team of inspired and dedicated translators, editors, and copy editors with whom it has been a great privilege to work, I express my hope that the decisions we have made have produced a translation that is faithful to the Hebrew, readable, accessible, and useful to the reader.

Jason Rappoport
Editor in Chief

Bereshit

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings and roots. It covers a far greater time period than all the other books of the Torah combined, surveying thousands of years, whereas the other books of the Torah deal with events that occurred over the course of 120 years. The early sections of Genesis skim over some two thousand years without much comment, although the narrative interrupts its general survey to focus on specific details and stories. These particulars do not merely add interest and color to the general picture, but together constitute the essential part of the overall tapestry of the book.

Genesis differs from the other books of the Torah in that it is virtually all narrative accounts of events, with very few commandments. In the manner of the Bible, it does not explicitly discuss philosophical or theoretical topics; rather, its contents are presented to the reader in the form of stories. Through its stories, the book deals with numerous fundamental human problems. Thus, the book of Genesis stands on its own, because it is relevant to all people. Rarely can one find in the book definitive positive or negative judgments. The stories mainly relate what happened.

That said, even when the Torah does not offer an explicit judgment, its opinion frequently can be inferred from the verses themselves. Direct messages, insights and revelations, discussions and analyses, questions and answers, are rarely found explicitly in the book. Instead, they are planted in the mind of the learner and left to take root and develop intellectually and emotionally within his or her soul, in accordance with his or her abilities.

At first glance it might seem that Genesis is an orderly book, as it stays faithful to the time line of the events it describes. However, a more careful examination of the sequence of the verses shows that there are invariably aspects of the text that are not fully elucidated. Some of the missing details are vital for a proper understanding, while others merely arouse the reader's curiosity. Even the opening verse, which apparently deals with the very beginning of all beginnings, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," actually occurs in the middle of the story. After all, the undoubted first and central "protagonist" of the book, as indicated by the number of mentions of His name, is God Himself, and yet He appears in the first verse of the book without any introduction or explanation. Indeed, God is the beginning of existence not only in the chronological sense, but also in the manner described in philosophical literature as the Primary Cause. Similarly, on more than one occasion, other important characters in the book, human or otherwise, appear on the scene with no background information provided, and their actions are generally described without any accompanying explanatory comments. Granted, over the generations, the Sages have elucidated these stories with various interpretations, but the stories of the Torah flow without such glosses, as though saying to the reader: The rest is commentary; go learn.

The three main topics of the book are the creation of the world in general, humanity as a whole, and the seeds of the development of God's elected people, Israel. However, the attention paid to the three subjects is unequal. The stories with the widest scope are short and obscure; the more an incident is focused and limited in scope, the more detail the text provides.

The first topic, the creation of the world in general, is found mainly in the first chapter, which depicts the formation of various cosmic entities and creatures from a primeval state of being. The book describes a world built on internal contrasts yet whose discrete beings somehow unite into a single essence. These accounts also evoke thoughts on the relationship between creation as a whole, with its many creatures, and the rational being that is man; the reproductive urges and will to dominate that define the biological world; and the complex and problematic nature of man, who is tasked with further developing God's creation.

The sections of the book that deal with humanity in general touch upon the basic issues of philosophy: human consciousness; the struggle between primitive nature and artifice; the temptations and dangers of the developing mind, as well as the problems of

desire and sin, lust and law breaking, jealousy and murder; responsibility and punishment; human creativity and those problems resulting from the very existence and stratification of human society. However, as stated above, these issues are not analyzed through a series of philosophical observations, but arise from the narrative accounts. The stories in the first chapters, *Parashat Bereshit* and *Parashat Noah*, can be read as parables, as introductions or keys to an entire world of human thought.

The sections of the book that concentrate on its third topic, the origins of the chosen people, contain the stories of the patriarchs and the nation's first generations. The individuals depicted are presented in their full humanity. Their lives are full of exertions, confrontations, and trials. The forefathers of the Jewish people must deal with the same problems that occupy humanity as a whole: love and hate, jealousy and competition, errors and their consequences. They are not spared pain, enslavement, or internal and external strife, but they also experience forgiveness and absolution. Nevertheless, alongside the human, personal, and familial aspects of the lives of the patriarchs, the book of Genesis depicts their relationship with God, together with their commitment and extreme devotion to the covenant with Him. Their personalities are molded through all of these factors. God's elect are capable not only of asking questions, but also of receiving answers and instructions, and these figures create the foundations for the rest of the books of the Torah.

Sample preview
Koren Publishers Jerusalem

Parashat Bereshit

Brief summary of themes in the narrative

Explanatory notes clarify the text and include a vast amount of rabbinical and contemporary sources

The Seven Days of Creation

GENESIS 1:1–2:3

some preexisting process. Had the verse stated *bareshit*, it would have been understood as meaning simply “in the beginning.” By contrast, the term *bereshit* indicates the beginning of some specific, unnamed process. It appears that a fundamental message lies hidden in this first word: At some early stage in the mysterious process of creating existence, God created the heavens and the earth.

- 1 **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** The opening verse takes the existence of God as a given. It does not address questions about God’s origin or nature; rather, God is understood to be the absolute existence from which everything begins. Already at the beginning of the account of Creation, heaven and earth appear as distinct entities and as a framework for all of creation, as detailed in the rest of the chapter.
- 2 **The earth was unformed and empty^D [*tohu vavohu*].** The earth was completely lacking any structure or order. The heavens too were unformed and empty, but the verse initially focuses on the earth, its structure and content. Although these two terms appear together in other places in the Bible, the precise meaning of the word *vohu* is difficult to ascertain; it is even uncertain whether *vohu* refers to a distinct concept. **And darkness was upon the face of the deep.** The deep may refer to deep waters, or to the unstructured universe, that existed at the time. At this early stage of Creation, nothing had yet to receive definite shape; nothing had been revealed. Therefore, the darkness upon the face of the deep was merely the absence of the light that was about to be created. Some commentaries maintain that the darkness was not the absence of light, but an entity in itself, based on the verse “I form the light, and create darkness.” **And the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water.** Water is the first actual substance mentioned in the Torah, as the heaven and the earth are not substances but general entities or zones. The verse does not discuss the creation of the primeval substance that served as the foundation for all of existence. In any case, the Torah indicates that God’s power, or will, exists in some form in this reality. God is not located within these entities, and He certainly is not to be identified with them; rather, He hovers close by while remaining separate from them.
- 3 The process of Creation begins: **God said: Let there be light, and there was light.**^D It is difficult to understand the meaning or significance of the phrase “God said.” The most that can be understood from this cryptic description is that God transmitted a kind of message that there should be light, and His instruction came to pass. Light was the first creation to emerge from *tohu vavohu*. It was unlike any form of light known to mankind; it did not emanate from a prior source. Perhaps it was not even a physical light, but a unique phenomenon.
- 4 **God saw the light that it was good.**^D As soon as the light emerged from the unformed universe, God evaluated it and distinguished between good and bad. **And God divided between the light and the darkness.** Once light was created and discerned as good, the next phase of its creation began, namely, the stage of separation, which established the light as a clearly defined entity. The act of discerning and separating between good and bad would continue till the end of time and manifest itself also in human history and civilization.
- 5 **God called the light day.** From the inception of the concepts of light and day, there was some measure of synonymy between them. Nevertheless, they are clearly and independently defined. Aside from day’s association with daylight, the day denotes a specific period of time. At this early stage of the Creation, with the formation of light comes the establishment of time. Until this point, the universe was in a raw state, completely unstructured and undefined; even space and time were not yet defined. These concepts came into being when God willed it. **And to the darkness He called night.** Darkness as well is removed from its previous status as a description of space alone and placed in a framework of time. The concepts of day and night as they appear in this verse express what the Sages called the order of time, in other words, the notions of before and after, relative concepts that did not apply when the earth was

Bold text refers to direct translation while the regular text offers a fuller understanding of the narrative

Clear Koren Tanakh font

פרשת

בראשית

א בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ: והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחסך
 על-פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים: ויאמר אלהים יהי-אור
 ויהי-אור: וירא אלהים את-האור כי-טוב ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החשך:
 ויקרא אלהים | לאור יום ולחשך קרא לילה ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום אחד:

Digitalized, clear Rashi font with vowels and punctuation

רש"י

בראשית י א, 'בראשית דגגך' (דברים יד, ד) חך פאן חתה
 חומרה: 'בראשית ברא חלהים' וגו' קמו: 'בראשית ברא',
 וזמה לו: 'תחלת דבר ה' בהושע, כלומר תחלת דבורו
 של הקדוש ברוך הוא בהושע, 'ויאמר ה' חל הושע' וגו'
 (הושע ח, ב). ואם תלמה, להודות פא חלכו תחלה נבראו,
 ופרוש: 'בראשית הכל ברא חלו, ויש לך מקראות
 שמקצרים לשונם וממעיטם תבה חמת, כמו: 'פי לא סגד
 דלתי בטני' (חוב ט, י) ולא פקש מי הסוגר, וכמו: 'ישא
 חת חיל דמשק' (שעה ת, ד) ולא פקש מי ישאנו, וכמו:
 'חס יחרוש בפקדים' (עמוס ו, יב) ולא פקש חס יחרוש
 חס בפקדים, וכמו: 'מצד מראשית חכרית' (שעה טו,
 י) ולא פקש 'מצד מראשית דבר חכרית דבר' - חס כן
 תמה על ענמן שהי המים קדמו, שהי פתי: 'ורוח
 חלהים מרחפת על פני המים' (להלן פסוק ב), ועדין לא
 גלה המקרא ברית המים מתי היתה, למדת שקדמו
 לארץ, ועוד שהמים מלא וממים נבראו, על קרח לא
 למד המקרא בסדר המקדמים והמחברים כלום: ברא
 אלהים, ולא חמר 'ברא ה', שפתחלה עלה במחשבה
 לבראתו במדת הדיו, ורחה שאין מתקנים, והקדים מדת

פרק א
 א בראשית. חמר דבי יחוק: לא היה צריך להתחיל
 חת התורה חלף מ'הדלש הזה לבס' (שמות יב, ב)
 שהיה מנה ראשונה שנגטו ישראל. ומה טעם פתח
 ב'בראשית' - משום 'פח מעשיו הצד לעמו לתת להם
 נחלת גוים' (תהלים קיח, א), שחס יאמרו חמות העולם
 ל'ישראל: לטטים חתם שפגשם חרעות שבעה גוים,
 הם חומרים להם: כל חרץ של הקדוש ברוך הוא
 היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעינו, פרענו נתנה
 להם, ופרענו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו: בראשית ברא
 חין המקרא הזה חומר חלף דקשנו, כמו שדקשוהו
 דבותנו ז"ל: בשביל התורה שנקראת 'בראשית דברו'
 (משל כ, ב), ובשביל שנקראו 'בראשית תבחיחה'
 (ירמיה ג, א). ואם בראת לפרשו פשוטו, כך פקשה:
 בראשית בראשית שמים ורוח, והארץ היתה תהו ובהו
 וחסך, ויאמר חלהים יהי אור, ולא פא המקרא להודות
 סדר הבריאה לומר שחלו קדמו, שחס פא להודות כך,
 היה לו לכתוב: בראשית ברא חת השמים וגו', שאין לך
 'בראשית' במקרא שאינו דבור לתבה של חכריו, כמו:
 'בראשית ממלכת יהוים' (ס, כו, ח), 'בראשית ממלכתו'

בא תהו ובהו. תהו לשון תמה ושמנון, שחלם תנהה
 ומשתומם על פהו שפה. תהו. איסטורדישון פלעו: בהו.
 לשון ריחות ומדו: על פני תהום. על פני המים שעל חרץ.
 ורוח אלהים מרחפת. פשא הכבוד עומד פחור ומרחף
 על פני המים בריח פיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ובמחמה,
 כינה המרחפת על הקו, חקובטי"ר פלעו:

ד וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב ויבדל חך בנה חנו
 צרכים לדברי חגדה, רחאו שאינו פדחי להשתמש בו
 קשעים והקדילו לצדיקים לעתיד לבוא ולמי פשוטו,
 כך פקשה: רחאו כי טוב ואין נאה לו ולחשך שיהיו
 משתמשים בעבר פוביח, וקבע לנה תחומו פיום ולנה
 תחומו פיליה:

ה יום אחד. לפי סדר לשון הפקשה היה לו לכתוב: יום
 ראשון, כמו שכתוב בשאר הימים: שני, שלישי, רביעי.
 למה פתב 'אחד'? על שם שהיה הקדוש ברוך הוא יחיד

DISCUSSION

1:2 | **The earth was unformed and empty:** Some of the commentaries maintain that heaven and earth contained all the components of Creation from the outset in a chaotic jumble (see Ramban, verse 1; *Bereshit Rabba* 1:14). According to this opinion, the process of Creation essentially involved the arrangement of these various components, specifically the establishment of the location, status, and function of each and every entity.

1:3 | **And there was light:** If one assumes that the light was indeed physical, it can be described as radiating from all of existence. There

were no boundaries to it; it spread over the entire universe. Not for naught did the Sages teach that with this light one could see from one end of the world to the other (*Hagiga* 12a).

1:4 | **That it was good:** The process of appraisal and judgment will appear in the subsequent stages of Creation as well. It is a fundamental part not only of the book of Genesis but of the other books of the Bible too, and can even be considered a foundational principle of Judaism itself (see introduction to commentary on Leviticus). Consequently, the evaluative term "good" is among the first words of the Torah

and is the first abstract idea mentioned in the Torah.

The concept of good can refer to a positive evaluation on a number of levels. Earlier generations differentiated between the moral good, the opposite of which is evil; the practical good, or the effective; and the pleasant (see *Rambam's Introduction to Avot* 5; *Sefer Halkkharim* 3:35). The Bible also refers to the aesthetically beautiful as good. It seems that throughout the recounting of the process of Creation, the descriptive term "good" is used in all its various meanings.

a novelty known in classical philosophy as the vegetative soul. The grass was the basis for all higher life forms that would be created later, not only because the latter depend upon vegetation in order to survive, but because they are themselves more advanced forms of things that grow. The creation of biology includes not only growth but also proliferation: **Vegetation yielding seed, and fruit tree bearing fruit in its kind, in which there is its seed, upon the earth.** The definition of the biological system according to a process in which a cell or group of cells start to grow, and indeed to propagate, is not new. Although this phenomenon of growth and reproduction runs counter to all considerations of physics, as it violates the laws of entropy, it is nevertheless the very definition of life. **And it was so.**

- 12 The earth produced grasses, vegetation yielding seed in its kind, and a tree bearing fruit in which there was its seed in its kind.** The Torah does not classify the various species of vegetation; it does not even provide the criteria for categorizing them. The verse instead emphasizes that each of these creations was a species to itself; the creation of plant life was a deliberate, ordered process. **And God saw that it was good.** In addition to being the day on which the dry land was exposed, the third day was the day on which life was first brought forth. The significance of the emergence of life on the third day is expressed in the double appearance of the phrase “it was good” (see verse 10). Before the third day, the universe consisted only of inanimate entities; on the third day life began, even if it was not yet intelligent. Although vegetation does not share all the characteristics of more complex life forms, it possesses the foundation and source of life, namely, the ability to tend to its own survival, to grow, and to multiply.
- 13 It was evening and it was morning, a third day.**
- 14 God said: Let there be lights⁹ in the firmament of the heavens.** From this point objects would exist that would generate and emit light. These were distinct from light itself, which was created on the first day. The addition on the fourth day of entities responsible for the light was part of the continued structuring and ordering of the universe. These lights would exist **to distinguish between the day and the night.** The division between day and night was significant not only from a celestial perspective, but also in establishing the rhythm of time. The function of the lights is first and foremost to measure time and

divide it into segments. Specifically, **let them be for signs,** phenomena which occur in heaven and on earth, **and for seasons, and for days and years.**

- 15 Let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth;^d and it was so.**
- 16 God made the two great lights,** as they appear today: **the greater light,** the sun, **to rule the day, and the lesser light,** the moon, **to rule the night, and the stars.**
- 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth**
- 18 and to rule during the day and during the night.** The sun and moon appear to human beings as rulers over day and night, as it is impossible for one to fail to notice the presence of the sun or its absence, and it is likewise impossible to miss the appearance or disappearance of the moon. **And** these lights also serve **to divide between the light and the darkness.** Although earlier verses already referred to day and night, and to morning and evening, and connected them to light and darkness, these entities were not completely defined until now. **And God saw that it was good.**
- 19 It was evening and it was morning, a fourth day.**
- 20** From vegetation and the heavenly bodies, the verse addresses the creation of animals: **God said: Let the water swarm with swarms [sheretz] of living creatures [nefesh haya].** These creatures would not grow and develop blindly, like vegetation, but would have the ability to move and some measure of will. The word *sheretz* may allude to wanting, *retziya*, or running, *ritza*. Note that the first appearance of the phrase *nefesh haya* is in connection with aquatic creatures; it appears again only later with regard to land animals. Perhaps this is because water is the first source for creation and for the continued existence of life. **And let birds fly above the earth on the face of the firmament of the heavens.**
- 21 God created the great serpents [taninim].** In several places in the Bible, the *tanin* is identified with the *livyatan* or some creature resembling it. In modern Hebrew, *livyatan* refers to a whale while *tanin* refers to an alligator, but these are not their biblical meanings. Rather, the *tanin* and *livyatan* are mysterious aquatic creatures that were created in the water and whose relationship to our world is unclear. In several places in the Bible they are depicted as enormously powerful monsters, which at times do not accept the authority even of God. **And every**

DISCUSSION

e.g., Job 7:12, 26:10; Jeremiah 5:22). On the other hand, there is a profound, symbiotic relationship between them: The dry land cannot exist without the waters of the sea, and the sea requires the dry land in order to contain and establish

boundaries for its waters, and to provide water through the various springs and rivers streaming through the dry land. This mutual dependency can be inferred from several descriptions of rain and rivers, both of which are manifestations of

the connection between the land and the sea (see, e.g., Deuteronomy 11:10–12; Ecclesiastes 1:7; *Ta'anit* 9b; *Sanhedrin* 108a).

1:14 | **Lights:** The heavenly bodies are the foundation of all human measurements of time, and



יב עֲשֵׂה פְרִי לְמִינֹו אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּבוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׁא עֵשֶׂב
 יג מִזֵּרֵעַ זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וַעַץ עֲשֵׂה־פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרְעוּבוּ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים בְּיָטוֹב:
 יד וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:
 טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרִקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ
 טז לְאוֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וְלַיָּמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרִקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־
 טז הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֶת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל
 יז לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים: וַיִּתֵּן
 יח אֶת־שְׁמֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּרִקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וְלַמְּשָׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וְלְהַבְדִּיל
 יט בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים בְּיָטוֹב: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי:
 כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רִקִיעַ
 כא הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה וְהַרְמֵשֶׁת

רשי

טו | והיו למאורות. עוד זאת נקרא, שיחירו לעולם.
 טז | המאורות הגדולים. שנים נבדלו, ונתמנעה הלכנה על שהקצרה והמרה. חי חסר לשני מלכים שנתמנו בקצרה חיה: ואת הפוכים. על ידי שמעט חת הלכנה הקצה נבדלה להפס דעתה.
 כו | נפש חיה. שיהא פה חיות: שרץ. כל דבר חי שחיו גמור מן החן קרוי שרץ. בעוף - כגון זבובים, פשקעים - כגון נמלים וחסופיות ותולעים, ונבדלות - כגון חלד ועקב וזבובים וכו' וזהו פה, וכל הקצים.
 כא | התנינים. דגים גדולים שבים. ונבדלי חיה: הוא לוינו וכן וכו', שפדחם וקר ונבדלה וזהו חת הנקבה ומלכה לנדיקום לעתיד לבוא, שאם יפרו וירבו לא יתקום העולם כפינו: נפש חיה. נפש שיש פה חיות:

מאורות. חסר ו' פני, על שהיו יום מראה לפל חסרה פתעוקות. הוא ששני: פדעיו היו מתענע על חסרה שלא תפל פתעוקות (תענית כו ע"ב): להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה. משאנו החור הרחשו, הכל פשקעת ימי פחשית שמשו: החור והשך הרחשוים זה פיום וזה בלילה: והיו לאות. פשהמאורות לוקין סימן רע הוא לעולם. שפחה: "ומיתות השמים חל תחתיו" (ירמיה י ג), פששוקם רעון הקלוש ברוך הוא חין חסר צריכים לדלו. מן הפדענות: וכו' פדעים. על שם העתיד פעתדים: שחל להצטוות על המועדות, והם נמנע למוולד הלכנה: ולימים. שמשו החמה חני יום ושמשו הלכנה חניו, חני יום שלם: ושנים. לסוף שלם ממות וששים וחמשה ימים יגמרו מהלכתן בשנים עשר מזלות המשקתים אותם. והיא שנה:

עשה פה, חלף ויתנו החן ען עשה פרי, ולא הען פרי למיך פשנתחל חס על עונו נפקה גם היא על עונה ונתקללה: אשר זרעו בו. הן גרעני כל פרי שמהן החילן עמח פשנטעון חיותו.
 יב | ותוצא הארץ וגו'. חף על פי שלא נחמד למינהו פדשחין פשויהו, שמעו שגטו החילנות על כך ונשאו קל וחמד פשנגו, פמפלש פחצה פשחישית חלון (וחלון ס ע"א):
 יד | יהי מאורת וגו'. מיום ראשון נבדלו, ונבדעו ענה עליהם להחלות פקיע. וכן כל תולדות שמים וחן נבדלו מיום ראשון וכל חיה וחדד נקבע פיום שנגע עליה, הוא פתנו (לעיל פסוק ח): "חת השמים" - לרבות תולדותיהם, "חת החן" - לרבות תולדותיה: יהי

DISCUSSION

➔ this is their primary function. While it is also true that the sun is the source of the earth's energy, in principle the world could exist if there were another source to provide energy or light for the earth, independent of the sun. Theoretically, there could be a source of light and energy that is not concentrated in one place but scattered throughout the firmament.

1:15| **For lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth:** The book of Genesis is not the story of the entire universe; rather, it is "the book of the legacy of Adam" (5:1). Since it deals with man, his problems, his manner of living, and his purpose, the world is described from mankind's perspective, and only with regard to those aspects relevant to him. Accordingly, although the difference in size between these massive lights and the

planet Earth was known even in ancient times, it is no surprise that the heavenly bodies are portrayed in the verse without any reference to their true size or to their function, beyond the fact that man uses them to measure time and that they provide light. Since other stars, which are located light-years away from us, have no practical connection to human existence on earth, the Torah does not mention them.

Parashat Noah

Explanations include scientific names of flora and fauna along with traditional rabbinic commentary and color pictures

The Impending Flood

GENESIS 6:9–7:6

In addition to the sin of sexual promiscuity mentioned at the end of the previous section, theft was rampant among mankind as well. For this reason, humans, and along with them all animals living on dry land, were doomed to perish in a flood. Only a few representatives of each species would be saved from the calamity and form the nucleus of a new world.

- 9 **This is the legacy of Noah**, the story of his life in brief. **Noah was a righteous, wholehearted man in his generations**; in contrast to those surrounding him, **Noah walked with God**. Noah was connected to God, as he contemplated Him and lived with an awareness of the Divine. During this period, when mankind had not yet received God's commandments, one's relationship with God was not expressed in mandated actions. It is stated about Noah, as well as Hanokh before him and Abraham after him, that they walked with or before God (5:22, 17:1). This means that God was the subject of their lives, and they had a special relationship with Him.
- 10 **Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Yefet.**
- 11 After a brief description of Noah as a private individual, the focus returns to the history of the world and Noah's important role in the unfolding events. **The earth was corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with villainy**. The absence of law and order, described above in relation to men taking women as they chose (verse 2), was not limited to the sexual sphere. This corruption also found expression in the manner in which the powerful exerted control over the weak, as people began to steal and snatch property from one another without compunction. As a result, the very possibility of possession and ownership was eliminated.
- 12 **God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted, as all flesh corrupted its path upon the earth**. People's lives in the environment of the time were apparently quiet and comfortable, with abundant food and water.¹ However, instead of being happy with their lot, the people exploited the abundance that was in easy reach by stealing from one another and refusing to recognize property laws and social conventions. Limits and boundaries did not exist for them.
- 13 **God said to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before Me**. According to My reckoning, the end of all living creatures has arrived, **as the earth is filled with villainy because of them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth**. I will destroy them together with the earth itself. However, you have been chosen to continue humanity.
- 14 Therefore, **make for you an ark of the relatively light gopher wood**;^b **separate compartments shall you make the ark, and you shall coat it within and without with pitch**, a kind of tar from which asphalt is produced. The tar will serve as a water-proofing substance.



Cedar tree



Cypress tree

- 15 **And this is how you shall make it: Three hundred cubits shall be the length of the ark, fifty cubits its breadth, and thirty cubits its height**. This is a huge structure, of exceptional proportions even in comparison to structures built on land.
- 16 **You shall make a window for the ark**, to allow the entrance of light. **And to a cubit shall you complete it at the top**; the sides of the ark shall form a kind of trapezoid, with the roof of the ark one cubit long. **And the entrance of the ark you shall place in its side**, for entering and exiting. **Lower, second, and third stories you shall make it**; the ark shall have three floors.
- 17 **And behold, I am bringing the flood [mabbul]**. The term *mabbul* is commonly translated as flood, based on the context.² However, it is likely that the word actually means "judgment" or "sentence."³ In other words, God is bringing a sentence of judgment in the form of **water upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which there is the breath of life, from under the heavens**. In those waters, **everything that is on the earth, everything that is generally found on dry land, shall perish**.
- 18 **But at this juncture I will keep My covenant with you**, which will be confirmed and fulfilled at a later point (see 9:9–11). **You shall come to the ark: you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you**.

BACKGROUND

6:14 | **Gopher wood**: Some identify the gopher tree with the cypress, *Cupressus*, whose wood

is water-resistant and suitable for shipbuilding. Others suggest that it is the cedar tree (Onkelos).

The Septuagint translation renders gopher as squared and planed.

ט
י
יא
יב
יג
יד
טו
טז
יז
יח

אֱלֹהִים תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ׃
וַיֻּלְדוּ־לְנֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָנִים אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶת׃ וַתִּשְׁחַת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים
וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס׃ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה נִשְׁחַתָּה כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־
בָּשָׂר אֶת־דְּרָכָהּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְנֹחַ קָן כָּן כָּל־בָּשָׂר בָּא
לִפְנֵי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס מִפְּנֵיהֶם וְהִנְנִי מַשְׁחִיתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ׃ עֲשֵׂה לְךָ
תֵּבַת עֲצֵי־גֹפֶר קַנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַתֵּבָה וְכִפַּרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבַּיִת וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר׃ וְזֶה
אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אַמָּה אֹרֶךְ הַתֵּבָה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה רָחְבָּהּ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים
אַמָּה קוֹמָתָהּ׃ צֹהַר וַתַּעֲשֶׂה לַתֵּבָה וְאֶל־אַמָּה תִּכְלְנָה מִלְּמַעַלָּה וּפִתַּח הַתֵּבָה
בְּצַדָּהּ תִּשִׂים תַּחְתִּים שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים תַּעֲשֶׂה׃ וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אֶת־הַמָּבּוּל מִיַּם
עַל־הָאָרֶץ לְשַׁחַת כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ רוּחַ חַיִּים מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּאָרֶץ
יָגוּעַ׃ וְהִקְמוֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבֵאתָ אֶל־הַתֵּבָה אִתָּהּ וּבְנִיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְנִשְׂיֹ-

רשי

שָׁלַח וְיָחִי רַיַח רַע שָׁל זָפֶת, חָבֵל בְּאֵן מִפְּנֵי חֹזֶק הַמַּיִם וְזָפֶתָה מִפְּנֵי וּמִחוּץ׃

טו וַיֵּשׁ חֹמְרִים חֲלוּן, וַיֵּשׁ חֹמְרִים חָבֵן טוֹבָה הַמְחִירָה לָהֶם, וְאֶל אַמָּה תִּכְלְנָה מִלְּמַעַלָּה, כְּסוּיָה מְקַשֵּׁעַ וְעוֹלָה עַד שֶׁהָיָה חָבֵן מִלְּמַעַלָּה וְעוֹמֵד עַל חֲמֵה, כְּדִי שְׂחִיבֵי הַמַּיִם לִמְטָה מִפְּחוּן וּמִכֹּחַן, בְּצַדָּהּ תִּשִׂים, שָׁלַח יִפְלֹוּ אֲשֵׁמִים בָּהּ, תַּחְתִּים שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים, שָׁלַח עֲלוֹתִים ז' עַל גַּב ז', עֲלוֹתִים לְאֶדָם חֲמֻנְעִים לְמַדּוּר הַבְּהֵמוֹת תַּחְתִּים לְזָבֵל׃

יז וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מֵבִיא, הִנְנִי מוּכָן לְהִסָּס עִם חֹתֶם אֲזַדְוִנוּ כְּבָר, "מֵה חֲנוּשׁ כִּי תִּזְכְּרֶנּוּ" (וַהֲלֹם ת, ה) מִבּוּל, שְׂבִילָה חֵת הַכַּל, שְׂבִילָה חֵת הַכַּל, שְׂבִילָה חֵת הַכַּל מִן הַצִּוָּה לְנִגְנוֹן, וְזֶהוּ שְׂבִילָה חֲנוּקָלוֹס, "טוֹפְנִיחַ", שְׂבִילָה חֵת הַכַּל וְהַיִּחָס לְכַבֵּל שֶׁהָיָה עֲנֻקָה, לְכַךְ נִקְרָאתָ שְׂבִילָה, שְׂבִיל מֵרַע מִבּוּל וְנִגְנוֹן לְשָׁם׃

יח וְהִקְמוֹתִי אֶת בְּרִיתִי, בְּרִית הָיָה עִרְיָן עַל הַפְּרוּת שָׁלַח וְיָקֵנוּ וְיַעֲשֶׂהוּ, שָׁלַח וְיַקְרָנוּ וְיַעֲשֶׂהוּ קָשִׁים שְׂבִילָה אִתָּהּ וּבְנִיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ, חֲנוּשִׁים לְבַד וְהִנְנִים לְבַד, מִכֹּחַן שְׂבִילָה וְנִשְׂיֹתָהּ מִפְּנֵי הַמַּיִם׃

יב כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר, חֲסִפֵּי בְּהֵמָה חַיָּה וְעוֹר נִקְרָחוּ לְשִׁחְיוֹן מִיָּנוּן׃

יג קָן כָּן כָּל בָּשָׂר, כָּל מְקוֹם שִׁחְתָה מוֹצֵחַ זְנוּתָה, חֲנִיכָה לְמִנְסִיחַ בְּחָה לְעוֹלָם וְהוֹצֵחַ טוֹבִים וְרָעִים, כִּי מִלְּאָה הָאָרֶץ חָמָס, לֹא נִחְתָם גִּזְרֵי דִינָם חָלָף עַל הַגּוֹל, אֶת הָאָרֶץ, כְּמוֹ מִן הַחֶזֶק, וְדוּמָה לוֹ: "כִּי־חִתִּי חֵת הָעִיר" (שְׁמוֹת ט, טו) מִן הָעִיר, "חֵת הַחֶזֶק" (מַלְאכִים ח' טו, טז) מִן הַחֶזֶק, "חֵת הַחֶזֶק", עִם הַחֶזֶק, שִׁחַף שְׁלֹשָׁה טַפְחִים שֶׁל עֲמֻק הַמַּחְדָּשָׁה נִגְנוּחוּ וְנִשְׂטָפוּ׃

יד עֲשֵׂה לְךָ תֵּבַת, הַרְבֵּה כּוֹחַ וְהִצֵּלָה לְפָנֶיךָ, וְלָמָּה הַטְּרִיחוּ בְּכֶנֶן זֶה? כְּדִי שִׁיחְיוּהוּ חֲנִשֵׁי דוֹר הַמִּבּוּל עֵסוּק בְּהַ מַּחָה וְעֲשִׂים עֲשֵׂה וְשִׁחְלוּן חֹתֵן: מֵה זֹאת לְכָךְ וְהָיָה חֹמֶר לָהֶם: עֲתֵד הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְהִבְיֵחַ מִבּוּל לְעוֹלָם, חוֹלֵי יָסוּבוּ: עֲצֵי גֹפֶר, כִּךְ שְׂמוֹ, וְלָמָּה מִמִּין זֶה? עַל שֶׁ עֲבָרִית שְׂנֵי עֲלִיָּה לְמַחֲוֹת נוֹ: קָנִים, מְדוּרִים מְדוּרִים לְכָל בְּהֵמָה וְחַיָּה: בַּכֹּפֶר, זָפֶת בְּשִׁלּוֹן חֲרָמִי, וּמִנְעוֹ מִתְלַמּוּד 'כְּכָרָה', תְּבַבְתוּ שֶׁל מִשָּׁה, עַל יְדֵי שְׂהִי הַמַּיִם תִּשִׂים, דִּיהַ בְּחֻמֶר מִכְּפֻסִים וְזָפֶת מִכְּפֻסִים, וְעוֹד כְּדִי

ט אֱלֹהִים תּוֹלְדֹת נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק, הַחִוִּיל וְהַזְכִּירוּ סִפֵּר בְּשִׁבְחוֹ שְׂנִיחָה: "זָכַר צַדִּיק לְכַבְרָה" (מַשְׁלִי יז), דָּבַר חֲכָה, לְמִדָּה שְׂעָרָה תּוֹלְדוֹתֵיהֶם שֶׁל צַדִּיקִים מִנְעִים טוֹבִים: בְּדֹרֹתָיו, יֵשׁ מְדוּבָרֵינוּ דוֹקָשִׁים חוֹתֵן לְשָׁבִי, כָּל שְׂכָן חָלוּ הָיָה בְּדוֹר צַדִּיקִים הָיָה צַדִּיק וְיָחַד, וְיֵשׁ שְׂדוּקָשִׁים חוֹתֵן לְגַנְחֵי: לְמִי דוֹר הָיָה צַדִּיק, וְחָלוּ הָיָה בְּדוֹרֵי שֶׁל חֲבֵרָה לֹא הָיָה נִחְסָב לְכָלוֹס: אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ נָח, וְהַבְּרָכָה הוּא חוֹמֶר: "חֲשֵׁר הַתְּהַלְכֵתִי לְפָנֶיךָ" (וְהָלוּ כה, טז) עַל הָיָה עִרְיָן שְׂעַד לְתַמְכוּ, חָבֵל חֲבֵרָה הָיָה מִתְחַזֵּק וְהָיָה עִרְיָן מִחֲלוֹ: הִתְהַלֵּךְ, לְשׁוֹן עֵבֶר, וְהָיָה שְׂמוּנָה שֶׁל לְמִי בְּשִׁלּוֹן כְּבֵד, מִשְׁמָשֵׁת לְהַבִּיא וְלִשְׂעֵבֶר בְּשִׁלּוֹן חֲכָד: "חִוִּם הַתְּהַלֵּךְ" (וְהָלוּ יג, ח) לְהַבִּיא, "הַתְּהַלֵּךְ לְנֹחַ" לְשְׂעֵבֶר: "הַתְּהַלֵּךְ עֵבֶר עִרְיָן" (שְׂמוּלָה ח' יב, יט) לְהַבִּיא, "וְהָיָה וְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ חָל הַבֵּית הָזֶה" (מַלְאכִים ח' יח, טז) לְשׁוֹן עֵבֶר, חָלָף שְׂהִי וְשְׂבִילָה שְׂבִילָה וְהַכּוֹס לְהַבִּיא׃

יא וְתִשְׁחַת, לְשׁוֹן עֵבֶר וְעֵבֶדָה זְרָה, כְּמוֹ: "כִּי תִשְׁחַת" (דְּבָרִים ז, טז), "כִּי הִשְׁחִית כָּל בָּשָׂר" (וְהָלוּ פְסוּחַ יב) וְהִמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס, גֵּל׃

Title and brief summary give an overview to the entire narrative

Parashat Beshalah



The Beginning of the Journey in the Wilderness

EXODUS 13:17–22

to Joseph, that his bones would be returned from Egypt.

Certain commandments were enumerated before and after the account of the plague of the firstborn and the exodus from Egypt, in order to imprint the memory of these great events on the consciousness of the Jewish people for all time. The Torah now returns to the story of the children of Israel, describing the beginning of their journey into the wilderness. Here, the people's first campsites are briefly enumerated, as well as certain matters concerning their general route and manner of travel. The Torah also notes the fulfillment of the promise made

- 17 It was, in Pharaoh's sending forth the people, that God did not guide them via the land of the Philistines,** along the Mediterranean coast, **although it was near, for God said: Lest the people reconsider when they see war.** Although the Philistines were not a large nation, they were militarily powerful. Passing through their land risked a war which might have caused the Israelites to reverse course **and return to Egypt.**
- 18 God led the people circuitously, via the wilderness of the Red Sea.** Instead of turning northward, toward the Mediterranean coastline, God led them southeast. **And the children of Israel came up armed from the land of Egypt,** as they assumed that they would eventually be forced to fight.² God decided that they were not yet ready to stand in battle, and He therefore guided them on a path that would avoid direct confrontation with the Philistines.
- 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he, Joseph, had administered an oath to the children of Israel,** the children of Jacob,³ or the Israelites in general, **saying: God will remember and redeem you; and** when this occurs, I request that **you shall bring my bones up from here,** from Egypt, **with you.**
- 20 They,** the Israelites, **traveled from** a place called **Sukot**; alternatively, from a place where there were booths [*sukkot*], **and they encamped in Etam, at the edge of the wilderness.** Until this point, the Israelites traveled in fertile areas that were part of Egypt or Goshen. Now, they begin to travel in uninhabited areas.
- 21** So that they could navigate the desert, an angel of **the Lord^D was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to guide them on the way.** They followed the cloud, which represented the glory of God. **And by night** He would go with them **in a pillar of fire to illuminate for them, to go day and night.** It is unclear whether the Israelites actually traveled by night. In any event, the pillar of fire gave them the ability to do so.⁴
- 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night would not move from before the people.** The Israelites did not know where they were traveling; these two pillars represented God's guiding hand in the wilderness.

The Israelites at the Red Sea

EXODUS 14:1–31

When God struck Egypt with the plagues, the Israelites remained on the periphery. They stayed in their dwellings, and they did not witness with their own eyes the wonders that Moses performed in God's name. Only at the Red Sea do Israel witness these miraculous events to their full dramatic extent. Furthermore, unlike the plagues that descended on Egypt within their borders, the occurrences described here come with sudden, quick intensity. This is also a defining moment for Moses in his

capacity as leader and redeemer in the eyes of the people.

- 14 1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**
- 2 Speak to the children of Israel, that they return** in the direction of Egypt **and encamp before Pi HaHiroth,^B** a famous place at the time. The name Pi is Egyptian. It is located **between Migdol and the Red Sea, before the pagan god Baal Tzefon.^{BD}** **Opposite it you shall encamp, by the sea.** On their way to

DISCUSSION

13:21 | **The Lord:** God appears in the world by way of angels or messengers (see Rashi; Rashbam; Ramban; *Hizkuni*; *Bekhor Shor* 14:19). The verse below (14:19) describes the

movements of this pillar, and there it is referred to as an angel.

14:2 | **Baal Tzefon:** This may be a reference to Set, Egyptian god of the desert, darkness, and

destruction. Over the course of many generations the Egyptians did not know how to relate to the God of Israel, and where to place Him within their pantheon. They saw Him as a local

פרשת
בשלח

וַיְהִי בִשְׁלַח פְּרַעְיָה אֶת־הָעָם וְלֹא־נָחַם אֱלֹהִים דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי קָרוֹב הוּא
 כִּי וְאָמַר אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־יִנָּחַם הָעָם בְּרֹאֲתָם מִלַּחְמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרַיִם: וַיֹּסֵב אֱלֹהִים ו
 אֶת־הָעָם דֶּרֶךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יַם־סוּף וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּקַּח
 מֹשֶׁה אֶת־עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ כִּי הִשְׁבַּע הַשָּׁבִיעַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פֶּקֶד
 יִפְקֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהַעֲלִיתֶם אֶת־עֲצָמוֹתַי מִזֶּה אֶתְכֶם: וַיִּסְעוּ מִסֹּפֶת וַיַּחֲנוּ
 בְּאֶתְם בְּקֶצֶה הַמִּדְבָּר: וַיְהוּה הַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן לְנַחֲתָם הַדֶּרֶךְ
 וְלַיְלָה בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ לְהַאֲדִיר לָהֶם לַלַּיְלָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה: לֹא־יָמִישׁ עַמּוּד הָעָנָן יוֹמָם
 וְעַמּוּד הָאֵשׁ לַיְלָה לִפְנֵי הָעָם:

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁבוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ לִפְנֵי פִי הַחִירֹת

Linguistic explanations of names, places and phrases provide historical context and offer the reader a broad worldview

רש"י

כמו להרחוקתם, חף פאן להנחותם על ידי שליח. ומי הוא השליח? עמוד הענן והקדוש ברוך הוא כבודו מולכו לכניהם, ומכל מקום חת עמוד הענן הכין להנחותם על ידו, שהי על ידי עמוד הענן הם הולכים עמוד הענן חינו לחזרה חלף להודותם הדקדק:

כב | לא ימיש. הקדוש ברוך הוא חת עמוד הענן יומם ועמוד האש לילה, מגיד שעמוד הענן משלים לעמוד האש ועמוד האש משלים לעמוד הענן, שעד שלא יסקע זה עולה זה:

דבר חסר, ו'חמשים', מחמשים, אחד מחמשה יחזו ו'חמשה' חלקים מיתו בשלשית ומי חספה:

יט | השבע השביעי. השביעם שאביעו לכניהם. ולמה לא השביע לבניו שאזוהו לחזן בענן מיד כמו שהשביע יעקוב? חמר יוסף. חני שליט הייתי במגרים והיה ספק בדי לעשות חבל גע לא יעזוב מגרים לעשות. לכך השביעם לקשוחלו ויחזו משם שאזוהו: והעליתם את עצמותי מזה אתכם. לחזיו השביע כן למדנו שאף עגמות כל השבטים העלו עמהם, שנאמר 'אתכם':

י | ויהי בשלח פרעה. ולא נחם. נהגם, כמו: 'לך נחה חת העם' (להלן לב, לד). 'בההולךך מנחה אתך' (משלי ו, כב): כי קרוב הוא. ונחם לשוב בחזיתו הדקדק למגרים ומדקדי חזרה יש הדקה בראתם מלחמה. כגון מלחמת 'ויקד העמלקי והכנעני' וגו' (במדבר יד, מה). חס הלבן דרך ישר היו חוזרים מה חס פשהקיסם דרך מערקם חמרי: 'נתנה ראש ונשובה מנג'ימה' (שם פסוק ד) חס הולכים בפשטרה על חת כמה וכמה: פן ינחם. יחשבו מחספה על שיחזו ויתנו לב לשוב:

פרק יד
 ב | וישבו. לחזויהם, לצד מגרים היו מקדבין כל יום השלישי, כדי להטעות חת פרעה שיחמר תועים הם בדקדק, כמו שנאמר: 'חמרי פרעה לבני יאחזל' וגו' (להלן פסוק ג). ויחזו לפני פי החירות. היא פיתוס, ועכשו נקראת 'פי

כ | ויסעו מספת. ביום השני, שהי בראשון פאז מרעמסם לסקות (לעיל יב, לו):

כא | לנחתם הדרך. נקוד פתח, שהיא כמו להנחותם, כמו: 'לדחותכם בדקדק חשר תלכו בה' (דברים ח, לג) שהיא

יח | ויסב. הסבס מן הדקדק הפשוטה לדקדק העקומה. ים סוף. כמו לים סוף. יסוף. היא לשון חסם שגלים בו הניס, וכן: 'ויסבס פסוף' (לעיל ב, ג). 'הנה וסוף קמלו' (שעיה יג, י). ו'חמשים'. חין 'חמשים' חלף מ'חמשים', וכן היא חומר: 'וחתם תעבדו חמשים' (ויחזע א, יד). וכן תרגם חוקקלוס 'מזקרו', כמו: 'ויקד חת חניכיו' (בראשית יד, יד) 'ויקדו'

BACKGROUND

14:2 | Pi HaHiro: Pi means temple in Egyptian and appears in names of other Egyptian places, such as Pitom and Pi Beset. It is possible that Hirot is a reference to Hathor, an Egyptian goddess, or to Hirot, a Syrian goddess attested to in Syrian and Egyptian inscriptions, whom the Egyptians worshipped. Despite the theory that

Pi HaHiro refers to the location of a temple, the location is not known today.
 A different view suggests that the name Pi HaHiro is of Semitic origin and signifies a canal or gulf (the word *khiritu* means canal in Ugaritic and Akkadian). Accordingly, this name could refer to two possible areas: The city known as Suez

(Jebel Attaka), on the coast of the Gulf of Suez, a branch of the Red Sea, or near the source of one of the branches of the Nile, perhaps the eastern (Pelusian) branch, called Shihor (Isaiah 23:3) after the Egyptian god Hor.
Baal Tzefon: Baal Tzefon is the name of a Canaanite god mentioned in an Egyptian contract

Canaan, the Israelites did not need to cross the Red Sea. From the eastern bank of the Nile, their way was open toward the Land of Israel, even if the Red Sea once extended further north than it does today. Still, God instructed Moses to turn from their route and camp by the sea.



Possible locations of Sukot, Migdol, and Baal Tzefon

- 3 **Pharaoh will then say of the children of Israel: They are astray in the land.** They have lost their way, and are doubling back. **The wilderness has closed in on them,** allowing them to travel no further.
- 4 **I will harden Pharaoh's heart.** After the plagues, the ruin, and the destruction inflicted upon Egypt, Pharaoh's heart will be hardened one last time, **and he will pursue them; and I will be exalted through Pharaoh, and through his entire army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord,** for something will occur now more miraculous than the plagues of Egypt. **And they, the Israelites, did so.**
- 5 Meanwhile, **it was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled.**^d The three days originally agreed upon (see 8:23–24) had passed, and the Israelites did not seem bound for any particular destination. **The heart of Pharaoh and his servants was transformed with regard to the people, and they said: What is this that we have done, that we have sent Israel from our servitude?** This nation of slaves filled an important

economic function for us, and was part of our way of life. We did not mean to set them free, only to allow them a respite.

- 6 **He harnessed his chariot.** Pharaoh commanded that his horses be harnessed to his personal chariot. **And he took his people, his soldiers, with him.**
- 7 **He took six hundred select chariots,** the best he had. These were the elite forces of Egypt, whose size is comparable to that of a modern armored division. **And he took as well all the chariots of Egypt; chariots played a dominant role in Egypt's military. And there were auxiliaries with all of them.**^d In addition to the driver, who held the reins, and the warrior, who held a weapon, usually a bow, as seen in ancient Egyptian drawings, Pharaoh added an officer over each chariot.



Mural of Egyptian warriors on chariots laying siege, found in Rameses II's temple in Thebes, thirteenth century BCE

- 8 **The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; the children of Israel went out with a high hand,** not as escapees.
- 9 **Egypt pursued them; all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army caught up with them encamped by the sea, by Pi HaHiro, before Baal Tzefon.**
- 10 **Pharaoh approached the Israelite encampment; the children of Israel lifted their eyes and behold, the forces of the**

DISCUSSION

deity associated only with Israel, and despite the plagues, they retained their pagan beliefs. The encampment of the Israelites before Baal Tzefon was likely to suggest to Pharaoh that the Israelites worshipped a god of desolation and ruin, and that this cruel, capricious god might perhaps abandon them in favor of the Egyptians (see *Mekhilta*).

14:5 | **It was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled:** Pharaoh almost certainly

sent men to accompany the Israelites, either officially or as undercover spies, in order to gather information about their activities. He therefore learned that the people did not go out like slaves on a temporary break from labor, but as victorious free men (see *Mekhilta*).

14:7 | **And there were auxiliaries with all of them:** The ancient Egyptians harnessed their horses by the neck, as they had not yet developed methods of harnessing the horse's body,

which would have allowed them to fully benefit from the horse's strength. The addition of an auxiliary to the chariot would slow it considerably, and was not necessarily appropriate for a military maneuver. Still, the additional soldier would make the chariot appear more imposing. This suggests that Pharaoh did not intend to engage the Israelites in open battle. Rather, he wished to frighten the Israelites into returning, and in this regard he nearly succeeded.

צֹאן וּבָקָר וַיִּתֵּן לְאַבְיִמֶלֶךְ וַיְכַרְתּוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית: וַיַּצֵּב אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שִׁבְעַת כִּבְשֹׁתַי הַצֹּאן לְבִדְהָן: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מַה הִנֵּה שִׁבְעַת כִּבְשֹׁתַי הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הֵצַבְתָּ לְבִדְהָנָה: וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶת־שִׁבְעַת כִּבְשֹׁתַי תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי בַעֲבוּר תִּהְיֶה־לִּי לְעֹדָה כִּי חִפְרָתִי אֶת־הַבְּאֵר הַזֹּאת: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּאֵר שִׁבְעַת כִּי שָׁם נִשְׁבַּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: וַיְכַרְתּוּ בְרִית בְּבֵאֵר שִׁבְעַת וַיִּקַּם אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ וּפִיכַל שָׂר־צַבָּאוֹ וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַיִּטַּע אֲשֶׁל בְּבֵאֵר שִׁבְעַת וַיִּקְרָא־שָׁם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם: וַיִּגַּד אַבְרָהָם בְּאֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים יָמִים רַבִּים:

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסְּהוּ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךְ אֶת־יִחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אֹהֲבָתָ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלַךְ־לָךְ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמִּדְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ: וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם בְּבָקָר וַיַּחֲבִישׁ אֶת־חֲמוֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֹלָה וַיִּקַּם וַיִּלַּךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים:

דש"י

ממך עמד לי בזה, שלא יאמר: הקדושות לא היה בהן ממש: את בנך חמר לו: שני בנים יש לי חמר לו: חת יחידי: חמר לו: זה יחיד לאמו וזה יחיד לאמו. חמר לו: חמר להקדש: חמר לו: שניהם חמי חמר לו: חת יצחק. ולמה לא יצא לו מתחלה? שלא לערבו פתוח ותנוח דעתו עליו ותשקד, וכדי לחבב עליו את המעשה ולתן לו סקר על כל דבר ודבור: ארץ המדינה ירושלים וכן בדברי הימים (י"ג א, ח) "לבנות חת בית ה' פידושלם בהר המורה". ודפיתנו פקשו, על שם שמש הוקחה יוצאה לשלח ויונקלוס תרגמו על שם עבודת הקטלת שיש בו מור נדף ושחר בשמים: והעלהו. לא חמר לו שחטוהו, לפי שלא היה חפץ הקדוש ברוך הוא לשחוטו חלף יעלהו לחר לעשותו עולה, ומשהעלהו חמר לו הויריה: אחד ההרים. הקדוש ברוך הוא מתחיל הצדקים ויחזר כך מעלה להם, וכל זה כדי להקדש שדךו, וכן: "אל החרץ חסר חרץ" (לעיל י"ג א, וכן ביונה: "והקח חלה חת הקדושה" (יונה ג, ב)).

ג וישבם. נדדו למנוחה, ויחבשו. הוא פענמו, ולא ענה לחמד מעבדיו, שהחכה מקלקלת השוקה: את שני נעריו. ישמעאל וחלועה. שחין חסד חסוד רשאי לגלות לדךך בלא שני חגשים. שחס ינטרך החמד להקבו ויתחיק והיה השני עמו: ויבקע, ונפלא, כמו: ונלאו הקדש" (שמואל ב, י"ג), לאון פקנע, פינדר"א בלעז:

עד שנהפכה קדוש, מיד "ויטע משם חבקה" (ועיל כ, ח) מפני שזה של לטע, וזכר לחרץ פלשתים, וכן תפעים ותפע שנה היה, שהרי בשלמי למילתו פאו חללו המלחכים, הדי עשירים וחסד שנה, וכן פתנו: "ימים רבים" - מרבים על הרשעים, ולא פה הפתנו לסתם חלף לפקש, וחס היו מרבים עליהם שתי שנים או יותר היה מספיק. על פתך חיים יתרים יותר משנה, הרי עשירים וש שנה. מיד יצא משם ויחזר לחבדו, ויחזקה שנה הקמה לפני עקלתו של יצחק שנים עשרה שנים כך שניה בסדר עולם:

פרק כב
א | אחר הדברים האלה. יש מרבותינו חומרים: חחר דכריו של שטן שהיה מקטרג וחומר: מפל סעודה עשה חבקה לא הקדש לפתך פד חחד או חזר חחד. חמר לו: כלום עשה חלף בשביל פנו, חלו היית חומר לו: וזכר חותן לפני, לא היה מעבד. ויש חומרים: חחר דכריו של ישמעאל שהיה מתפלל על יצחק, שכל בן שלם עשה שנה ולא מחר. חמר לו יצחק: פחד חחד חתה מירחג, חלו חמר לי הקדוש ברוך הוא: וזכר עמך לפני, לא היית מעבד: דגני. כך היא ענתם של חסידים, לאון ענה הוא ולאון ומנו:

ב | קח נא. חין עז' חלף לאון פקשה, חמר לו: בפקשה

ל | בעבור תהיה לי. זאת, "לענה" - לשון עדות של נקבה, כמו: "ועדה המעבדה" (לחלו לו, ב). כי חפרתי את הבאר. מרבים היו עליה רועי חבמלך וחומרים: חחנו חפרונה: חמרו: פניהם, כל מי שיחלה על הבאר ויעלו המים לקחתו שלו היא, ועלו לקחת חבקה:

ג | וישל רב ושמאל, חד חמר: פקדס להביא ממנו פרות לחוקים פקענה: וחד חמר: פקדן לחכמה וכו' כל מיני פרות. ומינו לשון נטיעה פחלים, שחמר: "ויטע חלה חפרנו" (שמואל ב, י"ג) ויקרא שם וגו'. על ידי חותן חלף חקרה שמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא חלה לכל העולם: לחחר שחוקים ושחח חומר להם: פרכו למי שחלקתם משלו, סגורים חתם שמשלי חכלתם? משל מי שחמר והיה העולם חכלתם:

ד | ימים רבים. מרבים על של חבדו; פחבדו עשה עשירים וחסד שנה וכן עשירים וש, שהרי בן שבעים וחסד שנה היה בנחל מחרן, חותה שנה "ויבא ושב בבל ממצד" (ועיל י"ג א), שלא מינו חסד לבן שבעים חלף חס, שכל מקומותיו היה פאורח חונה ונסע והולך, שחמה: "ויעבד חבד" (ועיל י"ג א), "ויעתק משם" (ספוק ח) "ויהי רעב בחרן ויגד חבד ממצד" (ספוק ח) ויבמרים לא עשה חלף שלמה חדשים, שהרי שלחו פקעה, מיד "ויקח למסעיו" (ועיל י"ג א) עד "ויבא ושב בחלבי ממרח חסר פחבדו" (ספוק ח) חס וש

- 4 Abraham started his journey in Beersheba,²⁵ many hours from Jerusalem, on foot. Since he and Isaac had only one donkey and were traveling together, the journey took three days. **On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place^D from afar.**
- 5 **Abraham said to his young men: Stay here with the donkey and wait for me, and I and the lad will go there; we will prostrate ourselves, pray or sacrifice an offering, and will return to you.** Abraham does not reveal his intention to sacrifice his son. Instead, he gives his attendants the impression that he and Isaac will sacrifice an offering together and then return.
- 6 **Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and placed it upon Isaac his son.^D** By carrying the wood, Isaac was already participating in the sacrifice. **He, Abraham, took in his hand the fire, the kindling, and the knife, and the two of them went together.^D**
- 7 Now that they were alone **Isaac said to Abraham his father; he said: My father. He, Abraham, said to him, as he had responded earlier to God: Here I am, my son,** ready and attentive. Abraham has not become any less fatherly toward Isaac, and he listens with a loving ear, despite the knowledge that he must sacrifice him. **He, Isaac, said: Here are the fire and the wood, but if our intention is to sacrifice an animal, where is the lamb for a burnt offering?**

8 **Abraham said,^D in a poignant response: God will Himself see to the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.** At this point,

Isaac surely began to ponder: What if we do not find a lamb? The juxtaposition of “burnt offering” and “my son” would have rung in his ears, as Isaac was no doubt aware of the practice of human sacrifice among the surrounding peoples. Nevertheless, the verse repeats the phrase indicating their solidarity: **And the two of them went together.** Earlier, Abraham was deeply troubled and Isaac was entirely innocent, and they went together. Now Isaac has heard Abraham’s frightening words, but he continues to walk with his father, without any attempt to escape.

- 9 **They came to the place that God had told him; Abraham built the altar there, arranged the wood, and bound the hands and feet of Isaac his son^D to prevent him from moving, and he placed him on the altar upon the wood.** He completed his preparation of Isaac as an offering.
- 10 **Abraham raised his hand^D and took the knife to slaughter his son.**
- 11 **The angel of the Lord called to him from the heavens.** Since the angel is a messenger of God, its statement is the word of God. **And he said: Abraham, Abraham.** Again, **he, Abraham, said: Here I am,** always ready to be commanded, even in the midst of such a superhuman effort as this.
- 12 **He said: Do not raise your hand to the lad, and do not do anything to him;^D for now I know that you are God-fearing,^D and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me.**

DISCUSSION

22:4 | **And saw the place:** It is unclear what exactly Abraham saw. While he may have been able to identify the land of Moriah, he would still have been unable to pinpoint the precise spot of his destination. The Temple Mount rises above the city of Jerusalem, but it does not rise above the surrounding hills and is unremarkable to the casual onlooker. The Sages explain that the hill was marked by a heavenly sign, such as a cloud (see *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer* 31; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 46; Ramban).

22:6 | **And placed it upon Isaac his son:** The Sages, in light of the juxtaposition of this story to the death of Sarah mentioned soon afterward (23:2), maintain that the two events occurred at the same period. If so, Isaac would have been thirty-seven years old at the time (*Seder Olam Rabba* 1; *Vayikra Rabba* 20:2; *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 23). However, from the details of the events and the conversation between Abraham and Isaac it appears that Isaac was quite young, perhaps ten to twelve years old. He could not have been much younger, as he was old enough to carry

wood a considerable distance (see Ibn Ezra, verse 4).

The two of them went together: The word “together” recurs three times in this story. In this verse, it underscores the heartrending nature of their journey together. Father and son walked together, one agonizingly aware of the purpose of their journey, and the other entirely innocent, under the assumption he was about to participate in a religious ritual, but utterly unaware that he was to be the offering.

22:8 | **Abraham said:** One powerful aspect of the story of the binding of Isaac is the silence of the Torah with regard to Abraham’s thoughts and emotions throughout the ordeal, as well as those of Isaac. Abraham could not perform his task immediately, but was obligated to complete a journey of several days, all the while nursing the thought that he would be required to kill his own son when he would reach his destination (see Ramban, verse 2). For him, those days would have been emotionally and psychologically devastating (see *Bereshit Rabba* 55:5).

One issue that must have struck Abraham was the apparent contradiction between God’s earlier promise: “It is through Isaac that descendants will be accounted to you” (21:12), and His command to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. Apart from the personal sacrifice and the contradiction between God’s statements, the sheer moral repugnance of what he was being asked to do must also have weighed on Abraham, who was familiar with child sacrifice as one of the abominations of the Canaanites (see Deuteronomy 12:31).

Abraham was thrust into a personal crisis, facing the impending loss of his beloved only son and heir, and simultaneously into a crisis of faith, forcing him to reexamine both his relationship with God and the ideals in which he believed. The test of the binding of Isaac highlighted Abraham’s profound compliance with God’s instructions. When God commanded him to perform this act, he obeyed, without question or complaint (see *Tanḥuma, Vayera* 46).

בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשָׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עַיְנָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרֶחֶק: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם
 אֶל־נַעֲרָיו שְׁבוּ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמוֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּזֶר נִלְכָה עַד־כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁוֹבָה
 אֵלֵיכֶם: וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֵלֶה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ
 וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וַאֲיִה הֵשֶׁה לְעֹלָה: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם
 אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה־לוֹ הֵשֶׁה לְעֹלָה בְנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 אָמַר־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת־
 יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים: וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח
 אֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת לִשְׂחֹט אֶת־בְּנֹו: וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר
 אַבְרָהָם | אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּזֶר וְאֶל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ
 מְאוּמָה כִּי | עֲתָה יָדְעֵתִי כִּי־יִרְאֶה אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יַחֲדָךְ

רשי

היא עקדה, והוא לשון 'עקדים' (להלו ל. לט) שקיו קקסליהם לבגס, מקום שעוקדים חזקו פו קיה נכר: יא | אַבְרָהָם אַבְרָהָם. לשון חבה הוא, שכופל חת שמו: יב | אל תשלח. לשחטו חמר לו: חלף להגס בדיחי לבחן? חגשה פו חבלה וחויגח מעט דס! חמר לו: חל תעש לו מ'אומה': כי עתה ידעתי. מעתה יש לי מה חשיב לשון ולחמות, התמיהים מה היא חבתי חלף, ידעתי לי פתחון פה עכשו, שזחיס 'כי ירא חלהים חתה':

דתינח: 'וחרפי תחבל כשך' (דברים לב, מב), ושמקשקת כשך לחבילה. דבר חחה, זאת נקדחת מחבלת. על סם שישחל חובלים מתן שכרה: וילכו שניהם יחדו. חברהם שקיה יזע שחולך לשחט חת פגו, היה חולך פדעו ושמחה כיעחק שלח היה מרגש פדבר: ח | יראו לו השעה. כלומר, יראה ויבחר לו השעה, ואם חין שח - 'לעולה בני'. וחף על פי שחבין יצחק שחיה חולך להשחט, 'ולכו שניהם יחדו' בלב שנה: ט | ויעקד. ריו וקליו מחחוקיו. הניס והקגלס פחד

1 | ביום השלישי. למה חחר מלהחיות מיד? כדי שלח יחמר: המנו ועקבו פתחום וקדך דעתו, וחלו היה לו שהות להמלך חל לבו לח היה עושה. וירא את המקום. קחה ענו קשור על קה: ה | עד כה. כלומר, דרך מועט למקום חשר לפינו. ומקדש חגה, חרחה היכן הוא מה שחמר לי המקום: 'פה יהיה זקעך' (לעל טו, ה) ונשובה. נתגבר שחשונו שניהם: 11 | המאכלת. סגון, על סם שחובלת חת השעה, קמה

DISCUSSION

22:9 | **And bound Isaac his son:** The Torah does not describe Isaac's reaction. Did he scream or cry? Did he resign himself to his fate? Many commentaries take this silence, and his lack of any opposition or attempt to flee reported in the Torah, as an indication that Isaac willingly consented to serve as the burnt offering. From this moment, the relationship between God and Abraham's family took on a new dimension. The descendants of Abraham became not just descendants of a particular individual, but a group of people with a unique heritage and

destiny, whose roots can be found in Isaac's selfless devotion.

22:10 | **Abraham raised his hand:** The action is drawn out in this verse, not due to any hesitation on Abraham's part, but in order to emphasize the difficulty of the trial. Every movement had independent significance, and the fact that the reader's attention is drawn to every part of the act accentuates the difficulty of the test.

22:12 | **Do not do anything to him:** Do not slaughter him or wound him in any way, even symbolically. Child sacrifice in the ancient world

was sometimes performed by a token gesture, such as passing one's son through fire without actually burning him.

Now I know that you are God-fearing: Until the binding of Isaac, Abraham had always performed God's will out of love; see Isaiah 41:8, where God refers to "Abraham who loved Me." This episode emphasizes Abraham's fear of God, and his willingness to obey any command God would give him. The term "fear" in this context does not mean that Abraham was frightened. Rather, it denotes obedience even in the

- Moses related the statement of the people to the Lord**, that they had agreed enthusiastically.¹⁷
- 10 The Lord said to Moses: Go to the people and sanctify**, summon, and prepare them,¹⁸ **today and tomorrow** for the revelation; **and they shall wash their garments** as part of the purification process that would become the accepted one in Israel.
- 11 They shall be ready for the third day, as on the third day the Lord will descend before the eyes of all the people on Mount Sinai.**
- 12** In addition, **you shall restrict the people all around, saying:** This border shall signify the location of the forbidden area. **Beware of ascending the mountain or even touching its edge**, as anyone who touches the mountain, thereby entering the sanctified area, **shall be punished by being put to death.**
- 13** However, **no hand shall touch him**, that person who enters the forbidden place, **for** if others chase after him to catch him, they too will enter the demarcated area.¹⁹ Therefore, **he shall be stoned from afar or shot with arrows; whether it is an animal that wandered inside or man, it will not live.** Only later, **with the extended blast of the shofar**, or alternatively, when that sound ceases, which is the signal for the cessation of the event, **they**, anyone who wishes, **shall be permitted to ascend the mountain.**^D
- 14 Moses descended from the mountain to the people. He sanctified the people and they washed their garments.**
- 15 He said to the people:** As part of your sanctification process, **be prepared in three days; do not approach a woman.** Refrain from sexual relations during these three days in order to focus your minds and prepare for the encounter.
- 16 It was on the third day, when it was morning, and there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the blast of a shofar was extremely powerful, and all the people who were in the camp trembled.**
- 17 Moses took the people out of the camp toward God.** Despite the warning against approaching too close to the central area of the event, it was appropriate for the people to advance as close as they could within the permitted area. **And they stood at the foot of the mountain.**
- 18 Mount Sinai was all smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its thick, concentrated smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace**, which is produced by a large fire in a small area. **And the entire mountain trembled greatly.**
- 19 The loud blast of the shofar**, which was initially heard together with the other noises, **grew continuously stronger.** As this occurred, **Moses would speak, and God would answer him with a voice.** The people heard this conversation between Moses and God.
- 20 The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain; the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain**, while all the people listened in order to hear the exchange between them, **and Moses ascended.**

*Sixth
aliya*

DISCUSSION

charismatic personality, but in such cases, the belief in the prophecy itself is limited. The public revelation at Sinai, in contrast, was designed to lead to a profound, permanent belief. The nation of Israel would see and hear God without an intermediary, and directly perceive the prophecy given to Moses and witness the truth of his mission (see Rambam, *Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Yesodei HaTorah* 8:1).

19:13 | **With the extended blast of the shofar, they shall ascend the mountain:** Undoubtedly, the descent of God to a particular spot is of theological significance. The giving of the Torah and the establishment of the covenant with the people of Israel will occur within the boundaries of that location and therefore

any approach to that area must be restricted. Nevertheless, the sanctity of Mount Sinai was merely temporary, as it was solely due to the momentous encounter about to take place there. In the Jewish tradition, the mountain is a site of historical memory, but it does not retain any measure of holiness. Consequently, no pilgrimages were undertaken to Mount Sinai, and even its precise location has not been preserved.

Not only is the place of the revelation unknown, but its exact date is not specified in the Torah either. In contrast to many other events, whose exact dates are recorded, here the date is mentioned only in a general manner: In the third month, a few days after the first of the month. According to the tradition, which accords with

a straightforward reading of the verses, the revelation occurred on the sixth or the seventh of the month of Sivan (see *Shabbat* 86b). This unresolved issue further increases the mystery surrounding the event, which occurred outside conventional boundaries, in an unidentified place and time. Momentarily, the Jewish people entered a different, unfamiliar state where they encountered their God, and that state faded away after the revelation. No similar event, where an entire nation of men, women, and children encounter God beyond the boundaries of time and space, occurred prior to this one, and there will be nothing comparable in the future (see Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:40, 2:33).

הָעַם אֶל־יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵךְ אֶל־הָעָם וְקִדַּשְׁתָּם הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר
 וּבִכְסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: וְהָיוּ נֹכְנִים לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד יְהוָה לַעֲיִנִּי
 כָּל־הָעָם עַל־הָרֹם סִינַי: וְהִגַּבְלַתְּ אֶת־הָעָם סָבִיב לְאַמֵּר הַשְּׂמֹרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בְּהָר
 וּנְגַע בְּקִצְוֵהוּ כָּל־הַנֶּגַע בְּהָר מוֹת יוֹמָת: לֹא־תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד בַּיֶּסֶקוֹל יִסְקַל אֹרֶיֶה
 יִיָּרֶה אִם־בְּהֶמָה אִם־אִישׁ לֹא יַחִיָּה בַּמִּשְׁךְ הַיֵּבֶל הַמָּוֶה יַעֲלוּ בְּהָר: וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה
 מִן־הָהָר אֶל־הָעָם וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־הָעָם וַיְכַבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֹתָם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָעָם הָיוּ
 נֹכְנִים לַשְּׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים אֶל־תִּגְשׁוּ אֶל־אִשָּׁה: וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַּהִיָּת הַבֶּקָר
 וַיְהִי קָלֹת וּבְרָקִים וַעֲנַן כָּבֵד עַל־הָהָר וְקוֹל שֹׁפָר חֲזָק מְאֹד וַיַּחֲרֹד כָּל־הָעָם
 אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה: וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לַקְּרָאת הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְּיָצְבוּ
 בַּתַּחֲתִית הָהָר: וְהָרֹם סִינַי עָשָׂן כְּלוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד עָלָיו יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל עֲשָׂנוּ
 כְּעֵשֶׂן הַבְּבֹשֶׁן וַיַּחֲרֹד כָּל־הָהָר מְאֹד: וַיְהִי קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר הוֹלֵךְ וְחֲזָק מְאֹד מִשֶּׁה
 יִדְבָּר וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְּקוֹל: וַיֵּרֵד יְהוָה עַל־הָרֹם סִינַי אֶל־רֹאשׁ הָהָר וַיְקַרָּא שְׁשִׁי

רש"י

באש עד לב השמים (דברים ה, יח) ומה תלמוד לומר: "בבשר" לשבד חת האזן מה שהיא יוכלה לשמע. נתן לברייתו סימן הנכר להם. פיוצא בו: "באריה יאצא" (הושע יח, י) וכי מי נתן פה פארי חלף הוא, והפסוק מושבו באריה? חלף חט מכבד ומדמיון חיות לברייתו כדי לשבד חת האזן מה שיכולה לשמע. פיוצא בו: "קולו בקול מים רבים" (יחזקאל מג, ב) וכי מי נתן קול למים חלף הוא, וחתה מכבד חיות לזמנתו לברייתו, כדי לשבד חת האזן:

יט | הולך וחזק מאד. מנהג הדיוט כל זמן שהוא מזכיר לתקע קולו מחלש וכוהה, חבל פחו "הולך וחזק מאד". ולמה כך מתחלה? לשבד חזניהם מה שיכולו לשמע. משה ידבר. כשהיה משה מדבר ומשמיע הדברות לשלח, שהרי לא שמעו מפי הגבורה חלף "חנני" ולא יהיה לך, והקדוש ברוך הוא משיעו לתת בו פה להיות קולו מנגיד וגשמע: יעננו בקול. יעננו על דבר הקול, כמו: "אשר יענה בראש" (מלכים א' יח, כד), על דבר האש להודיעו:

כ | וירד ה' על הר סיני. יכול ירד עליו מנשג? תלמוד לומר: "כי מן השמים דברתו עמכם" (להלן כ, יט)! מלמד שהדבין שמים התחוננס והעלוננס ודעונו על צדי ההר כמעט על המטה, וירד כפח הגבור עליהם:

יט | ולדברי החומר גשעה בחלש נתנו עשרת הדברות, לא הוסיף משה כלום, ו"לשלושת ימים" כמו ליום השלישי: אל תגשו אל אשה. כל שלשת ימים הללו, כדי שהיו הנשים טובלות ליום השלישי והיו טהורות לקבל תורה, שאם ישמשו תוך שלשה שמיא תפלט החשה שגבת זרע לאחר טבילתה ותחזר ותטמא, חבל מששהתה שלשה ימים כבד הזרע מסדריה ואינו רחוי להזריע, וטהור מלמטא חת הפולטת:

טז | בהית הבקר. מלמד שהקדים על ידס, מה שאין דרך פאר זרס לעשות כן שהיה הרב ממעון לתלמיד. וכן מענו ביחזקאל: "יום צח חל הבקעה... וחקום וצח חל הבקעה והנה שם כבוד ה' עמדי" (יחזקאל ג, כב-כג):

יז | לקראת האלהים. מעד שהיתה שכניה יוצאה לקראתם כחן היוצא לקראת פלה, וזהו שגחמ: "ה' מפני פח" (דברים לג, ב) ולא נחמר: "לסיני פח": בתחתית ההר. לפי פשוטו כרגלי ההר ומדקשו, שנתלש ההר ממקומו ונקפה עליהם כעניית:

יח | עשן כלו. חיו עשן זה שם דברה שהרי נקוד השין פתח, חלף לשון פעל, כמו חמר, שמה שמע. לכך תרגמו: "תגן קליה" ולא תרגם "מננח". וכל עשן שבמקרה נקודים קמו, מפני שהם שם דבר: הבבשין. כל סיד. יכול כבדן זה ולא ויתר? תלמוד לומר: "יער

י | וקדשתם. ומננס, שכינו עמנס "היום ומחר":

יא | והיו נכנים. משה: ליום השלישי. שהיה שעה בחלש, ובחמישי בנה משה חת המננס תחת ההר ושתים עשרה מננה, כל הענו החמור פקשת וזלה המשפטים (להלן מיד כד), וחיו מקדס ומחיר בתורה: לעיני כל העם. מלמד שלא היה בהם סומא, שנתכפחו כלם:

יב | והגבלת. קבע להם תחוננו לסימן, שלא יקרבו מן הגבול והלחה. לאמור. הגבול חומר להם: השמרו מעלות מכפון ולהלן, וחתה הזיכס על כך: ונגע בקצוהו. חפלו בקניה:

יג | ירה יורה. מכפון לנסקלון שהם נחיו למטה מנית הסקילה, שהיה גבוה שתי קומות: יורה. השלך למטה לחרו, כמו: "ירה בים" (לעיל טו, ד): במשך היבל. כשימנח היבל קול חרו, הוא סימן סלוק שכניה והפסקת הקול. וכוון שחמלק הם רשיו לעלות: היבל. הוא שופר של חיל, כפן פערניח קוריו לזכרח יוגלח. ושופר של חיבו של יחחק הנה:

יד | מן ההר אל העם. מלמד שלא היה משה פונה לעסקיו, חלף מן ההר חל העם:

טז | היו נכנים לשלושת ימים. למוך שלשת ימים, הוא יוס רביעי, שהוסיף משה יוס חרד מדעתו, כדברי רבי

- 21 **The Lord said to Moses: Descend, and again warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to see.** When they realize that this is no ordinary fire, the smoke is unusual, and the shofar is unlike any other shofar they have heard, they might be drawn to the place out of curiosity and yearning for God. **And** if they do come near, **many of them will fall**, either because there are guards stationed there, instructed to stop anyone who attempts to approach, or due to divine retribution for this infraction.
- 22 **Also the priests,**^D those who perform the sanctified rites and **who approach the Lord** and stand in front of the people at the foot of the mountain,²⁰ **shall sanctify themselves, lest the Lord burst out against them.**
- 23 **Moses said to the Lord:** Why do I need to warn them a second time? After all, **the people will not be able to ascend Mount**

Sinai, as you have already warned us, saying: Demarcate the mountain, and sanctify it.

- 24 **The Lord said to him: Go, descend,**^D **and you shall ascend, and Aaron with you.** Your brother shall accompany you part of the way. It is evident from the verses below that even those close to Moses, who were permitted to ascend higher than the rest of the people, were not permitted to reach the spot of the encounter itself, where Moses alone ascended (see 20:18). God again warns: **But the priests and the people shall not advance and break through to ascend to the Lord, lest He burst out against them.**
- 25 **Moses descended to the people, and said** God’s repeated warning **to them.** Apparently, he then ascended the mountain again.²¹

The Ten Precepts

EXODUS 20:1–14

The Torah lists Ten Precepts spoken by God on Mount Sinai, which He later wrote on stone tablets. The familiar term “Ten Commandments” is translated here as “Ten Precepts.” In three places the Torah recounts the writing of the ten *devarim* on the Tablets of the Covenant.²² *Devarim* is best translated as statements or precepts, not commandments. Furthermore, the passages in which these are stated²³ can readily be divided up into ten precepts, while it is difficult to divide them into ten commandments.

It should be noted that the precise division of the revelation into ten sections is a matter of dispute. These precepts, which include matters between man and God as well as those involving relationships between man and his fellow man, are at the foundation of the Judaic religious structure and the Jewish approach to life. In large part, they are also the source of universal values. Most of them are prohibitions relating to actions, but there are also some positive commands, as well as matters relating to one’s emotional and psychological states.

There is a distinction between the first five precepts, which focus on the relationship between God and man – including the honoring of one’s parents, as this precept is also within the rubric of honoring God – and the last five precepts, which consist of interpersonal prohibitions. In fact, the name of God does not appear in the second section at all.

All the precepts are addressed to the individual, in a direct, personal manner. However, in the early precepts, which focus on the belief in God, God is referred to in the first person, as the Speaker, whereas in the other precepts God is referred to in the third person.

- 20 1 **God spoke all these matters, saying:** It is unclear from the continuation of the account whether the entire people heard all the precepts directly.²⁴ In any case, they certainly heard the first section from God.
- 2 **I am the Lord your God,**^D **who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.** According to some commentaries, this is not a separate command, but the Speaker

presenting Himself, since without the acceptance of this basic identification of God there is no meaning to the commands that follow.²⁵ Others maintain that this is a command to believe in God and to know Him.²⁶

- 3 The previous declaration leads to the demand for exclusivity: **You shall have no other gods before Me,** together with Me. There is no other god but Me.

DISCUSSION

19:22 | **The priests:** The identity of the priests at the time is uncertain. According to tradition, the firstborn sons of each family served as priests. The special status of the firstborn can be seen, for example, in the story of Esau’s sale of his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:31–34; see also Exodus 4:22–23). After the sin of the Golden Calf, when the Tabernacle was built, Aaron’s descendants were appointed priests (*Zevachim* 112b;

Bemidbar Rabba 3:5; Ibn Ezra; *Bekhor Shor*; see Numbers 3:13, and *Bekhor Shor* ad loc.).

19:24 | **The Lord said to him: Go, descend:** Some commentaries interpret the phrase “Go, descend” as an explanation for why a repeat of the earlier warning is necessary. Although Moses was certain that no one would disobey the command and ascend the mountain, God told him that if he were to go down and examine

the people’s nature, he would realize the need to warn them again at this juncture, due to the great danger and the temptation to draw close to God (see *Ohev Yisrael*, *Likkutim Hadashim*, *Yitro*).

20:2 | **I am the Lord your God:** The first of the Ten Precepts appears in a positive and negative formulation relating to the presence of God. This matter must necessarily precede all the



כו על־פי אהרן ובניו תהיה כל־עבדת בני הגרשני לכל־משאם ולכל עבדתם
 כח ופקודתם עליהם במשמרת את כל־משאם: זאת עבדת משפחת בני הגרשני
 כט באהל מועד ומשמרתם ביד איתמר בן־אהרן הפהן: בני
 ל מרדי למשפחתם לבית־אבתם תפקד אתם: מבין שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד
 לא בן־חמשים שנה תפקדם כל־הבא לצבא לעבד את־עבדת אהל מועד: וזאת
 משמרת משאם לכל־עבדתם באהל מועד קרשי המשכן ובריחיו ועמודיו
 לב ואדניו: ועמודי החצר סביב ואדניהם ויתדותם ומיתריהם לכל־פליהם ולכל
 לג עבדתם ובשמת תפקדו את־כלי משמרת משאם: זאת עבדת משפחת
 לד בני מרדי לכל־עבדתם באהל מועד ביד איתמר בן־אהרן הפהן: ויפקד
 לה משה ואהרן ונשיאי העדה את־בני הקהתי למשפחתם ולבית אבתם: מבין
 שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד בן־חמשים שנה כל־הבא לצבא לעבדה באהל
 לו מועד: ויהיו פקדיהם למשפחתם אלפים שבע מאות וחמשים: אלה פקודי
 לו משפחת הקהתי כל־העבד באהל מועד אשר פקד משה ואהרן על־פי
 לח יהוה ביד־משה: ופקודי בני גרשון למשפחותם ולבית
 ט אבתם: מבין שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד בן־חמשים שנה כל־הבא לצבא
 מ לעבדה באהל מועד: ויהיו פקדיהם למשפחתם לבית אבתם אלפים ויש
 מא מאות ושלשים: אלה פקודי משפחת בני גרשון כל־העבד באהל מועד
 מב אשר פקד משה ואהרן על־פי יהוה: ופקודי משפחת בני מרדי למשפחתם
 מג לבית אבתם: מבין שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד בן־חמשים שנה כל־הבא לצבא
 מד לעבדה באהל מועד: ויהיו פקדיהם למשפחתם שלשת אלפים ומאתים:
 מה אלה פקודי משפחת בני מרדי אשר פקד משה ואהרן על־פי יהוה ביד־משה:

רשי

הקלעים בשפתם העליונה ככלונסות וקנטיסיון, כמו ששנויה במלחמת המשכן (כדייתח דמלחמת המשכן פרה ה).

ומיתרי הקלעים כמשא בני גרשון היו, ויתדות ומיתרים היו ליריעות ולהלעים מלמטה שלח תגפיהם הרוח, ויתדות ומיתרים היו לעמודים סביב לתלות פהם

כיו על פי אהרן ובניו. ואי זה מהבנים מננה עליהם? 'בני חיתמר בן חזקן הפהן' (להבן פסוק כח). לבן ויתדות ומיתריהם. של עמודים, שהיו יתדות

Examples of Rabbi Steinsaltz's clarity

- 46 The sum total of **all the counted, whom Moses and Aaron and the princes of Israel counted of the Levites, by their families, and by their patrilineal house**, was as follows:
- 47 They were counted **from thirty years old and above until fifty years old, everyone who came to perform the service of work and the service of bearing in the Tent of Meeting.**

- 48 **Those counted were eight thousand five hundred and eighty.**
- 49 **According to the directive of the Lord he counted them, at the hand of Moses, under his supervision,⁴ each man to his work and to his burden. And these were the results of his count that was performed as the Lord commanded Moses.**

Sending the Ritually Impure Outside the Camp

NUMBERS 5:1–4

impure individuals are prohibited from entering the camps which are arranged around God's Tabernacle.

- 5 1 **The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**
- 2 **Command the children of Israel, and they shall send out from the camp every leper, one afflicted with tzara'at, commonly translated as leprosy,⁵ and anyone with a discharge.** This includes a man who emits a gonorrhea-like discharge from the member, and a woman who emits a discharge of blood from the uterus.⁶ **And you shall also send from the camp anyone**

impure by means of a corpse. The details of this type of impurity are discussed elsewhere (19:11–22).

- 3 **Male and female, adults and minors alike, you shall send out, outside the camp you shall send them;^d and they shall not render impure their camp, in which I dwell in their midst.**
- 4 **The children of Israel did so, and sent them outside the camp; as the Lord spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.**

Payments and Gifts Due to the Priests

NUMBERS 5:5–10

unlawfully took money from a convert and he died leaving behind no heirs, the thief is unable to return the stolen property to its rightful owner. He must therefore give it to a priest, who is God's representative. Besides returning the principal, the thief must pay an additional fine and bring an atonement offering. Both this matter and the matter discussed in the subsequent section are somewhat related to the purity of the camp previously discussed. While the previous sections dealt with maintaining the ritual purity of the camp, these sections deal with the moral purity of the camp.

- 5 **The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**
- 6 **Speak to the children of Israel: A man or woman, when they perform any sin of a person, committing a trespass,^p betraying the trust of another through theft, stealing, or cheating, he**

thereby also sins **against the Lord.** Aside from the fact that the transgressor betrays a person's trust, he also does not take into consideration the fact that God is watching and is aware of his deed. **And therefore, that person is guilty.**

DISCUSSION

Families of the Levites, Their Numbers and Their Tasks

	Gershon	Kehat	Merari
Items under their responsibility	The curtains, screens, and hangings	The sacred vessels	The beams, pillars, and sockets
Families	Livni, Shimi	Amram, Yitzhar, Hevron, Uziel	Mahli, Mushi
Numbers, from one month old	7500	8600	6200
Numbers, between thirty and fifty years of age	2630 (roughly 35% of all the Levites)	2750 (less than one-third of all the Levites)	3200 (more than half of the Levites)
Place of encampment	West	South	North
Prince of their house	Elyasaf son of Lael	Elitzafan son of Uziel Elazar son of Aaron, the prince of the princes of the Levites	Tzuril son of Avihayil

Examples of Rabbi Steinsaltz's clarity

Book of Genesis | Chapter 41 | Miketz

- 43 He had him ride in the alternate chariot that he had,** the chariot he would use when the king's regular chariot was unavailable. Pharaoh kept his personal chariot exclusively for himself. **And they cried before him: Kneel.**⁷ When Joseph traveled in his chariot, all were obliged to kneel before him. **And he was set over the entire land of Egypt.** Pharaoh formally and publicly announced that Joseph was in charge of all of Egypt.
- 44 Pharaoh** summarized the matter and **said to Joseph: I am Pharaoh,** descendant of the gods, ruler and governor, **and yet, beyond that, without you no man shall lift his hand or his foot in the entire land of Egypt.** You have full authority over everything that is done in the land.
- 45 Pharaoh called Joseph's name Tzafenat Paneah;**^{BD} and as Joseph was now an important figure, Pharaoh arranged for him to be married: **He gave him Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera,**^D **priest of On,**⁸ **as a wife. Joseph came out over the land of Egypt;** he traversed the land as its ruler and began to organize its internal affairs.
- 46 Joseph was thirty years old as he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt.** Thirteen years had passed since his original dreams, due to which he was sold and exiled from his land (37:2). Since that time his status had changed beyond recognition. **Joseph came out from before Pharaoh, and he passed through the entire land of Egypt** in order to put into practice his advice to Pharaoh.
- 47 The earth produced, during the seven years of plenty, in abundance** [*kematzim*]. The grains of a single stalk amounted to a handful [*kometz*], or several handfuls.⁸ Alternatively, some explain that this means that the earth produced enough to fill the storehouses.⁹ In any event, the verse expresses the fact that the yield of the land was extensive.
- 48 He, Joseph, gathered all the food of the seven years that was in the land of Egypt and placed food in the cities; he placed the food of the fields that was around the city in it. In every city Joseph stored the produce that grew in its environs, both in order to keep the produce in the local climate to which it**

was accustomed, and also because each city could estimate accurately the amount of produce required for its inhabitants.

- 49 Joseph amassed grain like the sand of the sea,**^D **very much, until one stopped counting as it was without number.**

An enormous amount of produce grew each year. It is possible that this verse should be understood literally: At first they tried keeping records, but eventually they gave up, overwhelmed by the sheer mass of produce.

- 50 Two sons were born to Joseph during the years of plenty before the advent of the year of the famine, who were born to him by Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera, priest of On.**

- 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, as he felt: God has made me forget** [*nashani*] **all my toil, my suffering and hardship, and the trouble of my father's entire house,** from which I suffered for many years, as I am now a new person.

- 52 He called the name of the second son Efraim, as he said: Not only have I forgotten my suffering, but now God has made me fruitful** [*hifrani*] **in that I have become successful and risen to prominence in the land of my affliction.**

- Fourth 53 The seven years of plenty that was in the land of Egypt concluded.**
aliya

- 54 The seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said.** In Egypt, which is mainly dependent not on rainfall but on an irrigation system whose source is the Nile, this transition was sharp. If for whatever reason the water level in the Nile falls lower than required, the land does not produce, resulting in famine. Furthermore, this was not merely a local problem in



Fresco, Tomb of Nakht, 1400–1390 BCE

DISCUSSION

41:45 | **Tzafenat Paneah:** Some have explained this as a descriptive term in Hebrew meaning “interpreter of secrets” (*Targum Yonatan*; Rashi). However, as this is the only instance of the root *peh-ayin-nun-het* in the Bible, it is likely that this is in fact an Egyptian name given to Joseph by Pharaoh (Rashbam). There are other Israelites with Egyptian names in the Torah, e.g., Pinehas. Joseph's new name is a title of honor commensurate to his lofty position.

Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera: Despite the similarity in name, this was apparently not the daughter of Potifar (Rashbam), although there is a midrash which claims that Potifar and Poti Fera are one and the same (see *Sota* 13b). Joseph's father-in-law was not an executioner like Potifar, but the head priest in the capital city of On, where there was a temple. By arranging this marriage, Pharaoh not only acted generously toward Joseph but also strengthened his position: Since priests in Egypt were influential

members of society, Pharaoh wanted Joseph to have direct ties with this other source of power of the ruling classes.

41:49 | **Grain like the sand of the sea:** For a very long time, until nearly two thousand years ago, Egypt was the leading country in grain production. It grew enough for all its needs and even exported a significant amount of produce to lands near and far. During the period of Roman rule, Egypt served as the granary of Rome (see Isaiah 23:3).

Examples of Rabbi Steinsaltz's clarity

ספר בראשית | פרק מא | מקץ

מג וַיִּרְבֵּב אֹתוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַמִּשְׁנֶה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אֲבִרָךְ וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ עַל
 מד כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף אֲנִי פֶרְעֹה וּבְלִעְדֶיךָ לֹא-יָרִים אִישׁ
 מה אֶת-יָדוֹ וְאֶת-דָּגְלוֹ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּקְרָא פֶּרְעֹה שְׁם-יוֹסֵף צְפֹנָת פַּעֲנִיחַ
 מו וַיִּתֵּן-לוֹ אֶת-אֲסֹנֹת בֵּת-פְּוֹטִי פֶּרַע כֹּהֵן אֵן לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
 מז וַיֹּסֵף בֶּן-שָׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּעַמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פֶּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלְּפָנֵי
 מח פֶּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲבֹד בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַתַּעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁבְעַ שָׁנִי הַשְּׁבַע לְקַמְצִים:
 מט וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת-כָּל-אֶכְלָו שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּתֵּן-אֶכְלָו בַּעֲרִים
 נ אֶכְלָו שְׂדֵה-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֶיהָ נָתַן בְּתוֹכָהּ: וַיַּצְבֵּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כָּחֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה
 נא מְאֹד עַד כִּי-חָדַל לְסַפֵּר כִּי-אֵין מִסְפָּר: וְלִיוֹסֵף יָלַד שְׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטֶרֶם תָּבֹא שְׁנַת
 נב הָרַעַב אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה-לוֹ אֲסֹנֹת בֵּת-פְּוֹטִי פֶּרַע כֹּהֵן אוֹן: וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-שְׁם
 נג הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי-נִשְׁנֵי אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-עַמְלֵי וְאֶת כָּל-בֵּית אָבִי: וְאֶת שְׁם הַשֵּׁנִי
 נד קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי-הִפְרִנִי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עַנְיִי: וַתְּחַלִּינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הַשְּׁבַע אֲשֶׁר
 נה הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַתְּחַלִּינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הָרַעַב לָבוֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי

רביעי

רש"י

מזו | ותעש הארץ... פתגמונו, ואין הלשון נעקר מלשון
 גשמה: לקמצים. קמן על קמן, יד על יד היו חוצקין.
 מח | אכל שדה העיר... נתן בתוכה. שכל חקו וחקו
 מעמדת פרוציה, ונתנו פתוחה מעשר הפקוס
 ומעמדת חת התבואה מלקח:
 מט | עד כי חדל לספור. עד חסר חדל לו הסופר לספור,
 והכי זה מקרא קצר: כי אין מספר. לפי שאין מספר,
 והכי 'כפי משמש בלשון דקה':

וחצי גזר שלח ימים חים חת ידו בלעדיה, שלח בלשון
 דבר חסר, חטי פקעה, חט חסיה מלך, 'ובלעדיך' וגו',
 זו דגמת 'רק הפסח חגגל מנח' (לעיל פסוק ט) חלף
 שהנך לפשט לו בשעת נתונת הטענת: את ידו ואת
 רגלו. פתגמונו:
 מה | צפנת פענת. משפט התפנות, ואין לפענני דמיון
 במקרא: פוטי פדע. הוא פוטיפה, ונקרא פוטיפדע על
 שנתרם מאליו, לפי שלח חת יוסף למשכב זכור:

מג | במדבר המונה. השנה למדברתו, המהלכת חצל
 שלו: אברך. פתגמונו: 'דיו חפץ למלכא', 'ר' בלשון
 חרמי מלך, ב'השתפיון: 'לא ריבא ולא בר ריבא' (נב)
 ברח ד עיל. ונדברי חגיה, דלש רפי יהודה: 'חברך' זה
 יוסף, שהיו חב בחקמה וכן בשנים חמר לו רפי יוסי
 בן דוקמסקית: ברפי, עד מתי חתה מעות עליו חת
 הפתונים? חין 'חברך' חלף לשון ברפס, שהכל יהו
 נכסיו ויחלו פחת ידו, פענן שפאמר: 'נתנו חיתו' וגו':
 מד | אני פדעה. שגש וכלת פדי לגזל גדות על מלכותו,

BACKGROUND

41:45 | **Tzafenat Paneah:** The suffix represented here by the letters *ayin-nun-het*, typically spelled “ankh” in English, denotes life in Egyptian. This suffix was added to the names of important individuals, e.g., the pharaoh Tutankhamun, whose name is a fusion of the words *tut*, *ankh*, and *amun*. One can see in Egyptian engravings this

ankh symbol, an object that represents the life force, borne by gods and nobles. Some maintain that its shape is meant to be reminiscent of the Nile, which was the source of all life for Egypt.
On: The ancient capital of Egypt, located in the southern tip of the Nile Delta. On served as an

important religious center for the sun god Aten. Upon the Hellenist conquest of Egypt, its name was changed to the Greek Heliopolis, which means City of the Sun (see commentary on Isaiah 19:18).

the mountains of Africa, which failed to provide enough water. Rather, **there was famine in all lands**, due to climate changes. **But in all of the land of Egypt there was bread.**

- 55 After private stores of food ran out and it became clear that the summer harvest produced a meager yield, **all of the land of Egypt was hungry, and the people cried to Pharaoh for bread.** The citizens' direct and indirect complaints were directed at Pharaoh not only because he was their ruler, but also because they attributed divine qualities to him. **Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians: Go to Joseph**, as he is in charge of dealing with your sustenance; **what he says to you, you shall do.** Pharaoh sought to spare himself, his ministers, and his close confidants the pressure of handling this problem. As soon as

The First Descent of Joseph's Brothers to Egypt

GENESIS 42:1–28

which affects the entire region, reaches the land of Canaan as well, and the family of Jacob seeks to assuage its hunger by purchasing some of the produce that Joseph has stored in Egypt.

it became necessary to start distributing food in an organized manner, he directed all complaints to Joseph.

- 56 **The famine was on the entire face of the earth**, outside Egypt as well, and therefore it was impossible to import food. **And Joseph opened all that was in them**, the storehouses, **and sold grain to the Egyptians.**^d It is unclear whether in the first stage Joseph bought the produce or whether he collected it as a tax. In any case, at this point he sells it. **The famine was intensified in the land of Egypt**, as the people had nothing to eat apart from the produce in Joseph's granaries.
- 57 **All the land**, neighboring countries, **came to Egypt to purchase grain from Joseph, for the famine was severe in all the land.** Up to this point Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream had come to pass in full.

When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, planned a solution to the grave problems posed by his interpretation, and put these ideas into practice, he unknowingly, through hidden divine providence, has prepared the way for his reencounter with his brothers. The famine, the family of Jacob seeks to assuage its hunger by purchasing some of the

- 42 1 **Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt**, as Joseph sold produce not only to citizens of Egypt but to foreigners as well. Since Jacob and his sons were mainly shepherds, their distress was less immediate and apparent than that of their neighboring farmers. **And therefore Jacob said to his sons: Why are you presenting yourselves?** Do not display yourselves as exceptions to the general plight, lest hungry individuals surrounding us become envious of us or even attack us.
- 2 **He said: Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and acquire grain for us from there that we will live and not die.**
- 3 **Ten of Joseph's brothers went down to acquire grain from Egypt.** The more men who went down, the more produce they could carry back with them.
- 4 **But Benjamin, Joseph's brother** on his mother's side as well, **Jacob did not send^d with his other brothers, as he said: Lest disaster befall him.**
- 5 **The sons of Israel, Jacob, came to acquire grain among those others who came from Canaan to acquire grain in Egypt, as the famine was in the land of Canaan.**
- 6 **Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the provider of grain to all the people of the land.** Joseph did not deal merely with the actual sale of food; he was also responsible for providing oversight of the entire process. This meant that he had to take political considerations into account when supplying produce in order to ensure that foreigners would not endanger the security of the country. **Joseph's brothers came, and** when they saw the powerful minister they **prostrated themselves to him, faces to the earth**, like all the other purchasers.
- 7 **Joseph saw his brothers, and he recognized them.** Although he had not seen them for over twenty years and their appearances had certainly changed, Joseph had no difficulty recognizing them, as they had all arrived together and wore their customary garments. **But he acted as though he were a stranger to them and spoke harshly to them.** Joseph used his authority in order to cause them difficulties. **He said to them: From where did you come? They said**, in complete innocence: **From the land of Canaan to acquire food.**

DISCUSSION

41:56 | **Joseph opened all that was in them and sold grain to the Egyptians:** Joseph was interested not only in selling the produce but also in regulating its distribution. As Pharaoh's representative he sought to establish a system that would enable him to oversee the people's

sustenance. On the one hand, this was not a free distribution of bread; on the other hand, the trade in grain was not conducted as a free market system. Joseph's aim was to regulate the sale of grain in order to ensure that no one in Egypt would die of hunger.

42:4 | **But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob did not send:** Jacob was especially close to Benjamin for two reasons: He was the only surviving child of Jacob's beloved wife, and he therefore served as a reminder of her; and he also reminded Jacob of his favorite son, Joseph.

Parashat Vayikra

The Burnt Offering

LEVITICUS 1:1–17

The first offering to be discussed in the book of Leviticus is the burnt offering. The burnt offering is primarily a voluntary offering that expresses the owner's desire to present a gift to God. While other offerings are eaten by the priests or the owners, with only part of the offering burned on the altar, the burnt offering is burned on the altar in its entirety. The few references to offerings in the previous books of the Torah, mainly in Genesis, indicate that in early generations the main type of offering presented in divine worship was the burnt offering.

The concept of sacrificial offerings is foreign to modern sensibilities, and the slaughter of animals as a ritual of divine service is not practiced. However, the offering is merely a symbolic expression of giving to God. The person who presents an offering understands that God does not literally partake of the offering, yet he feels as though he is presenting God with a gift, as he wholeheartedly relinquishes something that belongs to him, burning it on the altar and thereby destroying it. This act expresses the complete communion with God of one who is entirely consumed by his love or fear of Him. The offering allows one to symbolically give everything to God, leaving nothing for himself except, perhaps, some inconsequential remnants.

- 1 It is stated at the conclusion of Exodus (40:35) that Moses could not enter the Tabernacle due to the cloud of God's glory that filled it. Therefore, **the Lord called to Moses**, telling him to enter the Sanctuary. Similarly, at the time of the giving of the Torah, God called Moses to enter the cloud of glory upon Mount Sinai.¹ **And the Lord spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting**, which was designated from this point on as the place of divine revelation,² **saying:**
- 2 **Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When any man of you brings an offering^D to the Lord, if you shall bring your offering from animals**, which is one of the items that may be brought as an offering, **from the cattle or from the flock you shall bring your offering.**
- 3 The Torah presents the laws of the burnt offering, which is one of the five types of offerings detailed in subsequent passages. **If his offering is a burnt offering from the cattle, an unblemished male he shall present it**, and the laws detailing what constitutes a blemish are detailed later in Leviticus (22:17–26). **To the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he shall present it**, as the burnt offering is offered upon the external altar, whether in the Tabernacle or in the Temple.³ The obligation to bring

the offering to the Tabernacle is incumbent upon the owner, not the priest.⁴ The offering is brought by the owner **for his propitiation before the Lord**, in order to find favor in His eyes.⁵ Alternatively, the verse does not refer to the desire of the person bringing the offering to propitiate God, but to the fact that he brings the offering of his own free will, as a gift offering rather than in fulfillment of an obligation.⁶



Cattle

- 4 **He shall lay his hand^D upon the head of the burnt offering** and lean on it with all of his weight.⁷ This is the first of the rites of the offering. **And it shall be accepted for him**, causing him to be accepted and to find favor in God's eyes, **to atone for him.^D**
- 5 **He shall slaughter the young bull before the Lord.⁸** This may be performed by the owner or by any other Jew.⁹ Ritual slaughter is required also in order to allow a non-sacred animal to be eaten. It is not considered an intrinsic part of the sacrificial

DISCUSSION

1:2| **When any man of you brings an offering:** The word order of the Hebrew verse is difficult, as it literally reads: "When any man brings, of you, an offering to the Lord." This alludes to the idea that when one brings an offering it is as though he sacrifices himself; the offering is "of you" (see Sforno; see also Ibn Ezra, *Od Yosef Hai*, and *Mei HaShiloah*, for alternative allusions based on this phraseology).

1:4| **He shall lay his hand:** The Mishna and Gemara describe the manner in which this was

performed during the Second Temple period. There is no reason to suppose that the procedure changed in any way over time, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that the Talmud describes the original method of performing this ritual. The owner placed both of his hands upon the head of the animal, between its horns, and leaned upon it with all his strength (see Ramban, Mishna *Yoma* 3:8, and *Menaḥot* 93a).

This rite is performed on almost every type of animal offering. Placing one's hands on the head

of the animal symbolizes an exchange of the person for the animal. The animal is sacrificed as a substitute for the owner; through the sacrifice of the animal's flesh and blood, it is as though one sacrifices himself (see Ramban on verse 9). By leaning upon the animal the owner expresses his identification with the animal and symbolically transfers his identity to the animal, thereby allowing it to be sacrificed in his stead. It is for this reason that the verse states here that he achieves propitiation, even though the offering has not yet been brought upon the altar.

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים מִשָּׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֵהָל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אָדָם כִּי-יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קָרְבָן לַיהוָה מִן-הַבְּהֵמָה מִן-הַבְּקָר
וּמִן-הַצֹּאן תִּקְרִיבוּ אֶת-קָרְבַּנְכֶם: אִם-עֲלָה קָרְבָנוּ מִן-הַבְּקָר זָכָר תָּמִים
יִקְרִיבֵנוּ אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד יִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְרֹצְנוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסַמְךָ יָדוֹ עַל
רֹאשׁ הָעֵלָה וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: וְשַׁחַט אֶת-כַּבֵּן הַבְּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ

רש"י

פרק א

מתנדבים עולה גשפיות קרבנכם. מלמד שהיא בזה נדבת צבואה היא עולית קין המזבח, הבה מן המותרות: ג זָכָר. ולא נקבה. פשהוא חומר: "זָכָר" למטה (פסוק א), שאין תלמוד לומר - זָכָר ולא טמטום וְהַזְדוּגוֹנוֹס: תמים. כל מוס: אֵל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. מטפל בהחיתו עד העקרה. מהו חומר "יקריב יקריב"? חפלו נתעקרה עולית לחובן בעולת שמעון. יקריב כל חסות לשם מי שהיא. וכן עולה בחלון. ויכרו החלון לגרבי עולות. והרי הן פלן עולות. ותקרב כל חסות לשם מי שהיא. יכול חפלו נתעקרה בפסולין. חו גשפיו מינו? תלמוד לומר: "יקריבנו": יקריב אהו. מלמד שבוטין אותו. יכול בעל קרבו? תלמוד לומר: "לרצנו". הו בינד? בוטין אותו עד שאומר: "רצנו חני". לפני ה' וסמך. חין סמיהו בגמה:

ד | על ראש העלה. להביא עולת חובה לסמיהו, ולהביא עולת העוף. העלה. פקט לעולת העוף: ונרצה לו. על מה הוא מרצה לז? חס תחמר על קרנות ומיתות בית דין חו מיתה ידוי שמים חו מלקות - הכי ענשו חמה, הו חינו מרצה חלף על עשה ועל לחו שנתה לעשה: הו ושחט... והקריבו... הבהיט. מקבלה וחיך מעות כפיה, למד על השחיטה שפשהו בז: לפני ה'. בעקרה: והקריבו. זו קבלה שהיא הרשונה. ומשמעה לשון הולכה. למדנו שתיקה: בני אהרן. יכול חללים? תלמוד לומר: "הכהנים": את הדין ויקרי את הדין

כן. למה נחמר: "מזהל מועד"? מלמד שהיה הקול נפקת. פיוצו בו: "וקול כנפי הכרוכים נשמע עד החצר החיצונה" (ירוחל ג, ה). יכול מפני שהקול נמוך? תלמוד לומר: "קול חל שדי בדבר" (סו, חס כו, למה נחמר: "עד החצר החיצונה"? שפיון שפגע סס היה נפקת: מאהל מועד לאמר. יכול מכל הבית? תלמוד לומר: "מעל הפקרת" (במדבר ג, טו). יכול מעל הפקרת כלה? תלמוד לומר: "מפיון שני הקרבים" (סו, לאמר. צו וחמר להם דברי כפשוטן: פשטיכם הוא נדב עמי. שכן מנינו, שכל שמונה שנים שהיו שחלל במדבר כמנדים מן המרגלים וחיך, לח נתחיד הדבור עם משה, שחמר: "ויהי כאשר תמו כל אנשי המלחמה למות... וידבר ה' אלי לחמר" (במדבר ג, טו-יז). דבר חסר. צו וחמר להם דברי והשיבו חס יקבלום. כמו שחמר. וישב משה חת דברי העם" (גו' שמות יט, ח):

ב | אדם כי יקריב מכם. פשיקריב. הקרבנות נדבה דבר הענין: אדם. למה נחמר? מה חס הרשון לח הקריב מן העול. שהכל היה שלו, חו חס לח תקריבו מן העול הבהמה. יכול חו חיה בקלל תלמוד לומר: "פקד ונחן: מן הבהמה. ולא פלה. ליוצו חת הדובע חת הגרע: מן הבקר. ליוצו חת הנעבע: מן הצאן. ליוצו חת המקנה: ומן הצאן. ליוצו חת הענין שהמית. פשהו חומר משה מן הענין: "מן הבקר" (פסוק ג, א, שאין תלמוד לומר - ליוצו חת הקרבים. מלמד ששנים

א | ויקרא אל משה. לכל דברות ולכל חמירות ולכל עניים קדמה קריאה. לשון חבה. לשון שמלחי השקת משתמשין בו, שחמר: "וקרח זה חל זה" (יטעה ג, א). חל לגבי חו חמות העולם נלה עליהן פלשון ערחי. פלשון טמאה, שחמר: "ויקר חללים חל פלעם" (במדבר כג, ד): ויקרא אל משה. הקול הולך ומגיע לחינו וכל ישחל לח שומעיו. יכול חו להפקות היתה קריאה? תלמוד לומר: "וידבר", לדבור היתה קריאה ולא להפקות. ומה היו הפסקות משמעות? לתן דוח למשה להתעונן בין פקשה לפקשה ובו ענין לענין. קל וחמר להדיוט הלמד מן ההדיוט: אליו. למעט חת חסרן. דפי יהודה בן בתירה חומר: שלשה עשר דברות נחמרו בתורה למשה ולחיסרן. וכנעון נחמרו שלשה עשר מעוטין. ללמדך שלח לחיסרן נחמרו, חלף למשה שחמר לחיסרן. וחלו הן שלשה עשר מעוטין: "לדבר חת" (במדבר ג, טו), "מדבר חליו" (סו, וידבר חליו" (סו, וועודתי לך" (שמות כה, כג) פלן בתורת כהנים (פרק ב, ג). יכול שמעו חת קול הקריאה? תלמוד לומר. קול לו. קול חליו. משה שמע וכל ישחל לח שמעו: מאהל מועד. מלמד שהיה הקול נפקת ולא היה יוצו חון לחל. יכול מפני שהקול נמוך? תלמוד לומר: "חית הקול" (במדבר ג, טו) מהו "הקול"? הו הקול המתפשט בפנתונים: "קול ה' בפת, קול ה' בקרה. קול ה' שבר חרוס" (תהלים כט, ד-ה) חס

DISCUSSION

➔ In this respect, the story of the binding of Isaac (Genesis, chap. 22), in which an animal was sacrificed in lieu of a human being, can be seen as a model for all animal offerings. This can also explain the seemingly cryptic statement

that Isaac's ashes form a heap upon the altar (see, e.g., Jerusalem Talmud, Ta'anit 2:1). Isaac himself was never sacrificed, but since the ram took Isaac's place, it is as though he himself were burned upon the altar.

And it shall be accepted for him to atone for him: One is not required to bring a burnt offering in order to achieve atonement for any specific transgression. Nevertheless one may bring a burnt offering in the case of a transgression

Examples of Rabbi Steinsaltz's clarity

Book of Numbers | Chapter 6 | *Naso*

- 4 **All the days of his naziriteship, from anything that may be derived from the grapevine, from pits to skin,²³ he shall not eat.** The nazirite may neither eat nor drink anything derived from the vine.
- 5 **All the days of his vow of naziriteship, as long as the vow is in effect, a razor shall not pass on his head.** He may not shave his hair. **Until completion of the days that he shall abstain for the Lord, he shall be holy; the hair of his head shall be grown out.^D**
- 6 **All the days of his abstinence to the Lord, he shall not approach a corpse.** He may not come into contact with a dead body under any circumstances.
- 7 **Even to his father and to his mother, to his brother and to his sister, he shall not become impure for them upon their death.** Similarly, the priests are also prohibited to approach a corpse.²⁴ However, the common priests may become impure upon the death of a close relative, whereas a nazirite may not become impure even in the case of a close relative, **since the crown of his God is upon his head.^D** The nazirite's long hair is a tangible symbol of his naziriteship and his unique closeness to God.
- 8 **All the days of his naziriteship he is holy to the Lord.** This is evident in the nazirite's deviation from social norms: in the restrictions upon his eating and drinking habits, in his long hair, and in his caution not to approach the dead.
- 9 **Even if the nazirite tries to avoid all contact with the dead, an unforeseen event might occur. If a corpse dies near him with unexpected suddenness, while he is under the same roof, the corpse renders him impure, and thereby renders the head of his naziriteship, the crown of his long hair, impure; that is, his naziriteship is compromised.²⁵ The impurity imparted by a**



Razor for shaving hair, from ancient Egypt

corpse lasts for seven days. Therefore, **he shall shave his head on the day of his purification; on the seventh day shall he shave it.**

- 10 **And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.**
- 11 **The priest shall prepare one of the birds as a sin offering, and the other one as a burnt offering, and the priest shall atone for him, for that which he sinned with regard to the corpse.^D** Even if the nazirite became impure due to circumstances beyond his control, his naziriteship is compromised and he requires atonement. **And he shall sanctify his head on that day, the eighth day, when his hair shall again be consecrated with the sanctity of naziriteship.**
- 12 **He shall dedicate to the Lord the days of his naziriteship, commencing his period of naziriteship anew, and in addition he shall bring a sheep in its first year as a guilt offering to complete his atonement. And the first days of his naziriteship shall be void.^D** The days prior to his impurity do not count toward the fulfillment of his vow, **as his naziriteship is impure.**
- 13 The previous verses presented the laws that pertain to a nazirite who became impure due to circumstances beyond his control, and who was unable to complete his naziriteship: He is required to shave; to bring a sin offering, a burnt offering, and a guilt offering; and to observe his period of naziriteship anew. The following verses detail the laws that apply when the nazirite successfully completes his period of naziriteship without mishap: **And this is the law of the nazirite, on the day of the completion of the days of his naziriteship: He shall bring it, the set of offerings listed below,²⁶ to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.** Alternatively, the verse means that he shall bring himself to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.²⁷
- 14 **He shall present his offering to the Lord: one unblemished lamb in its first year as a burnt offering, one unblemished ewe in its first year as a sin offering, and one unblemished ram as a peace offering,**

DISCUSSION

6:5| **The hair of his head shall be grown out:** According to the Sages' tradition, the minimum period of naziriteship is thirty days. If one is a nazirite for merely thirty days, the growth of his hair will not necessarily be noticeable, but in the case of a lengthy period of naziriteship the hair might grow extremely long, as in the case of Samson, Avshalom, and perhaps also the prophet Samuel (see Judges 13:5; I Samuel 1:11; II Samuel 14:25–26; *Nazir* 66a).

6:7| **Since the crown of his God is upon his head:** The term *nezer*, "a crown," is derived from the same root as the term *nezirut*, "naziriteship." In this verse, the two meanings of the root *nun-zayin-reish* merge together. The nazirite abstains from indulging in luxuries, sometimes turning his back on social life and worldly matters (see, e.g., Jeremiah 35:6–19; Lamentations 4:7). While he abstains from these matters, he is adorned with the crown of his God. The purpose of a crown is to emphasize the elevated status

of the wearer. It would therefore appear that there is a linguistic connection between these two meanings.

6:11| **And atone for him for that which he sinned with regard to the corpse:** Since the verse is referring to the unavoidable impurity of the nazirite in the case of a sudden death, it is difficult to understand why the nazirite requires atonement. Some of the Sages therefore explain that the sin which requires atonement is not the fact that he became impure, but his



Examples of Rabbi Steinsaltz's clarity

ספר במדבר | פרקו | נשא

כָּל יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מִגֶּפֶן הַיַּיִן מִחֲרָצִים וְעַד-זָג לֹא יֹאכַל: כָּל-יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ תֵּעַר לֹא-יַעֲבֹד עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ עַד-מְלֵאת הַיָּמִם אֲשֶׁר-יֵזִיד לִיהוּה קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה גִדֹּל פְּרַע שְׂעֵר רֹאשׁוֹ: כָּל-יְמֵי הַזִּירוֹ לִיהוּה עַל-נַפְשׁ מֵת לֹא יָבֹא: לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לְאָחָיו וּלְאָחָתוֹ לֹא-יִטְמֵא לָהֶם בְּמֵתָם כִּי נֹזֵר אֱלֹהֵי עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ: כָּל יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לִיהוּה: וְכִי-יָמוּת מֵת עָלָיו בַּפֶּתַע פְּתָאֵם וְטִמֵּא רֹאשׁ נְזֻרוֹ וְגִלַּח רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם טְהַרְתּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי יִגְלַחְנוּ: וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂמִינִי יָבֹא שְׂתֵי תָרִים אוֹ שְׁנַי בְּנֵי יוֹנָה אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וַעֲשֵׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶחָד לְחֻטָּאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו מֵאֲשֶׁר חָטָא עַל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְקִדַּשׁ אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: וְהֵזִיר לִיהוּה אֶת-יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ וְהֵבִיא כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן-שָׁנָתוֹ לְאִשִּׁם וְהֵימִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים יִפְלוּ כִּי טִמֵּא נְזֻרוֹ: וְזֹאת תֹּרַת הַנְּזִיר בַּיּוֹם מְלֵאת יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ יָבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְהִקְרִיב אֶת-קֶרְבָּנוֹ לִיהוּה כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן-שָׁנָתוֹ תְּמִים אֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכִבְשֵׂה אַחַת בֶּת-שָׁנָתָהּ תְּמִימָה לְחֻטָּאת וְאֵיל-אֶחָד תְּמִים לְשִׁלְמִים:

רש"י

יא | מֵאֲשֶׁר חָטָא עַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ. שֶׁלֹּא טָהַר מִטְּמֵאת הַמֵּת. רַבִּי חֵלְעָר הִקְפִּיד חֹמֶר: שְׂעֵר עֲגָמוֹ מִן הַיַּיִן וְקִדַּשׁ אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ. לְחֹזֵק וּלְהַתְחִיל מִנְּטֵן טִירֵדוֹ.

יב | וְהֵזִיר לַיהוָה אֶת יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ. יָחֹזֵק וְיִמְנֶה טִירֵדוֹ כַּבְּתֻלָּה: וְהֵימִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים יִפְלוּ. לֹא יַעֲבֹד מִן הַמִּטְּנָן.

יג | וְיָבִיא אֹתוֹ. יָבִיא חֵיט עֲגָמוֹ. וְזֶה חֵיט מִשְׁלָשָׁה חֵיטִים שֶׁהֵיָה רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל דּוֹקֵשׁ כִּן. כִּיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ: "וְהֵשִׂיחוּ חֹזֶתִים עֵוֹן חֲטָאֵיהֶם" (ויקרא כב, טו) חֵיט עֲגָמִים; כִּיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ: "וְיִקְבֹּד חֵיטֵן כִּבְיָ" (דברים לה, ו) הוּא קִבֵּר חֵיט עֲגָמוֹ.

טו | פֶּתַע. זֶה חֲזָנִים. פְּתָאֵם. זֶה אֲוִיָּה. וְיֵשׁ חֹמֶרִים: "פֶּתַע פֶּתַח־סֵל" דָּבָר אֶחָד הוּא, מִקְרָה שֶׁל פֶּתַח־סֵל: וְכִי יָמוּת מֵת עָלָיו. בְּחֵלֶל שֶׁהוּא בּוֹ: בַּיּוֹם טְהַרְתּוֹ. בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה חֵיטֵן חֹזֵר חֵיטֵן חֵלְעָר בְּשִׁמְעֵי שֶׁהוּא טָהוֹר לְגַמְרֵי? תִּלְמֹד לֹמַר: "בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי" חֵיט שְׂבִיעִי יִכּוּל חֲסֹבֵי לֹא הֵזֵא תִּלְמֹד לֹמַר: "בַּיּוֹם טְהַרְתּוֹ":

יז | וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂמִינִי יָבֹא שְׂתֵי תָרִים. לְהוֹצִיא חֵיט הַשְּׂבִיעִי. חֹזֵר חֵיטֵן חֵלְעָר לְהוֹצִיא חֵיט הַתְּשִׁיעִי? קָבַע זְמַן לְקַדְבִּין וְקָבַע זְמַן לְמַקְרִיבֵין, מִהַ קִּדְבִין הַקָּשִׁיר שְׂמִיעֵי וּמִשְׂמִיעֵי וְהִלְחִיחַ, חֵיט מִקְרִיבֵין שְׂמִיעֵי וּמִשְׂמִיעֵי וְהִלְחִיחַ:

יד | חֲרָצִים. הֵם הַגְּדֵעִינֵין. יָג. הֵם קִלְפוֹת שְׂמִיחֹן. שֶׁהַחֲרָצִים בְּתוֹכָן כֹּנְנִיבֵל בּוֹ:

ה | קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה. הַשְּׂעֵר שְׂלוֹ, לְגִדֹּל הַפְּרַע שֶׁל שְׂעֵר רֹאשׁוֹ: פְּרַע שְׂעֵר. נִקְוֵד פֶּתַח לְכִי שֶׁהוּא דְבוּק לִשְׂעֵר רֹאשׁוֹ, פְּרַע שֶׁל שְׂעֵר. וְסִרְוֹ שֶׁל "פְּרַע" גְּדוּל שֶׁל שְׂעֵר. וְכֵן "חֵיט רֹאשׁוֹ לֹא יִפְדֵּעַ" (ויקרא כח, יא) יִחִין קִרְוֵי פְּרַע פְּחוֹת מִשְׁלָסִים יוֹם:

ז | כָּל יְמֵי נְזֻרוֹ קֹדֶשׁ הוּא. זוֹ קִדְשֵׁת הַגֹּיִם מִלְּטִמֵּא לְמִתִּים:

DISCUSSION

→ initial decision to become a nazirite. The nazirite undertook his naziriteship out of a desire to sanctify himself for a limited amount of time. Since he became impure, he must start anew, extending the period of his naziriteship. It is possible that at this stage he regrets his vow, and no longer retains his original intention of sanctification. His abstinence therefore no longer

serves its intended purpose, and requires atonement. This concept is expressed in the words of Rabbi Elazar HaKappar: With what soul did the nazirite sin? Rather, he sinned by the distress he caused himself by abstaining from wine (*Ta'anit* 11a). According to this interpretation, the verse would be rendered: He shall atone for him, for that which he sinned with regard to his person.

6:12 | **And the first days shall be void:** The Talmud relates the story of Queen Helene, who vowed to be a nazirite for seven years. However, toward the conclusion of that period she became impure and had to start her naziriteship anew (*Nazir* 19b).

Moses and His Siblings' Criticism

NUMBERS 12:1–16

Moses does not have to deal only with the burden of leadership of the entire nation. In the upcoming passage, he is confronted by negative personal comments about him that are uttered by his older siblings, Miriam and Aaron. It is specifically in light of this criticism by his own family members that God expresses His most direct and exalted praise of Moses, and mentions his uniqueness among humankind. Due to his great humility, Moses is not sensitive to critique, but God zealously defends Moses' honor. The Torah also relates the punishment meted out to Miriam, who began the slanderous discussion about Moses. Later, the nation would be commanded to remember this event for future generations in order to internalize how serious a sin slander is. Although slander is not punishable in court, its consequences can be extremely destructive.

- 12** **1** **Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses**, at Miriam's initiative, with regard to the Kushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Kushite woman,^D Tzipora the Midyanite.³⁸ It is possible that the Midyanites, who were nomads, mixed with other peoples.³⁹ It is also possible that Tzipora was called Kushite because the Kushites were known for their black skin and Tzipora's skin was darker than usual among the Israelites, whose skin color was a light brown.⁴⁰ Although she was Moses' wife, Moses had separated from her and refrained from marital relations in order to commune with God in the Tabernacle.⁴¹
- 2** **They said: Was it only with Moses that the Lord spoke; didn't he speak with us as well?** Since we are also prophets, we do not see what right Moses has to act in this way with regard to his wife. Moses married Tzipora, her father later brought her to the Israelite camp from Midyan, and yet Moses is ignoring her. This was a private conversation between Miriam and Aaron, but **the Lord heard.**⁴²
- 3** The fact that Miriam and Aaron spoke about Moses in third person indicates that they were not directly addressing Moses. However, it is possible that they would not have minded if he had heard about their conversation, and perhaps they even intended for him to hear about it, thereby sending him an indirect message. It is possible that Moses heard and did not respond.⁴³ However, the verse testifies that even if Moses had been present when this conversation was taking place he would not have responded or have been insulted due to his great humility: **And the man Moses was very humble,^D more than any person on**

the face of the earth. Moses did not demand special status or extra rights; he saw himself simply as a servant and messenger of God who was transmitting His word and His Torah.⁴⁴

- 4** **The Lord said suddenly to Moses, to Aaron, and to Miriam: Go out the three of you, together, to the Tent of Meeting. The three of them went out.**
- 5** **The Lord descended in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called Aaron and Miriam and both of them came out** from the Tent and moved closer to the cloud.
- 6** **He said: Hear now My words: Even if your prophet is truly a prophet of the Lord, as you are, I will nonetheless reveal Myself to him indirectly, in a vision that must be deciphered, or in a dream I will speak to him.** Regular prophets do not hear My words while they are fully conscious, but rather while in a deep trance.
- 7** **Not so My servant Moses,^D** who is different from you and from all other prophets; **in all My house he is the most trusted,** so much so that I speak with him on a regular basis.
- 8** **Mouth to mouth I will speak with him,** in a direct manner, unlike the visions of other prophets from which they deduce the presence of God; **and a clear vision that is not in riddles** that require interpretation; **and the image of the Lord he will behold.^D** That being the case, **why did you not fear to speak against My servant, against Moses?** How do you dare to equate yourselves to Moses and to criticize his conduct?
- 9** **The wrath of the Lord was enflamed against them and He departed.**

DISCUSSION

12:1 | **He had married a Kushite woman:** Some have identified this woman as someone other than Tzipora. It is related in some *midrashim* that when Moses initially fled from Pharaoh, he spent time in Kush before arriving in Midyan, where he eventually married Tzipora. In Kush he had married a woman, perhaps the queen of Kush herself. According to these opinions, Miriam and Aaron spoke about the fact that this matter had not been closed (see *Targum Yerushalmi*; Ibn Ezra; Rashbam; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Shemot* 168).

12:3 | **And the man Moses was very humble:** The fact that Moses was so humble does not mean that he did not value or appreciate his position, rather Moses felt that he was merely doing his job. Consequently, it would never have occurred to him that because of his status he was immune from critique or that he had extra rights. This is because humility consists of an awareness of one's status unaccompanied by feelings of superiority. The greater the individual is, the more he views himself as insignificant compared to that which is above him, rather than measuring himself by those beneath him.

12:7 | **My servant Moses:** There are several other instances when Moses is called the servant of the Lord, as in the next verse (see also Exodus 14:31; Joshua 11:15). This depiction expresses not only Moses' subservience to God, but also his closeness, much like the expression "the king's servant" (see II Samuel 18:29; II Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 38:7–12). Archeological excavations have uncovered beautiful signet rings containing the words "servant of the king," or "servant of King so-and-so," indicating a lofty social status. The term, "servant of the Lord" is



Samples of explanatory scientific notes

Book of Exodus | Chapter 16 | *Beshalah*

no decisions on our own; we are only messengers of God, and you are subject to His direct supervision.

8 **Moses said:** You will be convinced of God's providence **with the Lord giving you meat to eat in the evening^d and bread in the morning to be satiated, with the Lord hearing your complaints that you bring against Him, then what are we? Your complaints are not against us, but against the Lord.**

9 **Moses said to Aaron:** Say to the entire congregation of the children of Israel: Approach before the Lord, as He has heard your complaints.

10 **And it was, as Aaron spoke to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, that they turned toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud.**

Sixth
aliya 11 **The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**

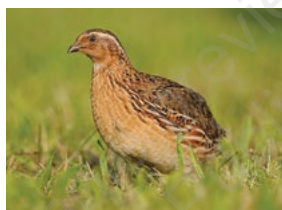
12 **I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying: In the afternoon you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be sated with bread, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God.**

13 **Indeed, it was in the evening that the quails⁸ came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. In springtime in the desert, formation of a layer of dew around the camp at night is a natural phenomenon.**

14 When the morning sun warmed the air, **the layer of dew lifted and behold, the Israelites found that on the surface of the wilderness**

there lay a **fine, grainy substance**; alternatively, this may be translated to mean that it was a fine substance that dissolved easily.²³ It was **fine as the frost on the earth**, but it was clear that this was not frost.

15 **The children of Israel saw it, and they said one to another: What [man] is it?**²⁴ Others would translate: It is food,²⁵ or: It is



Quail

a portion.²⁶ **As they did not know what it was, Moses said to them: It is the bread that the Lord has given you for eating throughout your journey.**

16 **This is the matter that the Lord has commanded: Gather from it, each man according to his eating; an omer, a dry measure greater than two liters, for a person, according to the number of your people, you shall each take for whomever is in his tent.** God will provide every person the same measure.

17 **The children of Israel did so, and they gathered** the manna that was scattered on the surface of the ground; **some** diligent or greedy people took **more, and some**, who were slower or less interested, took **less**.

18 **But they measured it with an omer** measure after gathering it in all their different vessels, **and they found that he who took more did not have excess, and he who took less did not lack;** all their different vessels held the same measure per person. **Each gathered according to his eating.** Already from the gathering of this food, it became apparent that it was an unnatural substance.

19 **Moses said to them:** The manna collected in the morning is meant to be consumed throughout the day, but no later. Therefore, **no man may leave from it until morning.**

20 **But they did not heed Moses; people left from it until the morning.** As can be found in any large group, there were some who were averse to any authority imposed upon them. Perhaps it was these individuals who refused to heed the instructions of Moses. However, it is possible that people left some of their manna overnight because they were not told that the manna would fall again the next day; they were therefore worried they would have no food. **And it, the manna, became infested with worms and reeked; and Moses became angry with them** for disregarding his instructions, and in the process, disgracing the manna, a miraculous gift from God. Here, yet another extraordinary property of the manna was revealed. Normally, worms do not appear in food within a matter of hours, and the process of decomposition takes longer.²⁷

BACKGROUND

16:13| **Quails:** The common quail, *Coturnix coturnix*, is a small bird from the pheasant family. Its body is small and round, reaching a length of up to 18 cm and a weight of about 100 g. At the end of the summer this species engages in a mass migration from central and eastern Europe, via the coast of Turkey, to the northern Sinai Peninsula and east-

ern Egypt, traveling about 750 km in a single night. They arrive exhausted from this long flight, and can be gathered easily by hand. The appearance of the quail was not in itself miraculous; the miracle was in the precise timing of this natural phenomenon in a manner that allowed for an immediate fulfillment of a promise to the children of Israel.

DISCUSSION

16:8| **With the Lord giving you meat to eat in the evening:** God was not quoted above as promising meat, but Moses would not have introduced such a promise on his own. Rather, God revealed to Moses more than what is reported in the Torah. In general, whenever the Torah states: And the Lord spoke to Moses, the Torah does not record the entirety of God's statement to Moses. Rather, it records only the content intended to be written. God said much to Moses that is not written explicitly in the Torah, some of which was transmitted orally by Moses afterward.

Samples of explanatory scientific notes

ספר שמות | פרק טז | בשלח

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּתַת יְהוָה לָכֶם בְּעָרֵב בֶּשָׂר לֶאֱכֹל וּלְחֶם בַּבֶּקֶר לְשִׁבְעַת בְּשָׁמַיִם יְהוָה אֶת־תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם מְלִינִים עָלָיו וְנַחֲנוּ מָה לֹא־עָלִינוּ תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם כִּי עַל־יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן אָמֹר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קִדְּבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי שָׁמַע אֶת תְּלַנְתִּיכֶם: וַיְהִי כַּדְּבַר אַהֲרֹן אֶל־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּפְּנוּ אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר וְהִנֵּה כְבוֹד יְהוָה נֹרְאָה בַּעֲנָן:

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־תְּלוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דִּבַּר אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר בֵּין הָעַרְבִים תֹּאכְלוּ בֶשֶׂר וּבַבֶּקֶר תִּשְׁבְּעוּ־לֶחֶם וַיִּדְעַתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וַיְהִי בְּעָרֵב וַתַּעַל הַשָּׁלוּ וַתִּכַּס אֶת־הַמַּחְנֶה וּבַבֶּקֶר הִיָּתָה שִׁכְבַּת הַטָּל סָבִיב לַמַּחְנֶה: וַתַּעַל שִׁכְבַּת הַטָּל וְהִנֵּה עַל־פְּנֵי הַמִּדְבָּר דֶּק מְחֹסְפִים דֶּק כַּפְּפֹר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּדְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו מִן הוּא כִּי לֹא יֵדְעוּ מַה־הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים הוּא הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָהּ: זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לְקַטֹּוּ מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוּ עֹמֵר לְגִלְגָּלַת מִסִּפֵּר נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם אִישׁ לֹא־שֶׁר בְּאֵהָלוּ תִקְחוּ: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְקְטוּ הַמִּרְבָּה וְהַמְּמַעִיט: וַיִּמְדוּ בְּעֹמֵר וְלֹא הָעֵדִיף הַמִּרְבָּה וְהַמְּמַעִיט לֹא הֶחְסִיר אִישׁ לְפִי־אֲכָלוּ לְקַטֹּוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים אִישׁ אֶל־יֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֶּקֶר: וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּתְרוּ אַנְשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֶּקֶר וַיִּרְסוּ תוֹלְעִים וַיִּבְאֵשׁ וַיִּקְצֹף עַל־הֶם מֹשֶׁה:

דש"י

טו | מן הוא. הכנת מזון הוא, כמו: 'וימנו להם המלך' (הניחל ח. ה) כי לא ידעו מה הוא. שיקראוהו בשמו:

טז | עמו. גם מדה. מספר נפשתיכם. כפי מנין נפשותי שיש להם בזה הענין, תחשו, עמך לכל גלגלת:

יז | המרבה והממעט. יש שלקטו הרבה וגם שלקטו מעט. וכשצאו לביתם מרדו בעמך חיש חיש מה שלקטו, ומנחו שהמקרה ללקט לח העדיף על עמך לגלגלת חשך בזה הענין, והממעט ללקט לא מנח חסר מעמך לגלגלת, והוא גם גדול שפעשה בו:

כ | ויתרו אנשים. דתן ויטרים: וירם תולעים. לשון קמה: ויבאש. הכי זה מקרח הסוף, שפתחלה הבאים ולבשוף התלעי. פענון שצמח: 'זלח הבאים ורמה לא היתה בו' (להלן פסוק כד) וכן דרך כל המתלעים:

חס תמלא שפסקת של בינה על ותסתם חת פיה ותניחא פניה, היא עולה מחלפה פחור. וכפונתו דקטו: שהטל עולה מן החרו. וכעלות שכבת הטל נגעה המן, ורחו והנה על פני המדבר דבר דה, מחספס - מגלה, וחיין דומה לו במקרה, וגם לומר 'מחספס' לשון 'חפוסה ודלוסקמח' שכלשון משנה: כשנתגלה משכבת הטל לחו שהיה דבר דה מחספס פתוח בין פתי שכבות הטל וחינקלוס תקדם: 'מקלח', לשון 'מחשף הלבו' (בראשית ל, טז) בכפר. כפוד - גלדיח בלע. 'דעק כציר', 'כפכבי גר' (ישעיה כו, ט), והוא מין צבע שחור פדלמנינו גבי פסוי הקם: 'הציר והזקנך' (חולין פח ע"ב). 'דעק כציר כגלדיח על חרעף', דה היה כציר ושוכב מגלד קרח על החרו, וכן פדושו, 'דק כפכר', שטוח קלוס ומחפר כגילה. 'דק' טינני' ש בלע, שהיה מגלדי גלד דה מלמעלה. ו'כציר' שתקדם חונקלוס, תוספת היא על לשון העברית וחיין לו תבה בפסוק:

ח | בשך לאכל ולא לשבע. למדה תורה דרך חרו שחיין חוכלין גשך לשבע ומה לחה להזיך לחם בבקר וגשך בערב? לפי שהלחם שחלו פהגן שחי חסר לו לחם בלח לחם חבל גשך שחלו שלח פהגן, שהרבה בהמות היו להם, ועוד שהיה חסר להם בלח גשך, לפיכך נתן להם בשעת טריח שלח פהגן: אשר אתם מלינים עליו. חת החסרים השומעים חתכם מתלוננים:

ט | קרבו. למקום שהענו ירד:

יג | השלו. מין עוף, ושמן מאל: היתה שכבת הטל. הטל שוכב על המן, ובמקום חסר הוא חומר: 'זכרת הטל' וגו' (כמדבר יח, ט). הטל יורד על החרו והמן יורד עליו ויחור יורד על טל עליו, והכי הוא כמנין בקפסח:

יד | ותעל שכבת הטל. כשהחמה זרחת עולה טל שעל המן לקרחת החמה כדרך טל עולה לקרחת חמה, חר

Parashat Teruma

The Commandments to Construct and Consecrate the Tabernacle and Its Utensils

This *parasha* and the following one, *Parashat Tetzaveh*, are part of one extended speech in which God instructs Moses in detail how to construct the Tabernacle and its various utensils, and how to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests to serve therein. These instructions were given to Moses during the forty days and forty

nights that he was on Mount Sinai, as was stated in the last verse of the previous *parasha*.

The Tabernacle is the site of divine revelation and is constructed in the form of a human home. The vessels of the Tabernacle correspond to the basic furniture of a home: a bed or chair, a lamp, and a table. The ark corresponds to a bed or chair; the table represents a table for eating, as the showbread was placed on it; and the candelabrum serves as a lamp that provides light inside.

The Call for Donations

EXODUS 25:1–9

The construction of the Tabernacle entailed using a wide range of both expensive and inexpensive materials. Each Israelite was asked to donate some material on the list, in accordance with his means and personal level of generosity. Although some of the expenses for the construction of the Tabernacle were collected in equal amounts from all Israelites in the form of a tax, this was not the primary source of

funding for the construction. For the most part, the Tabernacle was constructed using donations that were given freely, through the goodwill of the people.

- 25
- 1 **The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**^d
 - 2 **Speak to the children of Israel^p and command them that they shall collect for Me, on My behalf,¹ a gift; from every man whose heart pledges you shall collect My gift.** This is a donation, not a tax, and the specific amount that is donated depends on the generosity of the individual.
 - 3 **This is the gift that you shall collect from them.** Since the donations were to be used for the construction of the Tabernacle, only certain metals could be donated: **gold, silver, and bronze.** Other metals that the children of Israel possessed in the wilderness were not needed.²
 - 4 **And fabrics: sky-blue wool,^b colored a deep blue with dye extracted from the blood of a certain species of snail; and wool dyed purple^b or some reddish color. The dye used to make this color, which was also extracted from various snails, was very expensive, and in many places symbolized nobility. And**

scarlet wool,^b colored bright red with a dye extracted from certain insects. And in addition to threads of dyed sheep's wool, the people should take fine, clean linen [*shesh*], a word derived from Egyptian, and thicker, woven goat hair.

- 5 **And materials for the roofs and the walls: rams' hides from which the hair has been removed and dyed red, and tahash^b hides, and boards of acacia wood,^b**



Ram



Gum arabic tree



Murex trunculus, source of sky-blue dye



Murex brandaris, source of purple dye



Dugong

- 6 **oil suitable for the lighting of the candelabrum, spices used for the anointing oil and for the incense of the spices.**

Samples of explanatory scientific notes

ספר שמות | פרק כה | תרומה

פרשת תרומה

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת יַחַד כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לָבוֹ תִּקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמַתִּי: וְזֹאת הִתְרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֵתם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֶׁת: וְתִכְלֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים: וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תַּחֲשִׁים וְעִצֵּי שִׁטִּים: שֹׁמֵן לַמָּאֹד בְּשָׂמִים לְשֹׁמֵן הַמִּשְׁחָה

רש"י

ה' מְאֻדָּמִים. צבועות היו חלם לחחר עבדן. תַּחֲשִׁים. מין חייה, ולא היתה חלח לשעה, והרבה גונים היו לה, לכך מתרגם "סקסנח", ששם ומתפחד בגוון שלו. ועצי שטים. ומיחיו היו להם במדבר? פלש רבי תנחומיא, יעקב חיבנו עפה ברוח הקדש שיעתדיו ויחלח לבנות משכן במדבר, והביא חרוים למגדים ונטעים, וניה לבנו לטלם עמיהם כשיצאו ממגדים:

ו' שֹׁמֵן לַמָּאֹד. שמן זית וך להעלות נר תמיד. בְּשָׂמִים לְשֹׁמֵן הַמִּשְׁחָה. שנגשה למשח כלי המשכן והמשכן לקדשו, והקדשו לו בשמים, כמו שמתפשט ב"י תשא' (להלן

ג' זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֶׁת וְגו'. כלם בחו צבועה חיש חיש מה שגדבו לבו, חוץ מן הכסף שפח בשנה, מחצית השקל לכל חיה. ולא מעינו בכל מלאכת המשכן שהנך שם כסף יותר, שנימך: "וכסף פקודי העדה וגו' פקע לזלגלית" וגו' (להלן לה. טו. ו) ואחר הכסף הפח שם צבועה (להלן לה. טז) עשהוהו לכלי שרת:

ד' וְתִכְלֹת. עמר צבוע בדם חלוון, ועבדו ירק: וְאַרְגָּמָן. עמר צבוע ממין צבע ששמו ארגמן: וְשֵׁשׁ. הוא פשתן: וְעִזִּים. נוצה של עזים, לכך תרגם חונקלוס: "ומעזי", דבר הפח מן העזים ולא עזים ענגון, שתרגום של עזים עניח:

ב' וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה. "לי" - לשמי: תְרוּמָה. הפקשה, יפדשו לי ממנום נדבה: יִדְבְּנוּ לָבוֹ. לשון נדבה, והוא לשון רצון טוב, שישניו פלעו: תִּקְחוּ אֶת תְּרוּמָתִי. חמרו רבותנו, שלש תרומות חמורות פחו: חֹרֶת תְּרוּמַת פֶּקַע לְזִלְגֹלֶת שְׁנַעֲשֹׂו מֵהַם הַחֲדָנִים, כמו שמתפשט ביחלה פקודי' (להלן לה. טו. ו); וְחֹרֶת תְּרוּמַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ פֶּקַע לְזִלְגֹלֶת, לקפות לקנות מהו קדקנות צבור; וְחֹרֶת תְּרוּמַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן נִדְבַת כָּל חֵדֶד וְחֵדֶד שֶׁהִתְנַדְּבוּ. שלש עשרה דברים החמורים בענין כלם הקדו: למלאכת המשכן או לבגדי קהנה כשתקדקו בהם:

DISCUSSION

25:1 | **The Lord spoke to Moses saying [lemor]:** This is the most frequently repeated verse in the Torah. The simplest explanation of the word *lemor* is that it performs the same function as the colon in modern-day punctuation. Others explain that it means "to say" denoting a command by God to Moses to repeat to others what he will now hear (see Ramban, 6:10).

25:2 | **Speak to the children of Israel:** Although "speaking" [*dibbur*], the word used here, and "saying" [*amira*] are roughly synonymous, the former denotes a firmer instruction than the latter (see *Bereshit Rabba* 44:6; Rashi, Numbers 12:1).

BACKGROUND

25:4 | **Sky-blue [*tekhelet*] wool:** This refers to a deep blue dye, bordering on purple, and the word also refers to wool dyed that color. Many today identify *tekhelet* as the dye extracted from the banded dye-murex, *Murex trunculus*, a species of sea snail. This blue dye was used in the distinguished priestly garments and other royal clothes (see Esther 8:15).

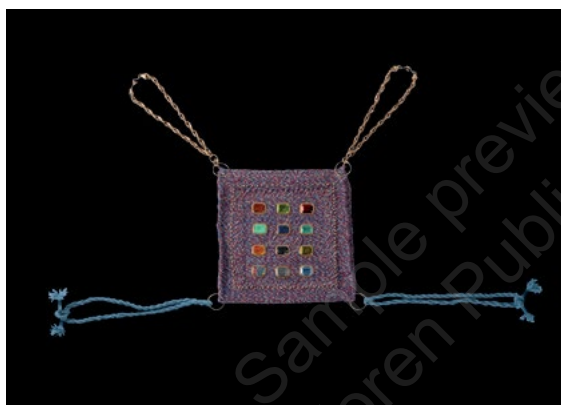
Purple [*argaman*]: This reddish-purple dye is extracted from the spiny dye-murex, *Murex brandaris*, another kind of sea snail. Early documents indicate that wool dyed with this substance was four times more expensive than other dyed wool. In addition to being frequently mentioned in the Bible together with the sky-blue dye used in the construction of the Tabernacle, it is also mentioned as being used in the covers of the Tabernacle's accoutrements and the vestments of the High Priest. The *argaman* dye is also mentioned in external sources dating from the fourteenth century BCE. In the Roman period, purple dye was used mainly by priests, kings, and ministers, and due to its importance and high price, production of the dye was monitored and trade in it was controlled.

Scarlet [*tola'at shani*] wool: This is a bright red dye produced from a certain species of insect (see Isaiah 1:18). It was used extensively in dyeing wool and expensive fabrics, as well as for the ritual purification of lepers and those who had become impure from contact with a corpse (see Leviticus 14:4-6; Numbers 19:6). In the description of the building of the Temple in II Chronicles (2:6-13), the word *karmil* is used to refer to this insect instead of *tola'at shani* (see Rav Se'adya Gaon; Rashi; Radak). *Karmil* is a type of insect known as *kermes* in Arabic, and similar names for *tola'at shani* exist in many European languages, such as "carmine" in English.

Current research suggests that *tola'at shani* is the scale insect *Kermes echinatus*, which feeds on the sap of evergreen trees and is found in Israel; this accords with the description in the Midrash (*Pesikta Rabbati* 20). The dye is extracted by drying the insects and then grinding and cooking them.

25:5 | **Tahash:** *Tahash* is mentioned in the book of Ezekiel as an expensive material used for making shoes: "I clothed you in embroidery and shod you with *tahash*,

- 13 The verse returns to elaborate on the production of the settings for the onyx stones. The process will have relevance for the breast piece as well: **You shall make settings of gold.** Perhaps this command includes the other settings of gold, which were placed on the breast piece.⁴
- 14 **And two chains of pure gold: You shall make them at the edges of the settings; they shall be braided craftsmanship.** After fashioning them, **you shall set the braided chains in the settings.**
- 15 **You shall make** an ornamental breast piece,^d which will be utilized in the administration of judgment;⁵ alternatively, the breast piece will symbolize your status as a judge. It shall be **artfully crafted; you shall make it like the craftsmanship of the ephod,** in a similar manner and from the same materials: **gold, sky-blue, purple, and scarlet wool, and linen, all spun together you shall make it.**



The breast piece

- 16 **It shall be square** in appearance, and yet it shall actually be made from a rectangular cloth that has been **folded**, doubled over. This will form a kind of pouch, in which the Urim and the Tumim are most likely meant to be placed (see verse 30). **Its length shall be a span [zeret]** after it is folded, **and its width a span.** A *zeret* is approximately half a cubit, slightly more than 20 cm. It is roughly the distance between the tip of one's little finger [*zeret*] and the tip of one's thumb when spreading out fingers to their greatest extent.
- 17 **You shall set in it, the breast piece, a mounting of stone, four rows of stone,** each of which shall contain three different precious stones. The identity of these stones is difficult to determine with absolute certainty: **A row of *odem*,** which is commonly identified as a **ruby,^{BD} a peridot,^B and an emerald;^B this shall be the first row.**
- 18 **And the second row: a carbuncle, a sapphire [sappir]** (see 24:10 above). The identity of the *sappir* stone is uncertain. **And a clear quartz [yahalom].** Although in modern Hebrew, *yahalom* refers to a diamond, it is likely that *yahalom* once referred to a different precious stone.
- 19 **And the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst.**
- 20 **And the fourth row: a beryl, and an onyx, and a chalcedony;^B they shall be set in gold in their mountings.** Due to the difficulty in cutting and smoothing these precious stones, the enclosures must be made to suit the shapes of the stones that will be set inside them, so that they will be held firmly.
- 21 **The stones^d shall correspond to the names of the children of Israel: Twelve, according to their names.** On each stone the name of one tribe will be engraved. And they shall be engraved like the **engravings of a signet,^d each according to its name, for the twelve tribes.**
- 22 The verse reiterates, this time in the context of the breast piece, an earlier command with regard to the chains (see verse 14

DISCUSSION

28:15 | **You shall make a breast piece:** It is possible that in ancient times, judges would adorn themselves with a garment or ornament similar to the High Priest's breast piece of judgment. It would appear that some type of ephod was donned by others besides the High Priest (see I Samuel 2:18, 22:18; II Samuel 6:14). Perhaps articles similar to the priestly vestments, among them the breast piece, were likewise worn by individuals of authority.

28:17 | **Ruby [odem]:** The ruby is a very expensive gem, and it is also one of the hardest stones. The Torah will state later that each stone represents one of the tribes. If *odem* is indeed the

ruby, it is possible that since this was the stone of Reuben, the eldest of the tribes, it was named after him, and when this term was transmitted to other languages it evolved into the term "ruby" (see Rabbeinu Bahya). Nevertheless, the true identity of the *odem* stone remains uncertain.

28:21 | **The stones:** According to ancient tradition, the color of the stone used for each tribe became the color of its respective flag (*Tanhumah*, Bemidbar 12; see *Targum Yerushalmi*).

Engravings of a signet: Although archaeological digs have uncovered ancient tools that were used to cut precious stones, the process of actually inscribing words on such stones is

of such unparalleled difficulty that in modern times it is performed only by means of lasers. Sapphire and ruby, from the mineral corundum, have a hardness of 9 on the Mohs scale, one level below that of the hardest stone, diamond. Consequently, there have been no discoveries of letters etched on such stones that date from ancient periods. The Sages therefore explain that the *shamir* worm, which may or may not have been a naturally occurring creature, was used for the engraving and writing of letters on the breast-piece stones (see *Avot* 5:6; *Gittin* 68a; *Sota* 48b; Rashi and Radak, Ezekiel 3:9).

Samples of explanatory scientific notes

ספר שמות | פרק כח | תצוה

יג לְזַכְרֶךָ: וְעָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁבָּצֹת זָהָב: וְשִׂיתִי שְׂרָשְׂרֹת זָהָב טְהוֹר מִגְבֹּלֹת שְׁנֵי
 יד תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם מַעֲשֵׂה עֶבֶת וְנָתַתָּה אֶת־שְׂרָשְׂרֹת הָעֶבֶת תַּלְתֵּת עַל־הַמִּשְׁבָּצֹת:
 טו וְעָשִׂיתָ חֲשׂוֹן מִשֵּׁפֶט מַעֲשֵׂה חֲשֵׁב כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶפֶד תַּעֲשֶׂנוּ זָהָב תִּלְלֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן
 טז וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשּׁוֹר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ: רְבוּעַ יִהְיֶה כְּפּוֹל זֹרֵת אֲרָבוֹ וְזֹרֵת רַחְבּוֹ:
 יז וּמְלֵאֲתָ בּוֹ מְלֵאֲתָ אֲבָן אַרְבָּעָה טוּרִים אֲבָן טוּר אָדָם פְּטֹדָה וּבִרְקַת הַטּוּר
 יח הָאֶחָד: וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נֶפֶךְ סַפִּיר וַיְהִלֵּם: וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְשֵׁם שָׁבוּ וְאַחַלְמָה:
 יט וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי תְּרִישִׁי וְשֵׁהָם וַיִּשְׁפֹּה מִשְׁבָּצִים זָהָב יִהְיוּ בְּמִלּוֹאֲתָם: וְהָאֲבָנִים
 כ וְתִהְיֶינָה עַל־שְׂמֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂתִים עֶשְׂרֵה עַל־שְׂמֹתָם פְּתוּחֵי חוֹתָם אִישׁ
 כב עַל־שְׂמוֹ תִּהְיֶינָה לְשָׁנֵי עֶשֶׂר שָׁבֹט: וְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־הַחֲשׂוֹן שְׂרָשְׂרֹת גְּבֹלֹת מַעֲשֵׂה

רשי

בכתפות החסוד הכחות מחזקיו על פתמיו ונקפלות ויורדות לפניו מעט, והחשן תלוי בהן כשקשרות וטבעות כמו שמתקשש בעננו:

יז ומלאות בו. על שם שהקבנים ממלאות גומות המשבצות המתקנות להן, הורח חותן בלשון מלאחים:

כז משבצים זהב יהיו. הטורים "במלאותם", מקפס משבצות זהב פעמה שעור שיתמלא בעיני החבן. זהו לשון "במלאותם", פשעור מלוי עבדן של חבנים יהיה עמק המשבצות, לא פחות ולא יותר:

כא איש על שמו. כסדר תולדותם סדר החבנים: אדם לחיובו, פטודה לשמעון, וכן קלם:

כב על החשן. כשכיל החשן, לקבנים כטבעותיו כמו

לשון עתה, כי כפשת החשן חוזר ומצנה על עשיתו ועל הדיעו, ולא נכתב כאן חלף להודיע מקצת ערך המשבצות שנה לעשות עם החסוד, וכתב לך זאת לומר לך, המשבצות הללו זקוקו לך, לכשתעשה שקשרות מגבולות על החשן, מתגם על המשבצות הללו:

טז חשן משפוט. שמתקשש על הקולו הדיו. דבר חכה "משפט", שמתקד דקדיו והבטחתו חמת, דריסנמניט בלע. שהמשפט משמש שלם לאונות: דברי פעלי הדיו, ונמד הדיו, ונגש הדיו, חס עגש מיתה חס עגש מפות חס עגש מנון, וזה משמש לשון כבוד דברים, שמתקשש ומקד דקדיו: כמעשה אפד. מעשה חושב ומחמשת מינון:

טז זרת ארבו וזרת רחבו. כסול ומטל לו לפניו כעד לבו, שצמיר: "והיו על לב חרדך" (להלן פסוק לו), תלוי

יב לזכרך. שיקחה הקדוש ברוך הוא כבטים כתונים לפניו וזכר עקבתם:

יג ועשית משבצות. מעוט "משבצות" פתים, ולא פדש לך עתה כפשה זו חלף מקצת דקדו, וכפשת החשן גומר לך פרושן:

יד שרשרת זהב. שלשלות: מגבולות. לסוף גבול החשן "תעשה חתם": מעשה עבת. מעשה קליעת חוטיו, ולא מעשה נקבים וכפלים כחותן שעושין לבורות, חלף כחותן שעושין לעדסקחות שקודין חגישיי"ש: ונתתה את שרשרת. של עבותות העשויות מעשה עבות, על משבצות הללו, ולא זה הוא מקום צחית עשיתן של שקשרות ולא צחית קביעתן, ואין "תעשה" החמיר כאן לשון צווי, ואין "ונתתה" החמיר כאן לשון צווי, חלף

BACKGROUND

28:17 | **Ruby [odem]:** Researchers have attempted to identify the *odem* with stones whose names in other Semitic languages relate their reddish [*adam*] appearance, such as the *samtu* stone in Akkadian, or *samkan* in Aramaic (see Onkelos; *Targum Yonatan*). Others identify the *odem* stone as *sardion*, carnelian, which appears in Greek and Roman literature, or as red jasper, which was used in Egypt at the time. Rabbenu Bahya identifies *odem* as the ruby, which he considers the choicest of the precious stones.

Peridot [pitda]: According to Onkelos, the *pitda* is the jade stone. However, a verse in Job (28:19)

identifies the *pitda* as coming from Kush: "It cannot be valued like the *pitda* of Kush." This suggests an identification as peridot, which can be found in East Africa. The Septuagint translates *pitda* as "*topazi[os]*," a word originally derived from the island of Topazos in the Red Sea, now known as Zabargad, which features significant deposits of peridot. This translation has led to the misidentification of *pitda* as topaz in many translations.

Emerald [bareket]: This refers to a shiny [*mavrika*] stone. Based on the Sanskrit term *marakata*, some maintain that it is the green emerald. Others have identified *bareket* as either a dark red

carbuncle; an agate, which is a striped quartz stone of various colors; or a precious stone with the appearance of fiery coal, e.g., a ruby.

28:20 | **Chalcedony [yashfe]:** The English word "chalcedony" derives from the name of the ancient town Chalcedon in Asia Minor. The Arabic *yashb* means jasper. In the Septuagint, *yashfe* is identified as the same stone as the *kadkhod* mentioned in Isaiah (54:12), a quartz stone of various colors. In Greek as well, there is the *karchedon*, probably named after the ancient city of Carthage, located in modern-day Tunisia, from where these stones were exported.

Samples of explanatory scientific notes

Book of Deuteronomy | Chapter 14 | *Re'eh*

- 2 God does not want His children to mutilate their bodies and render themselves unsightly,¹⁵ **for you are a holy people dedicated to the Lord your God, and you the Lord chose to be His people of distinction from all the peoples that are on the face of the earth.**
- 3 **You shall not eat any item considered an abomination.** According to some, this includes items that are despicable in the eyes of the surrounding nations as well.¹⁶
- 4 **These are the animals that you may eat: an ox, a sheep, and a goat;**
- 5 **in addition to the aforementioned domestic animals, you may also eat a deer, a gazelle, a fallow deer,^B a wild goat,^B an oryx,^B an aurochs,^B and a mouflon sheep.^{BD}**
- 6 **Any animal that has hooves, and unlike the horse and donkey, which have only one hoof on each foot, the animal has two hooves on each foot and they are entirely split, and it also brings up the cud among the animals, that you may eat.**
- 7 **However, these you shall not eat from those that bring up the cud, or from those with a split hoof, creatures that have only one of the characteristics of kosher animals but not both: The camel,^B and the hare, and the hyrax^B because they bring**



Fallow deer



Nubian ibex



Arabian oryx



Split hooves



Aurochs



Mouflon ram



Giraffe



Top of a camel's foot



Hare



Hyrax



Bottom of a camel's foot

DISCUSSION

14:5 | **Deer...a mouflon sheep:** The identification of the animals listed here is not certain, but this has little significance regarding the fact that it is permitted to eat them, as the Torah spells

out the physical characteristics on the basis of which it may be determined whether an animal is permitted to be eaten or not (see *Hullin* 71a). The customary practice, however, is to eat only

those animals about which there is a tradition that they are permitted, e.g., the deer and the gazelle (see *Hokhmat Adam* 36:1; *Zivhei Tzedek* 80:2).

Samples of explanatory scientific notes

ספר דברים | פרק יד | ראה

ב כי עם קדוש אתה ליהוה אלהיך ובך בחר יהוה להיות לו לעם סגולה מפל
ג העמים אשר על פני האדמה: לא תאכל כל-תועבה: זאת
הבהמה אשר תאכלו שור שיה בשבים ושה עזים: איל וצבי ויחמור ואקו
ו ודישן ותאו וזמר: וכל-בהמה מפרסת פרסה ושסעת שסע שתי פרסות
ז מעלת גרה בבהמה אתה תאכלו: אך את-זה לא תאכלו ממעלי הגדה
וממפריסי הפרסה השסועה את-הגמל ואת-הארנבת ואת-השפן כי-

ד-ה

והיא טמאה: בבהמה. משמע מה שנמצא בבהמה חבל, מכאן חמרו שהשיל מתר פשוטית חמו: ו השסועה. בקיה היא שיש לה שני זבין ושתי שדדחות חמרו דפתינו: למה נשנו? בבהמה מפני השסועה ובעופות מפני הקרה (להלן פסוק יג), שלא נחמרו בתורת כהנים:

ד-ה | זאת הבהמה... איל וצבי ויחמור. למדנו שהיה בכלל בהמה, ולמדנו שהבהמה וזיה טמאה מרבה מן הטוהרה, שקבל מקום פורט חת המועט: ואקו. מתקדם: "יעלף", "יעלי סלע" הוא חשטנב"ק. ותאו. "תנדלף", שור היער, "חלף" - יער פלשון חרמי: ו מפרסת, סדיקה, בתקומו: פרסה. פלנט"ח: ושסעת. חליקה בשתי עקרעם. שיש סדיקה וזיה חליקה בעקרעם

ב כי עם קדוש אתה. קדשת ענגמך מחכותך, ועוד: "ובך בחר ה'": ג כל תועבה. כל שתעבתי לך, כגון עם חזן כבוד קדי לשחטו במדינה. הדי דבר שתעבתי לך: "כל מום לח ויהיה בו" (ויקרא כב, כח) בן ולמד פון שלף ישחט ויחבל על חיותו המום. בשל פשר בחלב, הדי דבר שתעבתי לך, חזיה פון על חכילתו:

BACKGROUND

14:5 | **Fallow deer [yahmur]**: A type of deer; it chews its cud and has split hooves. The *yahmur* is commonly identified as the Persian fallow deer, *Dama dama mesopotamica*. The length of its body reaches 2 m. The average weight of a male is about 80 kg and that of a female is about 50 kg. Its antlers are spread less widely than those of other deer. The biblical name *yahmur* has been preserved in Aramaic and Arabic. It is possible that the name is attributed to the reddish-brown color of the animal, similar to *hamar*, which is wine (see, e.g., Isaiah 27:5). All the Aramaic translations use the name *yahmur*, as does the Arabic translation of Rav Se'adya Gaon. The Persian fallow deer is known as the *yahmur* in northwestern Iran, which hosts the last remaining natural population of Persian fallow deer in the world. However, some have identified the *yahmur* as the hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), an antelope that has curved horns similar to those of cattle.

Wild goat [ako]: Identified by most of the Aramaic translations as the goat-antelope, *Caprinae*, a wild goat from the Bovidae family. These goats live in open areas and on rocky, mountain-

ous terrain (see Psalms 104:18). In Israel, the only commonly found wild goat is the Nubian ibex (*Capra ibex nubiana*). Wild goats grow to a body length of 100–120 cm and a weight of 45–80 kg. The horns of the male reach a length of 130 cm, while those of the female reach a length of 40 cm.

Oryx [dishon]: According to the Aramaic translations, this is the oryx, and it is customarily identified as the Arabian oryx, *Oryx leucoryx*, which in the past was commonly found in desert plains in Israel, but became extinct from those areas in the early twentieth century due to hunting. It grows to a body length of 2 m, a height of 70 cm, and a weight of 70 kg. Its horns are straight and sharp.

Aurochs [te'o]: According to the Aramaic translations, this is a wild ox identified as the aurochs, *Bos primigenius*, which was common to Israel in biblical times but is currently extinct. It was much larger than modern-day cattle. It reached a length of about 3 m, a shoulder height of about 2 m, and a weight of over 1,000 kg. Its horns reached a length of 80 cm. Some have identified

the *te'o* with the water buffalo, *Bubalus bubalis*. However, no water buffalo remains have been uncovered in archaeological excavations from the biblical era. Apparently, the water buffalo reached Israel only in post-biblical times.

Mouflon sheep [zamer]: Rav Se'adya Gaon identified the *zamer* as the giraffe, *giraffa*, which has all the characteristics of a kosher animal. The giraffe lived in Egypt in biblical times, but archaeologists have yet to uncover any giraffe remains in Israel from that time period. Others have identified the *zamer* as a type of mouflon sheep, *Ovis orientalis*, or the barbary sheep, *Ammotragus lervia*, or the wild goat, *Capra aegagrus*, but there is no hard evidence for any of these claims.

14:7 | **The camel**: The upper, visible part of the camel's foot appears to be split, but its underside appears to be one unit. In any event, the camel walks on several fairly soft toes.

The hare and the hyrax: The hare and hyrax do not actually return food from their stomachs to their mouths to be chewed for a second time, but to the external observer they chew their

Samples of explanatory archeology notes

Book of Genesis | Chapter 37 | Vayeshev

10 He related it to his father and to his brothers.^d Unlike in the first dream, Jacob is represented in this dream. For this reason, Joseph also related the dream to his father.³ **And his father rebuked him, and said to him: What is this dream that you dreamed?** This is certainly not a meaningful dream. Considering that the sun and the moon are metaphors for one's parents, **will I and your mother and your brothers come to prostrate ourselves to you to the earth?** Surely we will not. Your mother is already dead.

11 His brothers envied him, whether on account of his abnormal dreams, or because of their father's relatively mild response. Unlike Joseph's brothers, Jacob did not rebuke Joseph for expressing undeserved arrogance; he claimed only that the dream could never come to fruition. **But his father kept the matter in mind.** Despite his stated assertion that Joseph's dreams were mere fantasy, Jacob kept them in mind, as he believed that there was some significance to them.

Second **12 His brothers went to herd their father's flock in Shekhem.**

aliya **13 Israel said to Joseph: Aren't your brothers herding in Shekhem? Go, and I will send you to them.** It is normal for a flock to spend weeks or even months outside its pen. Jacob wished to maintain contact with his sons, who had wandered with the flock all the way from Hebron to Shekhem. **He, Joseph, said to him: Here I am.**

14 He said to him: Go now, see the status of your brothers and the status of the flock and bring back word. He sent him from the Valley of Hebron.⁸ Although Hebron itself is situated on mountainous terrain, it is possible that Jacob's family dwelled in the valley below. Alternatively, the family lived in Hebron itself, but Jacob accompanied his son until they reached the valley, at which point Jacob sent Joseph on his own.⁴ **And he, Joseph, came to Shekhem.**

15 A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field. Despite the fact that Joseph was seeking an entire group of shepherds herding a large flock, he could not locate them. **The man asked him, saying: What do you seek?**

16 He said: I seek my brothers. Please tell me where they are herding. Joseph undoubtedly described their appearances to the man.

17 The man said: They traveled from here; for I heard them saying to each other: We shall go to Dotan,⁸ and it is likely that they arrived there. **Joseph went after his brothers, and he found them in Dotan.**



Dotan

18 They saw him from afar, and he was alone and likely in an isolated place, **and before he approached them, they conspired against him to kill him.** Their hatred of Joseph was so intense that once they encountered him alone and outside their father's home, they were stirred to rid themselves of him.

19 They said one to another: Here comes that dreamer. Joseph's dreams caused the brothers' hatred toward him to intensify. By mockingly referring to Joseph as "that dreamer," the brothers expressed their deep animosity toward him. Furthermore, the word "that" indicates that the brothers viewed Joseph as a hostile stranger, and not as their brother.

DISCUSSION

37:10| **He related it to his father and to his brothers:** As the story unfolds, Joseph is revealed as a talented diplomat who demonstrates skill in negotiation and prowess in relating to different types of people, while never being overly submissive or resorting to flattery. The question therefore arises: If Joseph always had these qualities, why did he not have the

sense to keep the contents of his dreams to himself? What prompted him to reveal such extreme and transparent dreams to his brothers, especially when considering the fact that they already had an extreme dislike of him?

To answer this question, one must first address another issue pertaining to all dreams recorded in the Bible: Are dreams merely a

physiological expression of the dreamer's personal aspirations, as one might conclude from Isaiah 29:8, or are they prophetic portents of future events? Joseph, like his father Jacob (see 28:12–16), was certain that his dreams were prophetic, as they did not portend random events or provide a pleasurable imaginary experience, but contained a clear message. Therefore, he

Samples of explanatory archeology notes

ספר בראשית | פרק לו | וישב

והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים משתחווים לי: ויספר אל-אביו ואל-אחיו ויגער-
 בו אביו ויאמר לו מה החלום הזה אשר חלמת הבוא נבוא אני ואמך ואחיך
 להשתחות לך ארצה: ויקנאו-בו אחיו ואביו שמר את-הדבר: וילכו אחיו
 לדעות את-צאן אביהם בשכם: ויאמר ישראל אל-יוסף הלוא אחיך רעים
 בשכם לכה ואשלחך אליהם ויאמר לו הנני: ויאמר לו לך-נא ראה את-שלוש
 אחיך ואת-שלוש הצאן והשבני דבר וישלחהו מעמק חברון ויבא שכמה:
 וימצאהו איש והנה תעה בשדה וישאלהו האיש לאמר מה-תבקש: ויאמר
 את-אחי אנכי מבקש הגידה-נא לי איפה הם רעים: ויאמר האיש נסעו מזה
 כי שמעתי אמרים נלכה דתינה וילך יוסף אחר אחיו וימצאם בדתן: ויראו
 אתו מרחק ובטרום יקרבו אליהם ויתנבלו אתו להמיתו: ויאמרו איש אל-אחיו

רש"י

ח'ת דינה, סם נחלקה מלכות בית דוד, סנאמר: ויולך
 רחוקים סכמה" (דברי הימים ב' י' ח').
 טו' וימצאהו איש. זה גבריאל.
 יז' נסעו מזה. הסינו ענגן מן החוה: נלכה דתינה.
 לבקש לך נכלי דתות סמייעך פהס. ולפי פשוטו סס
 מקום הוה, וחיך מקרכל יוצא מידי פשוטו:
 יח' ויתנבלו. נתמלחו נכלים ועקמומיות: אתו. כמו
 'חתי' עמו, פלומר חליו.

יב' לדעות את צאן. נקוד על חתי, סלח הלכו חלף
 לקעות חתי ענגן.
 יג' הנני לשון ענה ונחיות; טדוד למעות חכיו, וחי על
 פי סהיה יודע פחיו סאנחין חות:
 יד' מעמק חברון. והלח חקרון פהר, סנאמר: ויעלו
 כנגד ויכל על חקרון" (נמדבר ג, כג)? חלף מענה עמקה
 סל חותו צדיק הקבור פחקרון, לקיס מה סנאמר
 לחקרהס פין הפתרים: "פי גר יהיה זרעך": ויבא שכמה.
 מקום מוכן לקרענות, סס חקלהו סקטיס, סס ענו

י' ויספר אל אביו ואל אחיו. לחחר סספר חותו לחיו
 חזר וספרו לחיו פפניהס: ויגער בו. למי סהיה מטיל
 סנזה עליו: הבוא נבוא. והלח חמך פבר מתה! והוה
 לח היה יודע סהדברים מעעון לכלה סגליתו פאמו.
 ודתינו למדו מכלן סחיו חלוס בלח דברים פטלים,
 ויעקב נתפון להוהיח הדבר מלב פנו סלח וקנאוהו,
 לכך חמר לו: "הכוח נבוא" וגו', פסס סחי חפסר פחמך
 פך סשחר פטל.
 יא' שמר את הדבר. היה ממעין ומנפה מתי יבוא,
 וכן: "סומר חמוניס" (ישעיה כג, כ). וכן: "לח חממר על
 חטחתי" (חוב יז, טו) - לח חמתינו.

DISCUSSION

→ felt compelled to relate them to his brothers so that they could prepare for their realization, and perhaps in the hope that they would help expedite the prophecy. In his mind, Joseph saw a scenario in which the brothers would accept his leadership and assist him on his way. It was this possibility that motivated him to share his dreams with them.

It would appear that as time progressed, Joseph became increasingly convinced that his dreams would be realized, and actively took steps to bring about their fulfillment (see 42:9).

BACKGROUND

37:14 | **The Valley of Hebron:** Biblical Hebron was situated on a mountain known today as Tel Rumeida. From archaeological excavations of the mountain, it appears that Hebron was built during the Middle Bronze Age, between 1750–1650 BCE. Like Shekhem, it was characterized by thick walls constructed from massive stones. The Valley of Hebron is identified with Wadi al Kina to the east of Tel Rumeida, which continues into Wadi al Tuffah.

37:17 | **Dotan:** This likely refers to the Dotan Valley, the largest valley in Samaria, measur-

ing approximately 10 km long and 3 km wide. Through this valley once ran an important road connecting the eastern side of the Jordan River with the northern coastal plain. Dotan, which lies in the center of the valley, is generally identified with present-day Tel Dotan, located about 8 km southwest of Jenin. The city is mentioned in II Kings (6:13), and in Egyptian records from the fifteenth century BCE. Based on archaeological excavations, it would appear that during the period of the patriarchs, the city of Dotan was a large settlement surrounded by a wall.

Samples of explanatory archeology notes

Book of Genesis | Chapter 45 | *Vayigash*

- 3 **Joseph said to his brothers: I am Joseph,** and then immediately asked: **Does my father still live?^D And his brothers could not answer him because they were alarmed before him.** Joseph, of course, knew who they were the entire time, but the brothers were overcome by confusion and fear over the sudden revelation. Until now, they considered Joseph to be lost, even if they may have dreamt that one day they would discover him as a slave somewhere and possibly even free him. However, now he is present before them as an eminent personality, their apparent antagonist, the ruler in whose hands their fate rests.
- 4 **Joseph said to his brothers: Please approach me, and they approached** silently, as they were not yet able to speak. **He said again: I am Joseph your brother whom you sold to Egypt.** In this repetition he is no longer revealing his identity; rather, Joseph is emphasizing that he is still their brother.
- 5 However, **now** all that is in the past; **do not be sad, and do not become incensed with yourselves that you sold me here; it was for sustenance that God sent me before you.** If you wish, you can consider the entire matter from a different perspective. Look at all that transpired in the wake of the sale. Because I was taken to Egypt, I am now capable of supporting our family.
- 6 **For these past two years the famine is in the midst of the land, and there are an additional five years during which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest,** in accordance with Pharaoh's dream.
- 7 **God sent me before you to establish for you a remnant in the land,** as I will support you, **and to sustain you for a great deliverance.**
- 8 Joseph continues to placate his brothers: **Now,** you should know that **it was not you who sent me here, but God,** as you were simply the intermediaries for this great mission. **He made me into a father to Pharaoh,** a guardian of his kingdom, **and into a lord for all his house, and ruler over the entire land of Egypt.**
- 9 **Hurry and go up to my father and say to him: So said your son Joseph: God has made me lord for all Egypt. Now, come down to me^D to Egypt; do not tarry.**
- 10 **You will live in the land of Goshen,^D which is on the eastern border of Egypt, near the land of Canaan, and you will be near to me, you, and your children, and your children's children,**

and your flocks, and your cattle, and everything that you have.

- 11 **I will sustain you there,** as the Egyptian harvest was more stable than that of Canaan. Even if the produce of this harvest



Goshen

does not suffice, I will make sure to provide you with all of your needs. **For there are an additional five years of famine; lest you become impoverished, you, and your household, and everything that you have.** If you have to continue to purchase food from Egypt, you will eventually be forced to sell all your property.

- 12 **Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that is speaking to you** in your language.⁴ Prior to this point, Joseph had spoken in Egyptian, and the dialogue with the brothers had proceeded with the assistance of an interpreter. In addition to his change of language, here he soothes his brothers by equating them to Benjamin, his maternal brother, who did not participate in the plot against him.
- 13 **You shall tell my father all my glory in Egypt, and all that you have seen** with regard to my capabilities as a ruler; **hurry and bring my father down here.^D**

DISCUSSION

45:3 | **Does my father still live?:** This question is difficult to understand, as the brothers had already told Joseph several times that Jacob was alive (see, e.g., 43:28 and 44:20). Perhaps he asked again due to the emotion of the moment, especially in light of Judah's moving plea. If so, it was not a calculated question (see Sforno). Since

he had not had a close, loving relationship with his brothers, whereas he did love his father, in his current emotional state he wondered again about his father's well-being. Moreover, now he could finally refer to him in the appropriate manner as "my father," rather than "your father" (see 43:27). Alternatively, perhaps his inquiry

stemmed from suspicion that his father had actually died and that the brothers had lied to him to support their claims and arouse his mercy. Consequently, Joseph sought to resolve the uncertainty that plagued him (see *Keli Yakar*).

Samples of explanatory archeology notes

ספר בראשית | פרק מה | ויגש

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אֲבִי חַי וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ אָחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי
נִבְהָלוּ מִפָּנָיו: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו גִּשׁוּ-נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגְשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אָחֵיכֶם
אֲשֶׁר-מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרַיִמָּה: וְעַתָּה וְאֶל-תַּעֲצְבוּ וְאֶל-יַחַד בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי-מָכַרְתֶּם
אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי לְמַחִיָּה שָׁלַחַנִי אֱלֹהִים לִפְנֵיכֶם: כִּי-זֶה שְׁנַתִּים הָרַעַב בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ
וְעוֹד חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין-חָרִישׁ וְקָצִיר: וַיִּשְׁלַחַנִי אֱלֹהִים לִפְנֵיכֶם לְשׁוֹם לָכֶם
שְׂאֵרֵית בְּאֶרֶץ וְלִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לְפָלִיטָה גְדֹלָה: וְעַתָּה לֹא-אַתֶּם שָׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי
הִנֵּה כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁיִמְנִי לְאָב לְפָרְעָה וְלֹאדוֹן לְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ וּמִשָּׁל בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם: מִהָרֹו וְעַלֹו אֶל-אָבִי וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר בְּנֵךְ יוֹסֵף שְׂמַנִי אֱלֹהִים
לֹאדוֹן לְכָל-מִצְרַיִם רְדֵה אֵלַי אֶל-תַּעֲמֹד: וַיֹּשְׁבֵת בְּאֶרֶץ-גֹּשֶׁן וְהָיִיתָ קְרוֹב אֵלַי
אֶתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ וּבְנֵי בְנֵיךָ וְצִאֲנֶךָ וּבְקָרְךָ וּכְלֵ-אֲשֶׁר-לְךָ: וְכַלְפֹּלְתִי אֶתְךָ שֵׁם כִּי-עוֹד
חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים רָעַב פָּן-תִּוְדָשׁ אֶתָּה וּבֵיתְךָ וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לְךָ: וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רְאוֹת
וְעֵינַי אָחִי בְּנִימִין כִּי-פִי הַמְדַבֵּר אֵלֵיכֶם: וְהִגַּדְתֶּם לְאָבִי אֶת-כָּל-כְּבוֹדִי בְּמִצְרַיִם

שלישי

רשי

יא | פֶּן-תִּוְדָשׁ. "דְּלִמָּח תִּתְמַסְכֵּךְ", לָשׁוֹן: "מוֹרִיט וּמַעֲשִׂיר" (סְמוּחַל ח' ב' ז).

יב | וְהִנֵּה עֵינֵיכֶם רְאוֹת. בְּכַבּוּדִי, וְשָׁחַטִי חֲחִיקֶם שָׁחַט מְהוּל, וְעוֹד, "כִּי מִי הַמְדַבֵּר חֲחִיקֶם" בְּלָשׁוֹן הַקֶּדֶשׁ: וְעֵינַי אָחִי בְּנִימִין. הַשָּׂנֵה חֵת קָלֶם יָחִיד, לֹמַר כֶּשֶׁם שָׁחִין בְּלִבִּי שָׂנֵאָה לְהִתַּל בְּעֵנְיָם אָחִי, שֶׁלֹּו הָיָה בְּמִכְרֵתִי, כִּךְ חָיו בְּלִבִּי עֲלֵיכֶם.

ה | לְמַחִיָּה. לְהִיֹּת לָכֶם לְמַחִיָּה:

ו | כִּי זֶה שְׁנַתִּים הָרַעַב. עֲבָדוּ מִשָּׁעִי הָרַעַב:

ח | לְאָב. חֲבֵר וּמִטְרוֹן:

ט | וְעַלֹו אֶל אָבִי. חָדָן וְשָׂחַל גְּמוּהָה מִכָּל הַחֲקֻנוֹת:

ה | וְכִי נִבְהָלוּ. מִפָּנָיו הַגּוֹשָׁה: וְכִי נִבְהָלוּ. מִפָּנָיו הַגּוֹשָׁה:

ו | גִּשׁוּ-נָא אֵלַי. חֲחֵה חוֹתֶם נְסוּעִים לְחִיּוּה, חֲמֵה עֲבָשׁוּ חֲחִי נִכְלָמִים. חֲחֵה לְהֵם בְּלָשׁוֹן רָכָה וְתַחֲנֻנִים וְהִקָּחָה לְהֵם שְׂהוּף מְהוּל:

BACKGROUND

45:10 | **Goshen:** The majority of historians identify Goshen with the northeastern delta of the Nile River, spanning from the Lake of Manzala in the north to Wadi Tumilat in the south, and from the lakes in the east to the Nile in the west. This is an area that receives some of the most abundant rainfall in all Egypt, and therefore it has high-quality arable land. This

conjecture is supported by the archaeological discovery of the Papyrus Anastasi VI from the thirteenth century BCE, which describes this area as agriculturally fertile. Furthermore, in this area there were several locations with Semitic rather than Egyptian names, such as Migdol, Baal Tze-fon, and Sukot.

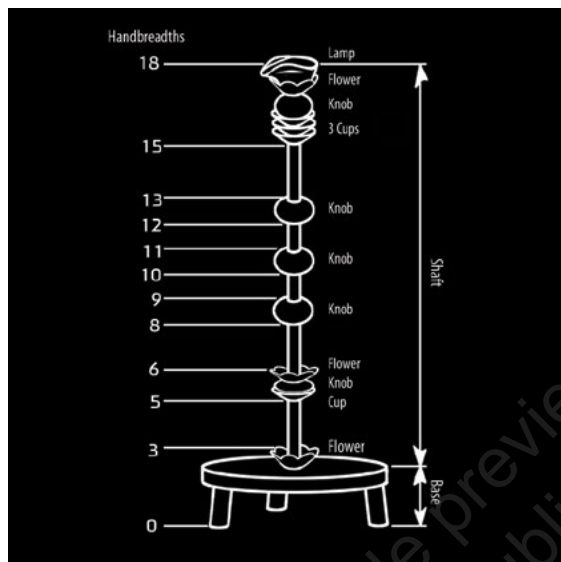
DISCUSSION

45:9 | **Come down to me:** Joseph's suggestion was both reasonable and practical. It can be assumed that this was not a spontaneous idea but a plan that he had already formulated earlier. Due to Joseph's exalted position in Egypt and the fact that the famine had reached Canaan as well, it would only be natural for him to have considered how he could support his father and family. However, in order to bring the plan to fruition the entire family had to move to Egypt.

Samples of explanatory archeology notes

Book of Exodus | Chapter 25 | *Teruma*

- 34 On the body of the candelabrum, meaning its central shaft, four finely crafted [*meshukadim*] cups, with its knobs, and its flowers. The special craftsmanship, possibly in the shape of almond blossom, may apply to the knobs and flowers as well. The Sages include this in a list of five cases in the Torah where the reference of a modifier is ambiguous.¹⁴



Parts of the shaft of the candelabrum

- 35 There shall be a knob under the first set of two branches extending from it, the body of the candelabrum, and a knob under the second set of two branches extending from it, and a knob under the third set of two branches extending from

it, so it shall be for the six branches emerging from the candelabrum. There was an ornamental knob at each point where the branches were joined to the central shaft.

- 36 The Torah reiterates: **Their knobs, meaning the knobs of the branches, and their branches, meaning the branches themselves, shall be made from it, from the candelabrum itself; all of it, including its branches and ornamentation, hammered of pure gold.**^D
- 37 **You shall make its lamps**, receptacles for the oil and the wicks located on top of the branches, **seven**, six above the branches that extend on the sides and one on the main shaft of the candelabrum. **And he shall kindle the wicks in its lamps¹⁵ so that it will illuminate toward its front.** All the flames were turned toward the central shaft or toward the area directly in front of it.¹⁶
- 38 **Its tongs**, used for handling the wicks, **and its pans**, small, spoon-like receptacles with flat bottoms that were open at the front, with which the burnt wicks and ash were removed from the lamps; these **shall be of pure gold.**
- 39 **He shall make it of a talent of pure gold with**, including in the total weight, **all these vessels.** The total weight of the candelabrum and its vessels shall be one talent of pure gold. Modern estimates of a talent range between 30 and 50 kg.
- 40 **See and craft^D the candelabrum and the other vessels in their form, as you are shown on the mountain.** Despite the lengthy passage dealing with the candelabrum, it is difficult to describe such complex and detailed forms in words. Therefore, God showed Moses an image of the vessels in order to enable him to guide the craftsmen in their proper construction. Moses saw the heavenly Tabernacle, with all the forms of the vessels inside, and this vision filled in the details missing from the verses, allowing the artisans to recreate the vessels faithfully in the earthly Tabernacle.

DISCUSSION

25:36 | **Hammered of pure gold:** Notwithstanding the great detail provided by the verses, many aspects of the construction of the candelabrum remain shrouded in mystery. The Torah does not specify whether the branches were curved or straight. The word used for "branch," *kaneh*, is indicative of a long, straight object, like a reed; however, in certain archaeological findings from the Second Temple period and later, as well as on the Arch of Titus, the branches of the candelabrum are depicted as curved. It should be noted that there are other significant differences between the candelabrum depicted on

the arch and the one in the Temple, and it is possible that the engraving there is the work of an artist who never saw the candelabrum. By contrast, in a painting of the candelabrum found in the ancient Dura-Europos synagogue in Syria (circa third century CE), the oldest known representation of the candelabrum from a communal Jewish institution, the branches are straight. Likewise, the sketch drawn by the Rambam features straight branches extending diagonally from the central shaft. Perhaps there were various candelabra in the First and Second Temples, of diverse forms.

In addition, the Torah does not state whether the branches turned in different directions or whether they were all on a single plane, nor does it specify the height of the candelabrum, only its great weight. According to rabbinic tradition it was three cubits tall, roughly 1.5 m (*Menaḥot* 28b). The volume of one talent of pure gold (see verse 39) is about 1,500 cubic cm, and one can therefore deduce mathematically that the branches of the candelabrum must have been thin.

וַיֵּצְאוּ מִן־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וּבַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲרֻבָּעָה גְבֻעִים מְשֻׁקָּדִים פְּתִירִיה וּפְרָחִיה:
 וּכְפֹתֵר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנּוּ וּכְפֹתֵר תַּחַת־
 שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים מִמֶּנּוּ לְשֵׁשֶׁת הַקָּנִים מִן־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: פְּתִירֵיהֶם וּקְנָתָם
 מִמֶּנּוּ יִהְיוּ כְּלֵה מִקְשָׁה אַחַת זָהָב טָהוֹר: וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־נִרְתִּיה שְׁבֻעָה וְהַעֲלֵה
 אֶת־נִרְתִּיה וְהָאִיר עַל־עֵבֶר פָּנֶיהָ: וּמִלְקַחֶיהָ וּמִחֲתֹתֶיהָ זָהָב טָהוֹר: כִּפֹּר זָהָב
 טָהוֹר יַעֲשֶׂה אֶתָּה אֶת כָּל־הַכֵּלִים הָאֵלֶּה: וְרָאָה וַעֲשֶׂה בְּתַבְנִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה

לד
לה
לו
לז
לח
לט
מ

רש"י

בָּהֶם קְרוּיִים מְלֻקְחִים, וְיִצְיִתְהוּ"א שְׁמֵרָה אֲנִיכְלוּם, לְאוֹן
 צֶמֶר, טַיִלִישׁ בְּלָעוּ: וּבַחֲתֻמָּהּ, הֵם כְּמוֹן בְּזִיכּוֹן קִטְעִים
 שְׂחִיבָה בְּהֵן חֵת הַחֶפֶז שְׂבָגַר בְּפִקֵּךְ, כְּשֶׁהוּא קִטְעִים
 חֵת הַעֲרֹת מֵאֶפֶר הַפְּתִילוֹת שְׂדֵלְקוֹ הַלְּלֵה וְכָבוֹ: וְלִאוֹן
 מִחֲתָה טַוּשִׁידוּר"א בְּלָעוּ, כְּמוֹ: "לְחֻתֹתֶיךָ אֵשׁ מִיָּקוּד" (ישעיה
 ל יד)

לט | כִּפֹּר זָהָב טָהוֹר. שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה מְשַׁקְלָה עִם כָּל כְּלֵי
 חֶלֶק כִּפֹּר, לֹא פָחוֹת וְלֹא יוֹתֵר, וְהַכֹּפֶר שֶׁל חוֹל שְׂמִים
 מִנֶּה, וְשֶׁל הַקֵּשׁ הֵיךְ פְּסוּל, מִיָּה וְעֵשָׂרִים מִנֶּה, וְהַמִּנֶּה
 הוּא לִטְוֵחַ שְׂשׂוּקָיוֹן בֶּה כְּפֹר לְמַשְׁקֵל קוֹלוּנָה, וְהֵם
 מִיָּה זְהוּבִים, עֵשָׂרִים וְחֲמִשָּׁה סְלֻעִים, וְהַסְּלַע חֲרָבָה
 וְהוּבִים:

מ | וְרָאָה וַעֲשֶׂה. רָאָה בָּאוּ בְּהַר תְּבִינָה שְׂחֵי מִרְאֵה
 אוֹתָךְ, מִגִּיד שְׁנֵתְקֶשָׁה מִשָּׂה בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַד
 שְׂהַרְחֵה לוֹ הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִזְבֵּחַ שֶׁל אֵשׁ: אֲשֶׁר
 אֲתָה מְרָאָה. כְּתָרְגוּמוֹ: "דְּחֵת עֲתִיחוֹ בְּטוֹרְחָ" חֵלֹ
 הֵיךְ נְחוּד 'מִרְאֵה' בְּפִתְחָ, הֵיךְ פִּתְחוֹ, חֵתָה מִרְאֵה
 לְחֻחִים, עֲבָשׂוּ שְׂקוּד חֲטוֹף קָמֹן, פִּתְרוֹנוֹ 'דְּחֵת'
 מִתְחִי, שְׂחֻחִים מִרְאִים לְךְ:

נמנאזו גביעם שנים ועשרים, שמונה עשרה לששה קנים
 שלשה לכל אחד ואחד, וחרבנה גופיה של מזבחה;
 ואחד עשר פתורים, ששה בששת הקנים, ושלשה
 גופיה של מזבחה שהקנים יוצאים מהם, ושנים עוד
 במזבחה שצומר: "משקדים פתירה" ומעוט פתורים
 שנים, האחד למטה חזל היד והאחד בשלשה טפחים
 העליונים עם השלשה גביעם. ותעשה פרחים היו לה
 ששה לששת הקנים, שצומר: "פקנה האחד פתיר ופרח"
 (לעיל פסוק לו), ושלשה למזבחה, שצומר: "משקדים
 פתירה ופרחיה" (בפסוק ה'הודם) ומעוט פרחים שנים,
 ואחד הצומר בששת 'שבעלתך' (במדבר יז ד) "עד ירכה
 עד פרחיה". ואם תדקדק במשה זו הפתירה למעלה
 תמצאם כמנינם איש איש במקומו:

לז | אֶת נִרְתִּיה. כְּמוֹן בְּזִיכּוֹן שְׂנוֹתָיו בְּתוֹכָם הַשָּׂמֶן
 וְהַפְּתִילוֹת: וְהָאִיר עַל עֵבֶר פָּנֶיהָ. עֵשָׂה פִי שֶׁשֶׁת הַעֲרֹת
 שְׂבָרְשִׁי הַקָּנִים הַיּוֹצִיִּים מִנְּדִיָּה מִסָּפֵי כְּלָפֵי הָאֲמֻנָּה,
 כִּי שִׁיחֵי הַעֲרֹת כְּשֶׁתְּדַלִּיקָם מֵאִוִּירִים "חֵל עֵבֶר פָּנֶיהָ",
 מוֹסַב אוֹרָם חֵל צַד פְּנֵי הַקָּנֵה הָאֲמֻנָּה שֶׁהוּא גוֹף
 הַמְּזֻבָּחָה.

לח | וּמִלְקַחֶיהָ. הֵם הַנְּצִינִים הַעֲשׂוּיִין לְכַח בָּהֶם הַפְּתִילוֹת
 מִתּוֹךְ הַשָּׂמֶן לְשִׁבּוֹן וְלִמְצָבֵי בְּנֵי הַעֲרֹת, וְעַל שֵׁם שְׂטוֹקִים

לד | וּבַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲרֻבָּעָה גְבֻעִים. גְּבוּעָה שֶׁל מִזְבֵּחַ הוּא
 חֲרָבָה גְּבוּעִים, חֵד בּוֹלֵט בֶּה לְמִטָּה מִן הַקָּנִים,
 וְהַשְּׂלֶשֶׁה לְמַעְלָה מִן יְצִיאת הַקָּנִים הַיּוֹצִיִּים מִנְּדִיָּה:
 מְשֻׁקָּדִים כְּפִתִּירֵיה וּפְרָחִיה. זֶה חֵד מִחֲמִשָּׁה מִקְרָחוֹת
 שְׂחִין לָהֶם הַכְּלֵה, חִין יְדוּעַ חֵם "גְּבוּעִים מְשֻׁקָּדִים" אוֹ
 "מְשֻׁקָּדִים כְּפִתִּירֵיה וּפְרָחִיה":

לה | וּכְפֹתֵר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים. מִתּוֹךְ הַכְּפֹתֵר הוּא הַקָּנִים
 נִמְשָׁכִים מִשָּׂה צִדֵּיה חֵיךְ וְחֵיךְ. כִּךְ שְׂנִינוּ בְּמִלְאֲכַת
 הַמִּשְׁכָּן: גְּבָהָה שֶׁל מִזְבֵּחַ שְׂמוֹנֶה עֶשֶׂר טְפָחִים. הַגִּילִים
 וְהַפְּרָח שְׂלֶשֶׁה טְפָחִים, הוּא הַפְּרָח הָאֲמוּד בְּיַד
 שְׂחֻמֵּר: "עַד יִרְכָּה עַד פְּרָחָה" (במדבר יז ד), וְטְפָחִים
 חֶלֶק, וְטְפָח שְׂבו גְּבוּעֵי מֵהַחֲרָבָה גְּבוּעִים וּכְפֹתֵר וּפְרָח
 מִשְׁנֵי כְּפֹתֵרִים וְשְׁנֵי פְּרָחִים הָאֲמוּדִים בְּמִזְבֵּחַ עֲנָמָה,
 שְׂחֻמֵּר: "מְשֻׁקָּדִים כְּפִתִּירֵיה וּפְרָחִיה" (בפסוק ה'הודם),
 לְמַדְנוּ שֶׁהוּא בְּקִנָּה שֶׁנֶּה פְּתוּרִים וְשְׁנֵי פְּרָחִים לְבַד מִן
 הַשְּׂלֶשֶׁה כְּפֹתֵרִים שֶׁהֵקֵם נִמְשָׁכִין מִתּוֹכָה, שְׂחֻמֵּר:
 "וּכְפֹתֵר תַּחַת שְׁנֵי הַקָּנִים" וְגו', וְטְפָחִים חֶלֶק, וְטְפָח
 כְּפֹתֵר, וְשְׁנֵי קָנִים יּוֹצִיִּים מִמֶּנּוּ חֵיךְ וְחֵיךְ נִמְשָׁכִים
 וְעוֹלִים כְּגוּב גְּבָהָה שֶׁל מִזְבֵּחַ, וְטְפָח חֶלֶק, וְטְפָח
 כְּפֹתֵר, וְשְׁנֵי קָנִים יּוֹצִיִּים מִמֶּנּוּ, וְטְפָח חֶלֶק, וְטְפָח
 כְּפֹתֵר, וְשְׁנֵי קָנִים יּוֹצִיִּים מִמֶּנּוּ, וְטְפָחִים חֶלֶק, נִשְׁתַּדְּרוּ
 שֶׁשְׂלֶשֶׁה טְפָחִים, שְׂבָהָה שְׂלֶשֶׁה גְּבוּעִים וּכְפֹתֵר וּפְרָח.

DISCUSSION

25:40 | **See and craft:** One feature of the Sanctuary is notably missing from the instructions in this *parasha*: The instructions for constructing the incense altar (see 30:1–10) are not given until after the description of the cloth coverings of the Tabernacle, the structure of the Tabernacle itself, the courtyard, the altar

for offerings located in the courtyard, and the priestly vestments. Since the Tabernacle was to be constructed in the likeness of a house, with its main vessels corresponding to a bed or chair, a table, and a lamp, the altar for incense was a luxurious addition: Historically, the wealthy would burn incense in their homes to provide

a pleasing fragrance, mainly during mealtimes. Perhaps the altar of the incense was therefore seen as an addendum rather than a crucial part of the Tabernacle (see Sforno; *Adderet Elyahu*; *HakEtav VehaKabbala*).

Moses and His Siblings' Criticism

NUMBERS 12:1–16

Moses does not have to deal only with the burden of leadership of the entire nation. In the upcoming passage, he is confronted by negative personal comments about him that are uttered by his older siblings, Miriam and Aaron. It is specifically in light of this criticism by his own family members that God expresses His most direct and exalted praise of Moses,

and mentions his uniqueness among humankind. Due to his great humility, Moses is not sensitive to critique, but God zealously defends Moses' honor.

The Torah also relates the punishment meted out to Miriam, who began the slanderous discussion about Moses. Later, the nation would be commanded to remember this event for future generations in order to internalize how serious a sin slander is. Although slander is not punishable in court, its consequences can be extremely destructive.

- 12 1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses**, at Miriam's initiative, with regard to the Kushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Kushite woman,^D Tzipora the Midyanite.³⁸ It is possible that the Midyanites, who were nomads, mixed with other peoples.³⁹ It is also possible that Tzipora was called Kushite because the Kushites were known for their black skin and Tzipora's skin was darker than usual among the Israelites, whose skin color was a light brown.⁴⁰ Although she was Moses' wife, Moses had separated from her and refrained from marital relations in order to commune with God in the Tabernacle.⁴¹
- 2 They said: Was it only with Moses that the Lord spoke; didn't he speak with us as well?** Since we are also prophets, we do not see what right Moses has to act in this way with regard to his wife. Moses married Tzipora, her father later brought her to the Israelite camp from Midyan, and yet Moses is ignoring her. This was a private conversation between Miriam and Aaron, but **the Lord heard.**⁴²
- 3** The fact that Miriam and Aaron spoke about Moses in third person indicates that they were not directly addressing Moses. However, it is possible that they would not have minded if he had heard about their conversation, and perhaps they even intended for him to hear about it, thereby sending him an indirect message. It is possible that Moses heard and did not respond.⁴³ However, the verse testifies that even if Moses had been present when this conversation was taking place he would not have responded or have been insulted due to his great humility: **And the man Moses was very humble,^D more than any person on the face of the earth.** Moses did not demand special status or extra rights; he saw himself simply as a servant and messenger of God who was transmitting His word and His Torah.⁴⁴
- 4 The Lord said suddenly to Moses, to Aaron, and to Miriam: Go out the three of you, together, to the Tent of Meeting. The three of them went out.**
- 5 The Lord descended in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called Aaron and Miriam and both of them came out** from the Tent and moved closer to the cloud.
- 6 He said: Hear now My words: Even if your prophet is truly a prophet of the Lord, as you are, I will nonetheless reveal Myself to him** indirectly, in a vision that must be deciphered, or in a dream I will speak to him. Regular prophets do not hear My words while they are fully conscious, but rather while in a deep trance.
- 7 Not so My servant Moses,^D who is different from you and from all other prophets; in all My house he is the most trusted, so much so that I speak with him on a regular basis.**
- 8 Mouth to mouth I will speak with him**, in a direct manner, unlike the visions of other prophets from which they deduce the presence of God; and a clear vision that is not in riddles that require interpretation; and the image of the Lord he will behold.^D That being the case, why did you not fear to speak against My servant, against Moses? How do you dare to equate yourselves to Moses and to criticize his conduct?
- 9 The wrath of the Lord was enflamed against them and He departed.**

DISCUSSION

12:1 | **He had married a Kushite woman:** Some have identified this woman as someone other than Tzipora. It is related in some *midrashim* that when Moses initially fled from Pharaoh, he spent time in Kush before arriving in Midyan, where he eventually married Tzipora. In Kush he had married a woman, perhaps the queen of Kush herself. According to these opinions, Miriam and Aaron spoke about the fact that this matter had not been closed (see *Targum Yerushalmi*; Ibn Ezra; Rashbam; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Shemot* 168).

12:3 | **And the man Moses was very humble:** The fact that Moses was so humble does not mean that he did not value or appreciate his position, rather Moses felt that he was merely doing his job. Consequently, it would never have occurred to him that because of his status he was immune from critique or that he had extra rights. This is because humility consists of an awareness of one's status unaccompanied by feelings of superiority. The greater the individual is, the more he views himself as insignificant compared to that which is above him, rather than measuring himself by those beneath him.

12:7 | **My servant Moses:** There are several other instances when Moses is called the servant of the Lord, as in the next verse (see also Exodus 14:31; Joshua 11:15). This depiction expresses not only Moses' subservience to God, but also his closeness, much like the expression "the king's servant" (see II Samuel 18:29; II Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 38:7–12). Archeological excavations have uncovered beautiful signet rings containing the words "servant of the king," or "servant of King so-and-so," indicating a lofty social status. The term, "servant of the Lord" is

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

Book of Genesis | Chapter 29 | Vayetze

- 20 **Jacob worked seven years for Rachel; they were in his eyes but a few days, in his love of her.** Since Jacob loved Rachel, seven years of work seemed to him a fair price for her hand in marriage.
- 21 **Jacob said to Laban: Give me my wife,** in accordance with our agreement, **as my time is fulfilled;** I have performed the amount of work we stipulated. **And I will consort with her.** Throughout that entire period Rachel was designated for Jacob, even engaged to him in a certain sense. Now Jacob sought to consummate this through marriage.
- 22 **Laban gathered all the people of the place, and made a wedding feast.**
- 23 **It was in the evening,^d and he,** Laban, **took Leah his older daughter and brought her to him,** Jacob; **and he consorted with her,** assuming that she was Rachel.
- 24 **Laban gave Zilpa,^d his maidservant, to his daughter Leah as a maidservant,** as one of his wedding gifts.
- 25 **It was in the morning** and Jacob discovered: **Behold, she was Leah. He said to Laban: What is this that you did to me? Didn't I work with you for Rachel, and why did you deceive me?**
- 26 **Laban said: It is not done thus in our place, to give the younger before the elder.** According to our custom, the elder must be married before her younger sister.
- 27 I offer a package deal: **Complete the wedding week for this one bride, and we will give you that one too,** the other sister, in exchange **for the work that you will work with me another seven additional years.** My daughters are equally dear to me, and each of them is separately worth seven years of work. While you thought you were laboring for Rachel, you were actually working for Leah. If Leah is not enough for you, you must work another seven years.
- 28 **Jacob,** an isolated stranger with no other recourse, **did so,** as he had no choice but to accept Laban's terms. **And he completed that week,^d** the week of celebration for the marriage of Leah, **and he,** Laban, **gave him Rachel his daughter for a wife.** Laban did not want Rachel to wait another seven years. Apparently, she had already come of age.
- 29 **Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, Bilha his maidservant as a maidservant.**
- 30 **He also consorted with Rachel, he also loved Rachel more than Leah,** even though she was not his first wife. **And Jacob worked with him another seven additional years,** as he had agreed.

The Birth of Jacob's Eleven Sons and Daughter

GENESIS 29:31–30:24

The overwhelming majority of Jacob's descendants, during his lifetime, were born outside the land of Canaan. Through his two wives and their maidservants he established the twelve tribes. The names given to his sons, and the explanations for these names, reveal the internal world of the mothers.

- 31 **The Lord saw^d that Leah was hated,^d and therefore He** came to her aid and immediately **opened her womb,** and she conceived. **And Rachel,** however, **was barren.** Since they married Jacob within seven days of each other, it was conspicuous that while Leah was pregnant, Rachel was left without children.
- 32 **Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; she said: Because the Lord saw [ra'á] my affliction; for now my husband will love me,^d** for I am the mother of his son.

DISCUSSION

the contrary, he seems a seasoned businessman involved in negotiations.

29:23 | **It was in the evening, etc.:** The women and men celebrated the wedding feast separately. Furthermore, the custom was to cover the bride's face with a veil, which meant that the bridegroom did not see his bride during the wedding itself. It is possible that the two sisters were similar in physical build and tone of voice. According to one opinion, they were twins (*Seder Olam* 2). Their resemblance to one another aided Laban in his plot to give Jacob Leah instead of Rachel.

Laban swapped his daughters because he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to marry off Leah, while gaining extra years of service. The Sages assume that although Laban initiated the fraud, a certain measure of cooperation on the part of Rachel was necessary to prevent Jacob from noticing the difference between the sisters. Laban's exchange of Leah for Rachel in the darkness is reminiscent of Rebecca's deception of her husband. There the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, were swapped with the help of metaphorical darkness, Isaac's blindness (see *Bava Batra* 123a).

29:24 | **Zilpa:** The name Zilpa means "pearl shell." The Sages maintain that Zilpa and Bilha were young daughters of Laban' born from a concubine (*Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer* 36; *Beresheet Rabba* 74:13; Rashi, 31:50). The fact that she had loftier status and was not a lowly slave is relevant for the continuation of the story.

29:28 | **And he completed that week:** Some of the marriage customs that appear here are observed by the Jewish people to this day. In addition to the basic custom of celebrating a wedding with a public feast, the custom to continue celebrations for seven days is based on this

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

ספר בראשית | פרק כט | ויצא

א שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וַיְהִי בְעֵינָיו פְּיָמִים אַחָדִים בְּאַהֲבַתּוֹ אֶתָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-לֵבָן
 ב הֲבֵה אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי כִּי מָלְאוּ יָמִי וְאִבּוּאָה אֵלַיָּהּ: וַיֹּאסֹף לֵבָן אֶת־כָּל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם
 ג וַיַּעַשׂ מִשְׁתָּהּ: וַיְהִי בַעֲרֹב וַיִּקַּח אֶת־לֵאָה בִּתּוֹ וַיָּבֵא אֶתָּהּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֵא אֵלַיָּהּ:
 ד וַיִּתֵּן לָבָן לָהּ אֶת־זֹלְפָה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לְלֵאָה בִּתּוֹ שִׁפְחָהּ: וַיְהִי בַּבֶּקֶר וַהֲנִיָּה הוּא
 ה לֵאָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־לֵבָן מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עַבְדָּתִי עִמָּךְ וּלְמָה רָמִיתָנִי:
 ו וַיֹּאמֶר לֵבָן לֹא־יַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן בַּמָּקוֹמִנִי לָתֵת הַצְּעִירָה לִפְנֵי הַבְּכִירָה: מִלֹּא שְׁבַע
 ז זֹאת וְנִתְּנָה לָךְ גַּם־אֶת־זֹאת בַּעֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹד עִמָּדִי עוֹד שְׁבַע־שָׁנִים
 ח אַחֲרוֹת: וַיַּעַשׂ יַעֲקֹב כֵּן וַיִּמְלֵא שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וַיִּתֵּן לָהּ אֶת־דָּחִל בִּתּוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:
 ט וַיִּתֵּן לֵבָן לְדָחִל בִּתּוֹ אֶת־בְּלָהָה שִׁפְחָתוֹ לָהּ לְשִׁפְחָהּ: וַיָּבֵא גַם אֶל־דָּחִל וַיֹּאֲהֵב
 י גַּם־אֶת־דָּחִל מִלֵּאָה וַיַּעֲבֹד עִמּוֹ עוֹד שְׁבַע־שָׁנִים אַחֲרוֹת: וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי־שָׁנְוָאָה כֹּז
 יא לֵאָה וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחֲמָהּ וְרַחֵל עֲקָרָה: וַתַּהַר לֵאָה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ רְאוּבֵן
 יב כִּי אָמְרָה כִּי־רָאָה יְהוָה בְּעֵינָי כִּי עָתָה יִאֲהַבֵּנִי אִישִׁי: וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן

רשי

גם את זאת מנד לחסר שבעת ימי המסכה, ומעבד לחסר נשואיה:

לו שבע שנים אחרות חסרות הקישן לראשונות, מה ראשונות פחמונה חף החסרונות פחמונה, וחף על פי שדברמחית בח עליו:

שמכנסין לו לכה, חמרה: עקשו תכלס חסות עמרה ומסכה לה חותן סימנט:

כו מלא שבע את. דבוק הוא, שהרי נקוד בטרף, שבע על זאת, והו שבעת ימי המסכה. פתלמד ירושלמי פנועד קטן (ח. י) ונתנה לך. לשון רבים, כמו: "נדרה ונבלה" (בעל יח. א), ו"נשדפה" (ספסוק ג), חף זה לשון ונתן:

כא מלא ימי. שחמרה לי חמי. ועוד, "מלאו ימי", שהרי חף בן סמנט וחלפע שנה, וחיימי חעמיד סנט עשר שבעים? והו שחמה: "וחבוה חליה", והלח קל שפקלים חינו חומר בן חלח להוליד תולדות חמר בן:

כד ויהי בבקר והנה היא לאה. חבל פליה לח היתה לחה, לפי שפסד יעקב סימנט לכהל, וכשחחיתה

DISCUSSION

→ episode, and does not appear elsewhere in the Torah (see Judges 14:12).

29:31 | **The Lord saw that Leah was hated:** It is possible that Leah loved Jacob even before their marriage, as he was her relative and had many evident fine qualities. She was compelled to love him in silence, dreaming for seven years of winning his hand. If so, she might have conspired with her father in his act of deception. Jacob would have complained to her for not revealing her true identity (see Ramban). Although Jacob always treated Leah properly, Rachel was his

favorite. This is similar to the story of Hanna and Penina, the two wives of Elkana (I Samuel 1:1–5). Elkana also loved his barren wife more while he treated the mother of his children in a formal manner.

Leah was hated [senu'a]: In modern Hebrew the word *senu'a* means hated. Here however, the Torah means that Leah was unloved relative to Rachel, as indicated in the previous verse. Elsewhere, in a passage dealing with the inheritance of the firstborn, the Torah likewise mentions a case involving two wives, one beloved

and the other hated (Deuteronomy 21:15–17). There too, the second woman is apparently not really hated, for if she were, the husband could simply divorce her. Rather, she is less loved than the first wife (see Ramban; *Tzeror HaMor*; Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch).

29:32 | **Now my husband will love me:** When a son was born to a ruler or in a family of noblemen, the status of the woman who had given birth to him often changed, and she became the primary wife (see 16:4; commentary on I Samuel 1:6).

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

Book of Genesis | Chapter 34 | *Vayishlah*

camp and flocks, perhaps because Jacob had cautiously left them behind. **He**, Jacob, **urged him**, Esau, to accept his present, **and he took it**.

- 12 Ever since Esau's anger and animosity toward Jacob had been aroused many years ago, Jacob had avoided this encounter. Nevertheless, Jacob's gift and gestures of submission were sufficient to subdue Esau's resentment and restore their brotherhood. **He**, Esau, **said: We will travel, and we will go, and I will go along with you**. Let us continue together on the same road, as you are my brother. From Jacob's subsequent response it is apparent that he understood Esau's comment as an invitation to visit him or even to live with him in the place where he ruled.
- 13 **He**, Jacob, **said to him: My lord knows that the children are tender**. You can see that the children are young. Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son, was about thirteen years old at the time. **And you know that the responsibilities of attending to the needs of the nursing flocks and cattle are upon me; if they drive them hard one day, all the flocks will die**. With my large family and many sheep, I cannot keep up with your troops.
- 14 **Please, my lord will pass before his servant**. You go first, **and I will advance slowly, according to the pace of the property that is before me and according to the pace of the children, until I will come to my lord to Se'ir**. There is a long way ahead of us until we reach your land.
- 15 **And Esau said: If so, please, I will place with you some of the people who are with me to protect you and your family**. **He**, Jacob, **said: Why do that? I will find favor in the eyes of my lord**.⁹ I am independent; I have no need for such assistance.

The Incident of Dina

GENESIS 34:1–31

rape of their sister provokes criticism from their father. There is a renewed sense of danger threatening the household that has been created with great hardships.

- 34 ¹ *Fifth aliya* Since Jacob and his family were residing near the city of Shekhem, **Dina**, the young **daughter of Leah, whom she bore**

Furthermore, I do not wish to burden you by accepting this service.

- 16 **Esau returned on that day** with his entourage and the animals he had received **on his way to Se'ir**.
- 17 **Jacob traveled to** a location named **Sukot**,⁸ **and built him a house, and established booths for his livestock**. **Therefore, he called the name of the place Sukot**. This was a temporary lodging, where Jacob stayed until he decided upon his next destination.
- 18 **Jacob came unharmed**⁸ and without losses **to the city of Shekhem**,⁸ **which is in the land of Canaan, upon his arrival from Padan Aram**. He intended to make Shekhem his permanent residence. **And he encamped before the city**; not inside, but close enough to form a relationship with the local residents.
- 19 **Since this was a populated area, it would have been inappropriate for Jacob to establish his residence on land that he did not own**. Therefore, upon his arrival **he purchased a tract of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the possession of the children of Hamor, father of Shekhem, who was the mayor of the city of Shekhem, for one hundred kesita**,⁸ a certain sum of money.⁷ Alternatively, *kesita* means sheep and the like.
- 20 **He established there an altar, and called it El Elohei Israel**, meaning the Strong God of Israel.⁸ Naming an altar in this manner was not unusual, as they were not treated as mere instrumental structures, but were anthropomorphized, given a name and identity. The commentaries note that Moses similarly named an altar "The Lord Is My Standard"⁹ and Jerusalem was called "The Lord Is There."¹⁰

to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. Having lived until that point mostly as a nomad in the desert, Dina

DISCUSSION

33:15 | **Why do that? I will find favor in the eyes of my lord:** Jacob wanted to end his encounter with Esau as smoothly and pleasantly as possible, without receiving any benefits from his brother. He did not wish to accept Esau's gestures of kinship, but merely to maintain a distant relationship of respect and conciliation.

33:17 | **Sukot:** A city in the portion of the tribe of Gad, on the eastern side of the Jordan River. It is identified with Deir Alla, which is located in the valley of Sukot (see Psalms 60:8), near an estuary of the Zarqa River.

33:18 | **Jacob came unharmed [shalem]:** According to one opinion, Shalem is the name of a town located on the road between the Jordan Valley and Shekhem. Its name is preserved in the Arab village of Shalem, about 6 km east of Shekhem.

Shekhem: Shekhem is identified with Tel Balata, which is located on a major intersection in the center of Sa-

BACKGROUND

maria, on "the path of the setting sun" (Deuteronomy 11:30). This path extends from the Jordan Valley to the Mediterranean coast through the Samarian hills. Remains of massive walls have been found there. According to archaeological findings, the city was founded at the beginning of the second millennium BCE, and it is mentioned in Egyptian documents dating from that period.

33:19 | **Kesita:** At that time there were presumably no standard coins; therefore, it is likely that this is not referring to a sum of money but to some other item of

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

ספר בראשית | פרק לד | וישלח

וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וְנִלְכְּהָ וְנִלְכְּהָ לְנִגְדְךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹוֵי אֲדֹנָי יִדְעוּ כִּי־הִילָדִים רַבִּים
וְהֵצֵאן וְהִבְקֶר עֲלוֹת עָלַי וּדְפָקוּם יוֹם אֶחָד וּמָתוּ כָּל־הֵצֵאן: יַעֲבֹר־נָא אֲדֹנָי
לִפְנֵי עֲבָדָיו וְאֲנִי אֶתְנַהֲלָה לְאִטִּי לְרֹגַל הַמְּלֹאכָה אֲשֶׁר־לִפְנֵי וְלְרֹגַל הִילָדִים עַד
אֲשֶׁר־אָבִיא אֶל־אֲדֹנָי שְׁעִירָה: וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוּ אֲצִיגָה־נָא עִמָּךְ מִן־הָעַם אֲשֶׁר אִתִּי
וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה אֲמַצְא־חֵן בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנָי: וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עֲשׂוּ לְדַרְכּוֹ שְׁעִירָה:
וַיַּעֲקֹב נִסְעָה סֶפְתָּה וַיִּבֶן לוֹ בַּיִת וּלְמִקְנֵהוּ עָשָׂה סֶפֶת עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם
סֶפֶת: וַיָּבֵא יַעֲקֹב שְׁלֹשׁ עִיר שְׁכֵם אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן בְּבֹאוֹ מִפְּדַן לֵאמֹר
אֲרָם וַיַּחֲזֵן אֶת־פְּנֵי הָעִיר: וַיִּקַּן אֶת־חֲלֻקַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־שָׁם אֶהְלוֹ מִיַּד
בְּנֵי־חַמּוֹר אָבִי שְׁכֵם בְּמֵאָה קֶשִׁיטָה: וַיַּצֵּב־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה בַת־לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לְיַעֲקֹב לְרֵאוֹת בְּבָנוֹת חַמִּישִׁי

יב
יד
טו
טז
יז
יח
יט
כ
כא

רש"י

"עד בואנה בית לחם" (רות ח, ט): בבאו מפדן ארם.
כחם החומר לחברו, יצא פלוני מפני שני חריות ובה
שלם, חרן כחן: ויבא שלם מפדן חרם, מלגן ומעשו
סדונו לו כדרכך:
יט | קשיטה. מעה. חמר רבי יעקב: כשהלכת ללכרי
הים היו קורין למעה הקשיטה:
כ | ויקרא לו אל אלהי ישראל. לא שהמזבח קרוי "חלחי
ושחל", חלח על שם שהיה הקדוש ברוך הוא עמו
והיעלו קרח שם המזבח על שם הנס, להיות כבחן
של מוקם טבר בקריית השם, כלומר מי שהיה חל,
הוא הקדוש ברוך הוא, הוא לחלחם לי ששמי ישחל.
וכן מנינו בגמשה: "ויקרא שמו ה' גשי" (שמות י, טו). לא
שהמזבח קרוי ה', חלח על שם הנס קרח שם המזבח
לחזקו שבו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, ה' הוא נשי וקפוחני
חמרו שהקדוש ברוך הוא קראו ליעקב חל: ודברי תורה
"כפשוטו" יפגן שלע" (ויחיה כג, טו). מתחלקים לכמה
טעמים, ויח ליש פשוטו של מקרא באתי:
פרק לד
א | בת לאה. ולא בת יעקב? חלח על שם ויחיתה

ליכך: עד אשר אבא אל אדני שעירה. החיוב לו הדקך,
שלא היה דעתו ללכת חלח עד סבות חמר: חס דעתו
לעשות לי דעה ימתני עד בואי חצלו. והוא לא הלך,
והימתני ולך? בימי המשיח, שנאמר: "ועלו מושיעים קדר
עיון לשפט חת הר עשו" (עובדיה ח, כח). ומדקשי חציה
יש לפרשה זו דברים:
טו | ויאמר למה זה. תעשה לי טובה זו שחיני גריר
לה: "חמני חרן בעיניך ולא תשלים לי עתה שום גמול:
טז | וישב ביום ההוא עשו לדרבו. עשו לבדו, וחרבע
מאות חים שהלכו עמו נשמטו מחצלו חרד חרד. והיכן
פרע להם הקדוש ברוך הוא? בימי זוד, שנאמר: "פי
חם חרבע מאות חים עדר חקר רכבו על הגמלים"
(שמואל א' ב, יז):
יז | ויבן לו בית. שיהיה שם שמונה עשר חקש, כון ויחך
יקון: יתן - יקבתי, חרף - יביתי, יתון - יקבתי:
יח | שלם. שלם בגופו, שנתרפח ממלעתי: שלם בגמנונו,
שלא חסר כלום מכל חותו דורו: שלם בתורתו, שלא
שכח תלמודו בבית לבן. עיר שכם. כמו לעיר, וכמוהו:

יב | נסעה. כמו: "שמעיה" (תהלים לג, ט), "שלחה" (לחלו גג,
ח) שהיא כמו 'שמעו', 'שלח', חרן יעשה כמו 'נעמי', והענין
יסוד פתחה. ותגמס של חונקלוס: "טול ונהך", עשו חמר
לענק, נסע מפרון ונלך: ואלכה לנגדך. גשנה לך, טובה
זו חנשה לך שחריך ימי מהלכתי ללכת לחט פחש
חיתה גריר, וזהו "לנגדך" - גשנה לך:
יג | עלות עלי. הענין והבקר שהן 'עלות', מטלות 'עלי',
לנהלן לחט: עלות. מנעלות עוללהן, לשון 'עולל ויזק'
(ירמיהו מד, ז, חכה ב, יח), 'עולל ימים' (ישעיה סה, כ), 'שתי
פרות עלות' (שמואל א' ז, ז), וכלעני חנענוטי: ודפקום יום
אחד. לגעס בדרך בגרונה, 'גמתי כל הענין' ודפקום.
כמו: "קול דודי דופק" (סוד השירים ה, ג), 'לקש בדלת':
יד | יעבר נא אדני. חל נח תחריך ימי הליכתך, עבר
כפי דרכך וחרן חס מתחריך: אתנהלה. חתנהל. היא
יתרה, כמו: 'חזקה' (לעול יח כח), 'שמעיה' (ירמיהו ה, כח),
תהלים סה, ט): לאטי. לחט שלי, לשון יתח, 'ההולכים
לחט' (שעה ח, א), 'לחט לי לנער' (שמואל ב' יח, ה): לאטי.
הלמד מן היסוד וחינה משמשת, חתנהל נחת שלי: לרגל
המלאכה. לפי ערך הליכת רגלי המלאכה המטלת
לפני הולכי: ורגל הילדים. לפי רגליהם שהם יכולים

BACKGROUND

value. See the verse: "Each gave him one *kesita*, and each one gold ring" (Job 42:11). The ancient translations of Onkelos, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Septuagint render the word as sheep. A similar word in Akkadian, *sikkultu*, means sheep or a valuable item. Interestingly, the term *hayyil*,

which in biblical Hebrew refers to wealth and property, means a horse in other Semitic languages. An etymological transition of this type, from sheep to money, occurs in Latin as well; the Latin term for money, *pecunia*, is derived from its word for sheep (see also Rav Se'adya Gaon;

Midrash Sekhel Tov; Ibn Ezra, Job 42:11). However, Rabbi Akiva attests in the Talmud: When I went to Africa, they would call a *ma'a*, which is a type of coin, a *kesita* (*Rosh HaShana* 26a). Some claim that *kesita* was a unit of weight.

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

Book of Exodus | Chapter 14 | *Beshalah*

Canaan, the Israelites did not need to cross the Red Sea. From the eastern bank of the Nile, their way was open toward the Land of Israel, even if the Red Sea once extended further north than it does today. Still, God instructed Moses to turn from their route and camp by the sea.



Possible locations of Sukot, Migdol, and Baal Tzefon

- 3 **Pharaoh will then say of the children of Israel: They are astray in the land.** They have lost their way, and are doubling back. **The wilderness has closed in on them,** allowing them to travel no further.
- 4 **I will harden Pharaoh's heart.** After the plagues, the ruin, and the destruction inflicted upon Egypt, Pharaoh's heart will be hardened one last time, **and he will pursue them; and I will be exalted through Pharaoh, and through his entire army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord,** for something will occur now more miraculous than the plagues of Egypt. **And they, the Israelites, did so.**
- 5 Meanwhile, **it was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled.**^p The three days originally agreed upon (see 8:23–24) had passed, and the Israelites did not seem bound for any particular destination. **The heart of Pharaoh and his servants was transformed with regard to the people, and they said: What is this that we have done, that we have sent Israel from our servitude?** This nation of slaves filled an important

economic function for us, and was part of our way of life. We did not mean to set them free, only to allow them a respite.

- 6 **He harnessed his chariot.** Pharaoh commanded that his horses be harnessed to his personal chariot. **And he took his people, his soldiers, with him.**
- 7 **He took six hundred select chariots,** the best he had. These were the elite forces of Egypt, whose size is comparable to that of a modern armored division. **And he took as well all the chariots of Egypt; chariots played a dominant role in Egypt's military. And there were auxiliaries with all of them.**^p In addition to the driver, who held the reins, and the warrior, who held a weapon, usually a bow, as seen in ancient Egyptian drawings, Pharaoh added an officer over each chariot.



Mural of Egyptian warriors on chariots laying siege, found in Rameses II's temple in Thebes, thirteenth century BCE

- 8 **The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; the children of Israel went out with a high hand, not as escapees.**
- 9 **Egypt pursued them; all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army caught up with them encamped by the sea, by Pi HaHiro, before Baal Tzefon.**
- 10 **Pharaoh approached the Israelite encampment; the children of Israel lifted their eyes and behold, the forces of the**

DISCUSSION

deity associated only with Israel, and despite the plagues, they retained their pagan beliefs. The encampment of the Israelites before Baal Tzefon was likely to suggest to Pharaoh that the Israelites worshipped a god of desolation and ruin, and that this cruel, capricious god might perhaps abandon them in favor of the Egyptians (see *Mekhilta*).

14:5 | **It was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled:** Pharaoh almost certainly

sent men to accompany the Israelites, either officially or as undercover spies, in order to gather information about their activities. He therefore learned that the people did not go out like slaves on a temporary break from labor, but as victorious free men (see *Mekhilta*).

14:7 | **And there were auxiliaries with all of them:** The ancient Egyptians harnessed their horses by the neck, as they had not yet developed methods of harnessing the horse's body,

which would have allowed them to fully benefit from the horse's strength. The addition of an auxiliary to the chariot would slow it considerably, and was not necessarily appropriate for a military maneuver. Still, the additional soldier would make the chariot appear more imposing. This suggests that Pharaoh did not intend to engage the Israelites in open battle. Rather, he wished to frighten the Israelites into returning, and in this regard he nearly succeeded.

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

ספר שמות | פרק יד | בשלח

בין מגדל ובין הים לפני בעל צפן נכחו תחנו על-הים: ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל נבכים הם בארץ סגר עליהם המדבר: וחקתי את לב-פרעה ורדף אחריהם ואפבדה בפרעה ובכל-חילו וידעו מצרים כי-אני יהוה ויעשו-כן: ויגד למלך מצרים כי ברח העם ויהפך ללב פרעה ועבדיו אל-העם ויאמרו מה-זאת עשינו כי-שלחנו את-ישראל מעבדנו: ויאסר את-רכבו ואת-עמו לקח עמו: ויקח שש-מאות רכב בחור וכל רכב מצרים ושלשם על-כלו: ויחזק יהוה את-לב פרעה מלך מצרים וירדף אחרי בני ישראל ובני ישראל יצאים ביד רמה: וירדפו מצרים אחריהם וישגו אותם חנים על-הים כל-סוס רכב פרעה ופרשיו וחילו על-פי החיות לפני בעל צפן: ופרעה הקריב וישאו

שני

רשי

והניח לא חתונה כפי שפירש מלכים, דרך מלכים עבדיו קודמין לו בפולחן, והניח חקדים לפניכם, שפירש: "ופרעה הקריב" (להלן פסוק ו), הקריב עצמו ומהר לפני חילוינו; דרך מלכים לטוב בזה פירוש כמו שפירש, הניח חשן עמכם בחלק, שפירש: "והניח שלב" (להלן טו, ט).

1 | בחור. נבכים. "בחור" לשון יחיד, כל רכב ורכב שבמנו זה היה בחור; וכל רכב מצרים. ועמהם כל שאר הרכב. ומהיכן היו הבהמות הללו? אם תחמר משל מצרים, הרי נאמר: "וימת כל מקנה מצרים" (לעיל ט, ו) ואם משל יסרחהל והלא נאמר: "ויס מקננו ילך עמנו" (לעיל י, כו)! משל מי הינו מ'היחזק חית דבר ה'" (לעיל ט, כ). מכאן היה דבר שמעון חומר: פסד שבאים הרג, טוב שבחששים רגל חת מוח: ושלשם על כלו. שרי צבאות, בתרגומי:

11 | ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה. שהיה תולה חס לקדח חס לזו, ויחזק חת לבו לקדח: ביד רמה. בגנותה גבוהה ומפסקמת:

12 | ופרעה הקריב. היה לו לכתוב: ופרעה הקריב, מהו

משפט עשה" (סס ט, ו); בפרעה ובכל חילו. הוא התחיל בעבדה וממנו התחיל הפרענות: ויעשו כן. להגיד שבחן ששמעו לקול משה, ולא חמרו: היחך נתקרב חל רודפינו? חנו צריכים לבדח! חלח חמרו: חיו לנו חלח דברי בן עמקם:

13 | ויגד למלך מצרים. חיזוקיו של עמהם, וכיון שהגיעו לשלשם ימים שקבעו לילך ולשוב ורחו שחיון חזקיון למצרים, באו והצדו לפרעה ביום הקדיש. ובחמישי ובששי קדשו חזריהם, ליל שביעי וקדו לים, שבחית חמרו שירה, והיו יום שביעי של פסח. לכך חנו קורין השירה ביום השביעי: ויהפך. נהפך ממנה שהיה, שהרי חמר להם: "הונו צדו מתוך עמי" (לעיל יב, לח), ונהפך לב עבדיו, שהרי לשעבר היו חומרים לו: "עד מתו יהיה זה לנו למנוקש" (לעיל י, ז) ועכשיו נהפכו לקדח חזריהם שבטל ממנום שהחילום: מעבדנו. מעבד חזקנו:

14 | ויאסר את רכבו. הוא בעצמו: ואת עמו לקח עמו. משקם בדברים: לקחו ונטלו ממנו ושלחונו: בואו עמי

החירות על סם שפגעו שם בני חזקו, והם שני סלעים גבוהים וקופים, והצד שביניהם קרוי פי הסלעים: לפני בעל צפן. הוא נחשך מכל חלחי מצרים כדי להטעותו שיאמר: השה וקדחן, ועליו פלש חיוב: "משחצא לגוים ויחבדו" (חיוב יב, כב).

15 | ואמר פרעה. כשישמעו שהם שבים לחזריהם: לבני ישראל על בני יסרחהל וכן: "ה' ילחם לכם" (להלן פסוק יד) - עלכם; "חמרי לו חחי הוא" (בראשית כ, ג) - חמרי עלי: נבכים הם. כלוחים ומשקעים, וכלנו שירידי. כמו: "נבכי ים" (חיוב לח, טו), "פעמק הבכח" (תהלים סד, ז), "מבכי נהרות" (חיוב כח, יח). "נבכים ים" - כלוחים הם במדבר, שחיון ירעו לנחת ממנו וקחיבו ילכו:

16 | ואפבדה בפרעה. כשהקדש ברוך הוא מתנחם בלשנים שמו מתגדל ומתפדה. וכן הוא חומר: "ונשפטתי חתו" וגו' ויחזר כך: "והתגדלתי והתקדשתי ונדעתי" וגו' (יחזקאל לח, כב-כג), וחומר: "שמה שפר לשפי קשת" ויחזר כך: "נדעתי ביהודה חלחיים" (תהלים עג, ב-ד), וחומר: "נדעתי ה'

BACKGROUND

from the sixth century BCE along with the gods of Tahpanhes. It is also the name of the ancient temple built to this god, on Jebel Aqra in Lebanon, near Ugarit. Some have hypothesized, without archaeological evidence, that the Baal

Tzefon mentioned here is a temple similar to that in Jebel Aqra that stood on Casius Mons, near Lake Bardawil, which historical records (Strabo) indicate was built by Phoenician seafarers to Baal. However, one must take into

account the phenomenon of multiple places called by the same name: Names of places close to the Egyptian border, such as Sukot and Goshen, also appear as the names of places in the Land of Israel and northward.

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

Book of Leviticus | Chapter 3 | *Vayikra*

- 13 **All your meal offerings you shall salt with salt; and you shall not withhold the salt of the covenant^d of your God from upon your meal offering. Moreover, on all your offerings you shall bring salt, not just on meal offerings.**
- 14 **If, or when, you bring a meal offering of first fruits to the Lord, it shall be made of just-ripened produce,²⁹ roasted in fire, ground of a moist, soft kernel.** In this manner you shall bring the meal offering of your first fruits. According to the interpretation of the Sages, this is referring to the *omer* offering,

The Peace Offering

LEVITICUS 3:1–17

4) is partially burned on the altar and partially eaten by the priests, who receive their portion as a gift from God. In contrast, the peace offering is shared by all: Parts of the offering are burned on the altar, parts are consumed by the priests, and a significant part of the offering belongs to the individual who brought the offering.

The sacred feast in which the peace offering is consumed evokes a unique experience that differs from the experience of sacrificing a burnt offering or meal offering. The term peace offering points to the atmosphere of peace and harmony that is inspired by the offering. The Hebrew term for peace offering, *shelamim*, is derived from the root *shin-lamed-mem*, which denotes completeness.

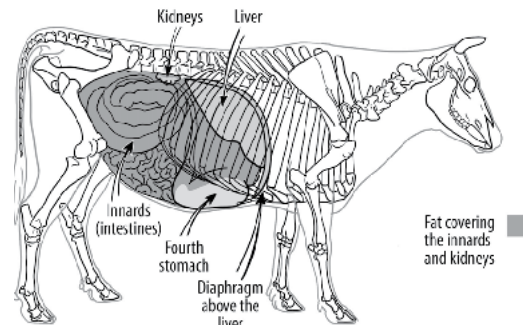
The section concerning the peace offering concludes with the general prohibition of consuming forbidden fat or blood. These are the parts of the peace offering that are presented to God on the altar. Consequently, these parts of any animal are forbidden for human consumption.

- 3 1 **If his offering is a peace offering: If he brings it from cattle, whether male or female, he shall offer it unblemished before the Lord.** In contrast to the burnt offering, for which one may bring only a male animal, the peace offering may be either male or female. It must still be unblemished, as is the case with regard to all offerings.
- 2 **He, the owner, shall lay his hand on the head of his offering** as though to transfer his identity to the animal. **And he shall slaughter it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting** in the Tabernacle courtyard, or, during the Temple period, in the Temple courtyard. The rite of slaughter is not considered one of the four proper sacrificial rites; rather, it is a preparatory rite and therefore may be performed by a non-priest. The priestly service commences with the rites involving the blood of the offering: **Aaron's sons, the priests, shall cast the blood around the altar.**
- 3 The peace offering is not burned in its entirety. Rather, **he shall present from the peace offering** a portion of the offering that will be burned on the altar as a **fire offering to the Lord: The layer of fat^{bd} that covers the innards, and all the fat that is on the innards,** additional sections of fat that are adjacent to the internal organs.³²

the meal offering of barley brought on the sixteenth of Nissan, which is the first meal offering brought from the new crop of produce.³⁰

- 15 **You shall put oil on it, and place frankincense on it. It is a meal offering,** and this is the manner of preparing a meal offering (see verse 6).
- 16 **The priest shall burn its memorial portion,** consisting of a handful **from its flour and from its oil, with all its frankincense; it is a fire offering to the Lord.**³¹

- 4 Also included in the portion of the offering burned on the altar are **the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, that is on the flanks.** This refers to the fat of the animal's flanks, which lies on the kidneys and extends to the hindquarters.³³ Some understand the flanks to refer to the inner muscles of the haunches.³⁴ **And the diaphragm above the liver,** although not the liver itself,³⁵ **with the kidneys he shall remove it.**
- 5 **Aaron's sons shall burn it,** the above sections of the animal, which are burned as one unit,³⁶ **on the altar on the burnt**



Fats from cattle burned on the altar

BACKGROUND

3:3] **The fat:** The *helev* is a layer of fat that covers the muscles in order to protect the internal organs, to control body temperature, and to control hormonal activity. The *helev* also serves as a food repository that is digested by the body when it lacks nourishment. This layer of fat exists in all animals, though its thickness varies from one type of animal to another.

Samples of explanatory notes giving historical or cultural context

ספר ויקרא | פרק ג | ויקרא

וְכֹל-קָרְבַּן מִנְחַתְךָ בַּמֶּלַח תִּמְלַח וְלֹא תִשְׁפִּית מֶלַח בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַל מִנְחַתְךָ

עַל כָּל-קָרְבַּנְךָ תִּקְרִיב מֶלַח: וְאִם-תִּקְרִיב מִנְחַת בְּפוּרִים

לַיהוָה אָבִיב קְלוֹי בְּאֵשׁ גֹּרֶשׁ בְּרִמְלָה תִּקְרִיב אֶת מִנְחַת בְּפוּרֶיךָ: וְנָתַת עָלֶיהָ

שֶׁמֶן וְשִׁמְתָה עָלֶיהָ לְבַנְנָה מִנְחָה הוּא: וְהִקְטִיר הִבְחִין אֶת-אֲזִפְרָתָהּ מִגֹּרֶשָׁה

וּמִשִּׁמְנָה עַל כָּל-לִבְנַתָּהּ אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה:

וְאִם-זָבַח שְׁלָמִים קָרְבָנוּ אִם מִן-הַבֶּקָר הוּא מִקְרִיב אִם-זָכָר אִם-נִקְבָּה תָּמִים רביעי

יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסַמְךָ יָדוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ קָרְבָנוֹ וְשִׁחֲטוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּזְרָקוּ

בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְהִקְרִיב מִזְבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים אִשָּׁה

לַיהוָה אֶת-הַחֶלֶב הַמְכַסֶּה אֶת-הַקֶּרֶב וְאֵת כָּל-הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקֶּרֶב: וְאֵת

שְׁתֵּי הַפְּלִיֹת וְאֶת-הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַכֶּסֶלִים וְאֶת-הִיתָרְתָּה עַל-

הַכֶּבֶד עַל-הַפְּלִיֹת יִסִּירָנָה: וְהִקְטִירוּ אֹתוֹ בְּנֵי-אֹהֶרֶן הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל-הָעֹלָה

רש"י

דן | הַכֶּסֶלִים. פלגוש גלעון, שהחלב שעל הפלגות כשהבהמה חיה הוא בגבה הכסלים והם למטה, והוא החלב שתחת המענים שקורין גלעון לונביליש, לבן הנדחה למעלה בגבה הכסלים, ובתחתיתו הנקשר חופיה: היתרת. הוא דבן המסך שקורין חיבלייש, וכלשון חרמי "חגריא": על הכבד. שיטל מן הכבד עמה מעט, ובקרום חרור הוא חומר: "זאת היתרת מן הכבד" (ויקרא ט, י): על הכבד על הפלגות. לבד מן הכבד ולבד מן הפלגות "יסירנה" לו:

הו | על העולה. מלבד העולה, למדנו שתקדם עולת תמיד לכל קרבן על המזבחה:

גסה בריחים של גדושות, כמו: "ויגרס בצרן" (איכה ג, טו), וכן: "גרסה נפשי" (תהלים קיט, כ); ברמל. געור הכר מלח, שהתבואה לחה ומלחה בקשון שלה, ועל כן נקראים המלילות 'ברמל', וכן: "ודקמל דקלנו" (מלכים ב' ה, טב):

פרק ג

א | שְׁלָמִים. שמיטילים שלום בעולם. "שְׁלָמִים" - שיש בהם שלום למזבח ולבָּעֵלִים:

ג | וְאֵת כָּל-הַחֶלֶב וְגו'. להביא חלב שעל הפכה, דברי דבי שמעאל. דבי עקבא חומר: להביא חלב שעל הקרון:

במלח, ונסוך המים בה: על כל קרבןך. על עולת בהמה ועור וזמנוי כל הקדשים בלך:

יד | וְאִם תִּקְרִיב. הכי "אם" משמש בלשון 'כי', שהרי חיו זה השני, שהרי במנחת העמר הכתוב מדבר, שהיא חובה. וכן: "אם יהיה היבל" וגו' (במדבר לו, ד) מנחת בפורים. במנחת העמר הכתוב מדבר, שהיא בזה חוב, בשעת בשול התבואה, ומן השעורים היא בזה, נאמר כאן: "חביב" ונאמר להלן: "כי השערה חביב" (שמות ט, לא): קלוי באש. שמיטשין חותה על האור פחגוג של קלחים, שחלולי כן חניה נטרות בריחים. לפי שהיא לחה: גרש ברמל. גרסה געודה לחה: גרש. לשון שביקה וטחינה

DISCUSSION

2:13 | **The salt of the covenant:** In the ancient world, covenants were made using items that symbolized endurance or by performing acts that symbolized the fate of one who breaks the covenant, e.g., slaughtering animals or melting wax. Salt was a substance that was essential for the preparation of food and for its preservation, and it was also used medicinally and as an anti-septic. These characteristics caused it to become a symbol of endurance, perpetuity, and purification. Conversely, salt can dry up the earth and destroy fertile land. For all these reasons, salt

was commonly used to symbolize the sealing of a covenant. A person who partook of the bread and salt of another was considered to be close to him (see also Genesis 31:54, Numbers 18:19, and II Chronicles 13:5).

The offerings burned on the altar come from all of the three types of matter that comprise the physical world: Salt is inanimate matter, the meal offering is a form of vegetable life, and the animals and birds belong to the world of animal life. Salt, which is the most elementary of these

items, is included in all of the offerings (see Rashi and Ramban).

3:3 | **The fat:** The Torah distinguishes between two types of fat. The fat referred to as *helev* is a fatty membrane, relatively firm and solid, which lies above the meat. Conversely, the fat that is integrated into the meat and the muscle tissue is known in rabbinic literature as *shuman*. It is not among the parts of a peace offering that are burned on the altar, and it is permitted for human consumption (see *Horayot* 2a; Ramban, verse 9).

- 43 He had him ride in the alternate chariot that he had,** the chariot he would use when the king's regular chariot was unavailable. Pharaoh kept his personal chariot exclusively for himself. **And they cried before him: Kneel.**⁷ When Joseph traveled in his chariot, all were obliged to kneel before him. **And he was set over the entire land of Egypt.** Pharaoh formally and publicly announced that Joseph was in charge of all of Egypt.
- 44 Pharaoh** summarized the matter and **said to Joseph: I am Pharaoh,** descendant of the gods, ruler and governor, and yet, beyond that, **without you no man shall lift his hand or his foot in the entire land of Egypt.** You have full authority over everything that is done in the land.
- 45 Pharaoh called Joseph's name Tzafenat Paneah;**^{BD} and as Joseph was now an important figure, Pharaoh arranged for him to be married: **He gave him Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera,**^D **priest of On,**^B **as a wife. Joseph came out over the land of Egypt;** he traversed the land as its ruler and began to organize its internal affairs.
- 46 Joseph was thirty years old as he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt.** Thirteen years had passed since his original dreams, due to which he was sold and exiled from his land (37:2). Since that time his status had changed beyond recognition. **Joseph came out from before Pharaoh, and he passed through the entire land of Egypt** in order to put into practice his advice to Pharaoh.
- 47 The earth produced, during the seven years of plenty, in abundance** [*kematzim*]. The grains of a single stalk amounted to a handful [*kometz*], or several handfuls.⁸ Alternatively, some explain that this means that the earth produced enough to fill the storehouses.⁹ In any event, the verse expresses the fact that the yield of the land was extensive.
- 48 He, Joseph, gathered all the food of the seven years that was in the land of Egypt and placed food in the cities; he placed the food of the fields that was around the city in it. In every city Joseph stored the produce that grew in its environs, both in order to keep the produce in the local climate to which it**

was accustomed, and also because each city could estimate accurately the amount of produce required for its inhabitants.

- 49 Joseph amassed grain like the sand of the sea,**^D **very much, until one stopped counting as it was without number.**

An enormous amount of produce grew each year. It is possible that this verse should be understood literally: At first they tried keeping records, but eventually they gave up, overwhelmed by the sheer mass of produce.

- 50 Two sons were born to Joseph during the years of plenty before the advent of the year of the famine, who were born to him by Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera, priest of On.**
- 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, as he felt: God has made me forget** [*nashani*] **all my toil, my suffering and hardship, and the trouble of my father's entire house,** from which I suffered for many years, as I am now a new person.
- 52 He called the name of the second son Ephraim, as he said: Not only have I forgotten my suffering, but now God has made me fruitful** [*hifrani*] in that I have become successful and risen to prominence **in the land of my affliction.**
- Fourth 53 The seven years of plenty that was in the land of Egypt concluded.**
aliya

- 54 The seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said.** In Egypt, which is mainly dependent not on rainfall but on an irrigation system whose source is the Nile, this transition was sharp. If for whatever reason the water level in the Nile falls lower than required, the land does not produce, resulting in famine. Furthermore, this was not merely a local problem in



Fresco, Tomb of Nakht, 1400–1390 BCE

DISCUSSION

41:45 | Tzafenat Paneah: Some have explained this as a descriptive term in Hebrew meaning “interpreter of secrets” (*Targum Yonatan*; Rashi). However, as this is the only instance of the root *peh-ayin-nun-het* in the Bible, it is likely that this is in fact an Egyptian name given to Joseph by Pharaoh (Rashbam). There are other Israelites with Egyptian names in the Torah, e.g., Pinehas. Joseph's new name is a title of honor commensurate to his lofty position.

Asenat, daughter of Poti Fera: Despite the similarity in name, this was apparently not the daughter of Potifar (Rashbam), although there is a midrash which claims that Potifar and Poti Fera are one and the same (see *Sota* 13b). Joseph's father-in-law was not an executioner like Potifar, but the head priest in the capital city of On, where there was a temple. By arranging this marriage, Pharaoh not only acted generously toward Joseph but also strengthened his position: Since priests in Egypt were influential

members of society, Pharaoh wanted Joseph to have direct ties with this other source of power of the ruling classes.

41:49 | Grain like the sand of the sea: For a very long time, until nearly two thousand years ago, Egypt was the leading country in grain production. It grew enough for all its needs and even exported a significant amount of produce to lands near and far. During the period of Roman rule, Egypt served as the granary of Rome (see Isaiah 23:3).

Samples of explanatory linguistic notes

ספר בראשית | פרק מא | מקץ

וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמִדְבַּת הַמִּשְׁנֶה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וַיִּקְרָאוּ לְפָנָיו אֲבִרָךְ וַנִּתְּזוּן אֹתוֹ עַל
 כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף וּבִלְעָדֶיךָ לֹא-יָרִים אִישׁ
 אֶת-יָדוֹ וְאֶת-דָּגְלוֹ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּקְרָא פֶּרְעֹה שְׁם-יוֹסֵף צַפְנַת פַּעַנָּח
 וַיִּתֵּן-לוֹ אֶת-אֲסֹנַת בַּת-פּוּטִי פֶרַע כַּהֵן אֵן לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
 וַיֹּסֵף בֶּן-שָׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּעָמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פֶּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלְּפָנֵי
 פֶּרְעֹה וַיַּעֲבֹד בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַתַּעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁבְעַ שָׁנֵי הַשְּׁבַע לְקַמְצִים:
 וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת-כָּל-אֶחָד מִן-שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּתֵּן-אֹכֵל בַּעֲרִים
 אֶכָּל שְׂדֵה-הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֶיהָ נָתַן בְּתוֹכָהּ: וַיַּעֲבֹד יוֹסֵף בְּרַ כַּחֲלוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה
 מְאֹד עַד כִּי-חָדַל לְסַפֵּר כִּי-אֵין מִסְפָּר: וְלִיוֹסֵף יָלַד שְׁנֵי בָנִים בְּטָרְסָם תָּבוֹא שְׁנַת
 הָרֵעַב אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה-לוֹ אֲסֹנַת בַּת-פּוּטִי פֶרַע כַּהֵן אֵוֹן: וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת-שֵׁם
 הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי-נִשְׁנֵי אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-עַמְלֹי וְאֶת כָּל-בֵּית אָבִי: וְאֶת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי
 קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי-הִפְרִנִי אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶרֶץ עַנְיִי: וַתִּכְלֹינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הַשְּׁבַע אֲשֶׁר
 הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַתַּחֲלִינָה שְׁבַע שָׁנֵי הָרֵעַב לָבוֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי

רביעי

רשי

מזו | ותעש הארץ. בתרגומו, ואין הלשון נעקר מלשון עשיה: לקמצים. קמץ על קמץ, וז' על יד היו חוזרים:

מח | אכל שדה העיר... נתן בתוכה. שכל חקו וחקו מעמדת פרוציה, ונתנון פתבויה מעפר המקום ומעמיד חת התבויה מלכה:

מטו | עד כי חדל לספר. עד אשר חדל לו הסופר לספר, והרי זה מקרה קצר: כי אין מספר. לפי שחיו מספר, והרי כפי משמש כללן דהיא:

ואני גזר שלח ידים חת ידו בלעדיך, שלח בקשיתך. דבר חכה "חני פרעה", חני חקיה מלך, "ובלעדיך" וגו', זו דגמית "רק הכפח חגל ממך" (לעיל פסוק ג) חלח שהצדק לכשם לו בשעת נתינת הטבעת: את ידו ואת רגלו. בתרגומו:

מה | צפנת פענח. מפרש העבונות, ואין לפענח דמיון במקרא: פוטי פרע. הוא פוטיפה, ונקרא פוטיפדע על שנתפס מחלני, לפי שלחח חת יוסף למשפכ זכור:

מג | במדבבת המשנה. השניה למקבתו, המהלכת חצל סלו: אברך. בתרגומו: "דיו חפח למלח", "כך בלשון חרמי מלך, בהשתמו: "לח ריבח ולא בר ריבח" (גמ' בתרא ד ע"א). ובדברי חז"ה, דלש רפי יהודה: "חברך" זה יוסף, שהיה חב בחקמה וכן בשנים חמר לו רפי יוסי בן דודמסקות: בדפי, עד מתי חמה מעות עליו חת הקתונים? חיו חכרן חלח לשון בקים, שהכל יהו כגשיו ויחיון תחת ידו, כענין שחמה: "ועתה חתו" וגו':

מד | אני פרעה. ישג וכלת בידי לגור גרות על מלכותי,

BACKGROUND

41:45 | **Tzafnat Paneah:** The suffix represented here by the letters *ayin-nun-het*, typically spelled "ankh" in English, denotes life in Egyptian. This suffix was added to the names of important individuals, e.g., the pharaoh Tutankhamun, whose name is a fusion of the words *tut*, *ankh*, and *amun*. One can see in Egyptian engravings the

ankh symbol, an object that represents the life force, borne by gods and nobles. Some maintain that its shape is meant to be reminiscent of the Nile, which was the source of all life for Egypt.

On: The ancient capital of Egypt, located in the southern tip of the Nile Delta. On served as an

important religious center for the sun god Aten. Upon the Hellenist conquest of Egypt, its name was changed to the Greek Heliopolis, which means City of the Sun (see commentary on Isaiah 19:18).

Parashat Beshalah

The Beginning of the Journey in the Wilderness

EXODUS 13:17–22

Certain commandments were enumerated before and after the account of the plague of the firstborn and the exodus from Egypt, in order to imprint the memory of these great events on the consciousness of the Jewish people for all time. The Torah now returns to the story of the children of Israel, describing the beginning of their journey into the wilderness. Here, the people's first campsites are briefly enumerated, as well as certain matters concerning their general route and manner of travel. The Torah also notes the fulfillment of the promise made

to Joseph, that his bones would be returned from Egypt.

- 17 **It was, in Pharaoh's sending forth the people, that God did not guide them via the land of the Philistines**, along the Mediterranean coast, **although it was near, for God said: Lest the people reconsider when they see war**. Although the Philistines were not a large nation, they were militarily powerful. Passing through their land risked a war which might have caused the Israelites to reverse course **and return to Egypt**.
- 18 **God led the people circuitously, via the wilderness of the Red Sea**. Instead of turning northward, toward the Mediterranean coastline, God led them southeast. **And the children of Israel came up armed from the land of Egypt**, as they assumed that they would eventually be forced to fight.² God decided that they were not yet ready to stand in battle, and He therefore guided them on a path that would avoid direct confrontation with the Philistines.
- 19 **Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he, Joseph, had administered an oath to the children of Israel**, the children of Jacob,³ or the Israelites in general, **saying: God will remember and redeem you; and** when this occurs, I request that
- you shall bring my bones up from here, from Egypt, with you.**
- 20 **They**, the Israelites, **traveled from** a place called **Sukot**; alternatively, from a place where there were booths [*sukkot*], **and they encamped in Etam, at the edge of the wilderness**. Until this point, the Israelites traveled in fertile areas that were part of Egypt or Goshen. Now, they begin to travel in uninhabited areas.
- 21 So that they could navigate the desert, an angel of **the Lord^D was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to guide them on the way**. They followed the cloud, which represented the glory of God. **And by night He would go with them in a pillar of fire to illuminate for them, to go day and night**. It is unclear whether the Israelites actually traveled by night. In any event, the pillar of fire gave them the ability to do so.⁴
- 22 **The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night would not move from before the people**. The Israelites did not know where they were traveling; these two pillars represented God's guiding hand in the wilderness.

The Israelites at the Red Sea

EXODUS 14:1–31

When God struck Egypt with the plagues, the Israelites remained on the periphery. They stayed in their dwellings, and they did not witness with their own eyes the wonders that Moses performed in God's name. Only at the Red Sea do Israel witness these miraculous events to their full dramatic extent. Furthermore, unlike the plagues that descended on Egypt within their borders, the occurrences described here come with sudden, quick intensity. This is also a defining moment for Moses in his

capacity as leader and redeemer in the eyes of the people.

- 14 1 **The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**
2 **Speak to the children of Israel, that they return in the direction of Egypt and encamp before Pi HaHiroth,^B a famous place**

at the time. The name Pi is Egyptian. It is located **between Migdol and the Red Sea, before the pagan god Baal Tzefon.^{BD} Opposite it you shall encamp, by the sea**. On their way to

DISCUSSION

13:21 | **The Lord**: God appears in the world by way of angels or messengers (see Rashi; Rashbam; Ramban; *Hizkuni*; *Bekhor Shor* 14:19). The verse below (14:19) describes the

movements of this pillar, and there it is referred to as an angel.

14:2 | **Baal Tzefon**: This may be a reference to Set, Egyptian god of the desert, darkness, and

destruction. Over the course of many generations the Egyptians did not know how to relate to the God of Israel, and where to place Him within their pantheon. They saw Him as a local

Samples of explanatory linguistic notes

ספר שמות | פרק טו | בשלח

נַשְׁפֹּתִי	אָרִיק חֲרָבִי תֹדִישְׁמוּ יָדַי:	נַפְשִׁי	י
צַלְלוּ פַעוּפֹרֶת בָּמִים	מִי־כַמְכָה בְּאֵלֶם יְהוָה	בְּרוּחַךְ פָּסְמוּ יָם	יא
מִי	נֹרָא תְהַלֵּת עֵשָׂה	אֲדִירִים:	יב
נְחִית	נְטִית יְמִינְךָ תְּבַלְעֵמוּ אֶרֶץ:	כַּמְכָה נֶאֱדָר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ	יג
נְהַלֵּת בְּעִזֶּךָ אֶל־נֹה	שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגְּזוּן	פְּלֹא:	יד
חִיל	אֵילִי מוֹאָב יֵאֱחָזְמוּ רַעַד	בַּחֲסִדְךָ עִסְוּ גְּאֻלַּת	טו
אִז נִבְהָלוּ אֱלֹפָי	תְּבַאֲמוּ וְתִטְעֵמוּ בְּהַר נַחֲלַתְךָ	קֹדֶשְׁךָ:	טז
נִמְגֹו	בְּגִדְלִי זֹרְעֶךָ יִדְמוּ כְּאֶבֶן	אֲחִז יִשְׁבִי פְּלִשְׁתִּי:	יז
תִּפְלַעַלְיָהֶם אִימָתָה	יְהוָה וַיִּמְלֹךְ לְעֵלְמֹס וְעַד:	אָדוּם	יח
עַד־		כָּל יִשְׁבֵי כְּנָעַן:	יט
עַד־יַעֲבֹד עִסְוּ		וּפְחָד	
מָכוֹן		יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךְ יְהוָה	
מִקְדָּשׁ אֲדָנִי כּוֹנֵן		קִנִּיתִי:	
כִּי		לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פְּעֻלַּת יְהוָה	
		יָדִיךָ:	

רש"י

כמו: "קריבים תמננה" (תהלים סה, יא), חמרו: עלינו הם פאים לכלותנו ולקיש חת חרצנו.

טו | תפל עליהם אימתה. על הקדושים: ופחד. על הקדושים, קענו שפאמר: "כי שמענו חת חקר הובש" וגו' (יהושע ב, י): עד יעבר... עד יעבר. פתקמו: קנית. חפבת משחר חמות, כחפן הקני נמנים יקרים שחביב על האדם:

יז-יח | תבאמו. נתנפח משה שלא יפגם לזרן. לכן לא נחמר תביאנו: כיון לשבתך. מקדש של מטה מכון כנגד פסח של מעלה חקר "פעלת": מקדש. הטעם עליו זקח גדול להקפידו מעת השם שלחתינו, המקדש חקר כוננו ידיו ה: חביב בית המקדש, שהעולם נבחר ביד חסות, שפאמר "חך ידי יסדה חרן" (שעה מתי, יג) ומקדש פשתו ידים וחימת יבנה פשתו ידים? זמן שיהי: ימלך לעולם ועד, לעתיד לבא שכל המולכה שלו, וילעלם ועד' לאון עולמית הוא והגיו' בו יסוד, לפיכך היא פתחה, ככל "חרכי האדע ועד" (ירמיה כט, כג) שפאמר בו שמש, קמונה היא.

יב | נטית ימינך. כשהקדוש ברוך הוא נוטה ידו הקשעים פלים ונפלים, לפי שהכל נתון בידו ונפלים בהטיתה, וכן הוא חומר: "והי יטה ידו וכשל עוזר ונפל עזר" (שעה לא, א). משל לקבל זכוכית הענוים ביד חרם, משה ידו מעט והם נפלים ומשפטים: תבלעמו ארץ. מכון שכן לקבוכה, פשכר שחמרו: "ה' הצדיק" (לעיל ט, כז).

יג | נהלת. לאון מעלה. וזאנקלוס תמגס לאון נושא וסובל, ולא דקדק לפגש חמר לאון העברית.

יד | ידיו. מתנפזו: ישיבי פלשת. מפני שהקדש חת בני חפדים שמהרו חת הקו ויצאו בחזקה, כמפגש בדיכרי הימים (א' ג, כא): "הקדש חרש יצת:

טו | אלוף אדום אילי מואב. והלא לא היה להם לרא כלום, שהרי לא עליהם הולכים? חל מפני חנונית שהיו מתאוננים ומנטעשים על כבודם של ישראלי: נמגו. נמסו,

תחמה, חיו לאון דיוקת נפל על היוצא חלף על העתק ועל השק ועל הפלי שפאמר מננה, ככל לא על החק ועל היקו ולקחה ולפגש "חריק חרבי" כלאון "וקח חת חמיו" (בראשית יד, יד), חזון פחרי - מעטו הלאון מוסב חף על היוצא, שפן עברך (שיר השירים א, ג), ולא הורק מפלי חל פלי" (ירמיה מתי, יא), ולא הורק הפלי חיו פתעו פאון חלף "לא הורק הינו מפלי חל פלי", מעטו הלאון מוסב על הינו וכן: "הקדו חקדקם על ופי חקמתך" (יחזקאל כח, ז) חקדקם: תודישמו. לאון רישית ודלות, כמו: "מוריש ומנשיר" (שמואל א' ב, ז).

י | נשפת. לאון הפחה, וכן "וגם נשף ברהם" (שעה מ, כד): צללו. שקעו, עמקו, לאון "מעלה": פערפת. חרב, פלו"ס בלענו.

יא | באלם. בחוקים, כמו: "וחת חילי חרן לקח" (יחזקאל יז, ג), "חיליתי לערעך חושה" (תהלים כב, כ). נודא תהלות. ירחו מלהגד תהלותך פן ימעטו, על פן: "לך קמיה תהלה" (סם סה, ב).

Samples of explanatory linguistic notes

Book of Leviticus | Chapter 11 | *Shemini*

and the sparrow hawk^B after its kind.

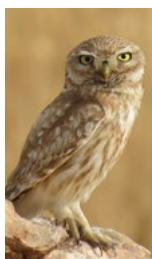
- 17 **The little owl,^B the fish owl,^B** a coastal bird that snatches fish from the sea,²⁹ **and the short-eared owl.^B**
18 **The barn owl,^B the eagle-owl,^B and the roller.^B**
19 **The stork [*hasida*].^B** Although *hasida* refers to the stork in modern Hebrew, the true identity of the *hasida* was a matter of disagreement among Jews in the Middle Ages. Jews living in central and eastern Europe considered the stork a non-kosher bird, while the Jews of Spain considered it kosher.³⁰ **And the heron,^B** a bird similar to the *hasida*, **after its kind, the hoopoe,^B**

and the bat.^B The bat is a mammal, not a bird. It is listed here among the fowl because the Torah does not use modern zoological categories. The Hebrew for fowl, *of* is literally rendered flying creatures, which include the bat.

- 20 **Every flying swarming creature that walks on all fours,** flying insects that have four legs and two additional limbs, which are not feet but are used for walking, e.g., ants, each of these creatures **is a detestable thing to you.**
21 **However, this you may eat from all flying swarming**



Eurasian sparrow hawk



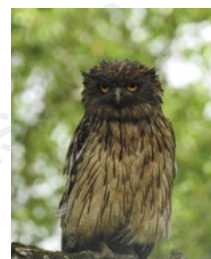
Little owl



Short-eared owl



Barn owl



Brown fish owl



Eagle-owl



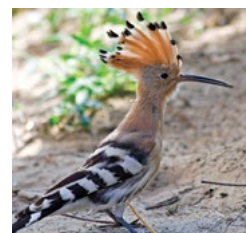
Roller



Egyptian vulture



Heron



Hoopoe



Bat

BACKGROUND

Sparrow hawk [*netz*]: Based on the translation appearing in the Septuagint, *ieraka*, the *netz* has been identified as the Eurasian sparrow hawk, *Accipiter nisus*, one of the most common and noticeable birds of prey in Israel (see Rashi here and *Hullin* 63a). The Eurasian sparrow hawk is 30–40 cm in length, while its wingspan reaches up to 65 cm. Its back is brownish-gray, and it has a striped tail. It would seem that the phrase “the sparrow hawk [*netz*] after its kind” includes other types of birds of prey of similar size that are found in Israel, such as the peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus*; the Eurasian hobby, *Falco subbuteo*; the lanner falcon, *Falco biarmicus*; and the saker falcon, *Falco cherrug*. The Midrash refers to

the fact that the *netz* is a bird hunter, as it states: To what was Israel comparable at that hour? To a pigeon fleeing from a *netz* (*Mekhilta*, *Beshalah*, *Masekhta deVayehi* 2).

11:17 | **Little owl [*kos*]:** The *kos* is depicted in Psalms (102:7) as a solitary desert bird that inhabits wastelands and ruins. Aramaic translations, the Septuagint, and the majority of commentaries and researchers identify the *kos* as the little owl, *Athene noctua saharae*, a small nocturnal bird of prey from the owl family. The little owl measures up to 21 cm, with a wingspan of approximately 60 cm; the weight of an adult can reach up to 150 g. The little owl is commonly found in open areas and dwells among ruins and

in rocky terrain. Some claim that the *kos* is a water bird, e.g., the pelican, due to the fact that it is listed alongside the *shalakh*.

Fish owl [*shalakh*]: According to the Sages and the Septuagint, the *shalakh* snatches fish from the sea (*Hullin* 63a). Some claim that it is the osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*, which almost entirely feeds off fish. According to the Septuagint, it is the cormorant, which dives into the sea to catch fish and is found near large bodies of water in Israel. Researchers suggest other possibilities: the pelican; the white-throated kingfisher, *Halcyon smyrnensis*; and the pied kingfisher, *Ceryle rudis*. Due to the mention of this bird alongside the *yanshuf*, some maintain that it is the brown

Samples of explanatory linguistic notes

ספר ויקרא | פרק יא | שמיני

וְאֶת־הַנֶּיֶץ לְמִינֵהוּ: וְאֶת־הַכּוֹס וְאֶת־הַשְּׁלֶךְ וְאֶת־הַיִּנְשׁוּף: וְאֶת־הַתְּנַשְׁמֶת
וְאֶת־הַקָּאֵת וְאֶת־הַרְחָם: וְאֶת־הַחֲסִידָה הָאֲנָפָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת־הַדּוֹכִיפֶת וְאֶת־
הָעֵטְלָף: כָּל שֶׁרֶץ הָעוֹף הַהֵלֶךְ עַל־אַרְבַּע שֵׁקֶץ הוּא לָכֵן: אֲךְ אֶת־זֶה תֹאכְלוּ

יז
יח
יט
כ
כא

רש"י

הרופ"א, ולמה נקרא שמו 'דוכיפית'? שהודו כפוח, וזו היא כדבולת, וצד טורח' נקרא על סם מעשי, כמו שפלטו דבולתו במסקת גטין כפוק 'מי שחזו' (דף סח ע"ב).

כ | שרץ העוף. הם הדקים הנמוכים הדוחסין על הקרקע, כגון זמרים ונענן ונמשין וזמרים.

ובורחת בלילה, ותנשמת' החמודה בשקעים היא דומה לה, ואין לה עינים, וקורין לה טלפ"א:

יט | החסידה. זו דיה לבנה, עגוני"א, ולמה נקרא שמה 'חסידה'? שעושה חסידות עם חברותיה במזונות: האנפה. היא דיה רגזית, ונראה לה, שהיא שקורין היירוף: הדוכיפת. מתקנול הקד, וכדבולתו כפולה, ובלע

יז | שרץ. פקשו דבולתו, זה השולה דגים מן הים, והוא שתרקם חונקלוס: ושלענח"א: בוס ונשוף. הם צחיטו"ש העועקים בלילה, ויש להם לסתות כחדם. ועוד חרף דומה לו שקורין ייבין:

יח | תנשמת. היא קלב"א שורין, ודומה לעכבר,

BACKGROUND

→ fish owl, *Ketupa zeylonensis*, a small nocturnal bird of prey from the owl family, which also hunts fish.

Short-eared owl [yanshuf]: According to Isaiah (34:10–11), the *yanshuf* is a bird that lives in ruins and wastelands. The commentaries maintain that it is a nocturnal bird whose name is derived from the noun *neshef*, meaning "night" (Ibn Ezra; Radak), or from the sounds it emits when exhaling [*neshifa*]. Onkelos and the Talmud (*Nidda* 23a) identify it by the Aramaic term *kifofa*, a bird that is similar in appearance to a monkey [*kof*], in that its eyes are situated at the front of its head. This description fits the nocturnal birds of prey from the owl family. Nowadays, this is indeed the accepted identification of the *yanshuf*. Two species of owl are found in Israel: the long-eared owl, *Asio otus*, and the short-eared owl, *Asio flammeus*. Their length can reach up to 40 cm, their wingspans are about 1 m, and they weigh up to 300 g.

11:18 | **Barn owl [tinshemet]:** The barn owl, *Tyto alba*, is a common nocturnal bird from the owl family. Onkelos calls it *baveta*, while the Talmud refers to it as *ba'ut* (*Hullin* 63a). Its length is 34 cm, and it is recognizable by the heart-shaped feathers around its eyes. The barn owl lives in pits, ruins, and caves and hunts field mice and small birds.

Eagle-owl [ka'at]: The *ka'at* lives in wastelands and desolated areas (Isaiah 34:11; Zephaniah 2:14; Psalms 102:7). Its name alludes to its habit of vomiting [*haka'a*] undigested food pellets, something done primarily by nocturnal birds of

prey. Some identify the *ka'at* with the eagle-owl, a desert owl, since the *ka'at* is mentioned in the verse alongside other nocturnal birds of prey. Others suggest that it is the houbara bustard, *Chlamydotis undulata*, a large land bird with long legs and an elongated neck. Its length extends up to 65 cm, with a wingspan of 150 cm.

Roller [raham]: The translation of *raham* as the roller follows the Talmud (*Hullin* 63a), *Targum Yonatan*, and the meaning of a similar Arabic term. The roller gets its name from the aerial acrobatics some of these birds perform during courtship or territorial flights. Rollers resemble crows in size and build but are colored blue, pink, or brown. Rashi explains that its name derives from the fact that its arrival signals the coming rainfalls, which are called *rahamim*, mercy. Rav Se'adya Gaon identifies the *raham* as the Egyptian vulture, *Neophron percnopterus*, based on the fact that this is its name in Arabic. The Egyptian vulture is approximately 60 cm in length, with a wingspan of 150–170 cm, and it weighs up to about 2 kg. Some commentaries contend that the *raham* is a nocturnal bird of prey, since it is mentioned alongside the *ka'at* and the *tinshemet*.

11:19 | **Stork [hasida]:** The *hasida* is mentioned in the Bible as a migratory bird that nests in juniper trees (Jeremiah 8:7; Zechariah 5:9; Psalms 104:17; Job 39:13). *Targum Yonatan* and the Talmud identify it as the white *dayya*, which Rashi understands to be the stork, which is from the order Ciconiiformes, or a related species. The Septuagint and the Vulgate identify it in a similar fashion. The stork commonly lives near swamps

or on riverbanks and subsists on a diet of frogs, insects, young birds, lizards, and rodents. Ancient cultures viewed the stork as a symbol of dedication and respect for one's parents. The Talmud describes it as a bird that performs acts of kindness [*hesed*] with its young and others of its kind (*Hullin* 63a).

Heron [anafaf]: According to the Talmud (*Hullin* 63a), the *anafaf* is similar to the *hasida* in appearance and in its flight. It is accepted to identify the *anafaf* with the heron, an aquatic bird from the family Ardeidae, which resembles the *hasida* (see Rashi). Several species of heron are found in Israel. While these species differ in size, herons all possess long legs, a long neck, and a long beak.

Hoopoe [dukhifat]: According to the Talmud (*Hullin* 63a), this is referring to a bird whose comb appears bent [*hodo kafuf*]. The Aramaic translations refer to it as *naggat tura*, which the Talmud (*Gittin* 68a) identifies as a wild rooster. According to the Septuagint, as well as the Latin translations, the *dukhifat* is identified as the hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, a bird with a distinctive colorful comb on its head consisting of feathers that appear either folded over or spread out. Its length is roughly 28 cm, with a wingspan of about 44 cm, and its weight ranges from 46 to 70 g.

Bat [atalef]: From the order Chiroptera, the bat is a flying mammal that lives in trees and caves. It is a nocturnal creature and sustains itself on insects and fruit. There are dozens of species of bats in Israel.

Examples of original and unique explanations

Book of Exodus | Chapter 20 | *Yitro*

- 21 **The Lord said to Moses: Descend, and again warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to see.** When they realize that this is no ordinary fire, the smoke is unusual, and the shofar is unlike any other shofar they have heard, they might be drawn to the place out of curiosity and yearning for God. **And** if they do come near, **many of them will fall**, either because there are guards stationed there, instructed to stop anyone who attempts to approach, or due to divine retribution for this infraction.
- 22 **Also the priests,^D those who perform the sanctified rites and who approach the Lord** and stand in front of the people at the foot of the mountain,²⁰ **shall sanctify themselves, lest the Lord burst out against them.**
- 23 **Moses said to the Lord:** Why do I need to warn them a second time? After all, **the people will not be able to ascend Mount**

Sinai, as you have already warned us, saying: Demarcate the mountain, and sanctify it.

- 24 **The Lord said to him: Go, descend,^D and you shall ascend, and Aaron with you.** Your brother shall accompany you part of the way. It is evident from the verses below that even those close to Moses, who were permitted to ascend higher than the rest of the people, were not permitted to reach the spot of the encounter itself, where Moses alone ascended (see 20:18). God again warns: **But the priests and the people shall not advance and break through to ascend to the Lord, lest He burst out against them.**

- 25 **Moses descended to the people, and said** God's repeated warning **to them.** Apparently, he then ascended the mountain again.²¹

The Ten Precepts

EXODUS 20:1–14

The Torah lists Ten Precepts spoken by God on Mount Sinai, which He later wrote on stone tablets. The familiar term "Ten Commandments" is translated here as "Ten Precepts." In three places the Torah recounts the writing of the ten *devarim* on the Tablets of the Covenant.²² *Devarim* is best translated as statements or precepts, not commandments. Furthermore, the passages in which these are stated²³ can readily be divided up into ten precepts, while it is difficult to divide them into ten commandments.

It should be noted that the precise division of the revelation into ten sections is a matter of dispute. These precepts, which include matters between man and God as well as those involving relationships between man and his fellow man, are at the foundation of the Judaic religious structure and the Jewish approach to life. In large part, they are also the source of universal values. Most of them are prohibitions relating to actions, but there are also some positive commands, as well as matters relating to one's emotional and psychological states.

There is a distinction between the first five precepts, which focus on the relationship between God and man – including the honoring of one's parents, as this precept is also within the rubric of honoring God – and the last five precepts, which consist of interpersonal prohibitions. In fact, the name of God does not appear in the second section at all.

All the precepts are addressed to the individual, in a direct, personal manner. However, in the early precepts, which focus on the belief in God, God is referred to in the first person, as the Speaker, whereas in the other precepts God is referred to in the third person.

- 20 1 **God spoke all these matters, saying:** It is unclear from the continuation of the account whether the entire people heard all the precepts directly.²⁴ In any case, they certainly heard the first section from God.
- 2 **I am the Lord your God,^D who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.** According to some commentaries, this is not a separate command, but the Speaker

presenting Himself, since without the acceptance of this basic identification of God there is no meaning to the commands that follow.²⁵ Others maintain that this is a command to believe in God and to know Him.²⁶

- 3 The previous declaration leads to the demand for exclusivity: **You shall have no other gods before Me,** together with Me. There is no other god but Me.

DISCUSSION

19:22 | **The priests:** The identity of the priests at the time is uncertain. According to tradition, the firstborn sons of each family served as priests. The special status of the firstborn can be seen, for example, in the story of Esau's sale of his birthright to Jacob (Genesis 25:31–34; see also Exodus 4:22–23). After the sin of the Golden Calf, when the Tabernacle was built, Aaron's descendants were appointed priests (*Zevachim* 112b;

Bemidbar Rabba 3:5; Ibn Ezra; *Bekhor Shor*; see Numbers 3:13, and *Bekhor Shor* ad loc.).

19:24 | **The Lord said to him: Go, descend:** Some commentaries interpret the phrase "Go, descend" as an explanation for why a repeat of the earlier warning is necessary. Although Moses was certain that no one would disobey the command and ascend the mountain, God told him that if he were to go down and examine

the people's nature, he would realize the need to warn them again at this juncture, due to the great danger and the temptation to draw close to God (see *Ohev Yisrael*, *Likkutim Hadashim*, *Yitro*).

20:2 | **I am the Lord your God:** The first of the Ten Precepts appears in a positive and negative formulation relating to the presence of God. This matter must necessarily precede all the



Examples of original and unique explanations

ספר שמות | פרק כ | יתרו

יהוה לְמוֹשֶׁה אֶל־דָּאֵשׁ הָהָר וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רַד הָעֵד בָּעַם פֶּן־יִהְיֶה־סוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לְרָאוֹת וְנִפְל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב: וְגַם הַפְּהַנִּים הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל־יְהוָה יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ פֶן־יִפְרֹץ בָּהֶם יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לֹא־יוּכַל הָעַם לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָר סִינַי כִּי־אַתָּה הַעֵדְתָה בְּנֹו לֵאמֹר הַגִּבַּל אֶת־הָהָר וְקָדְשִׁתּוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה לִךְ־רַד וְעֲלִית אִתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן עִמָּךְ וְהַפְּהַנִּים וְהָעַם אֶל־יְהִרְסוּ לַעֲלֹת אֶל־יְהוָה פֶּן־יִפְרֹץ־בָּם: וַיֵּרַד מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעַם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם:

וַיְדַבֵּר
אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאֹמֶר:
הַיּוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: לֹא־יְהִיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פְּנֵי:

רש"י

הקולות' (להלן פסוק טו), קולות בָּחִין מִכָּרְעֵה רִחוּת וּמִן הַשְּׁמַיִם וּמִן הָאָרֶץ, חָל תַּחֲמוּדֵי קִשִׁית הַרְבֵּה הֵן! וְלָמָּה חָמַד לָאוֹן וְיָחִיד, "חֲלֵהֶיךָ"? לָמָּה פִּתְחוֹן פִּה לְמַגֵּה לְלַמֵּד סַנְטוֹרִיָּא דְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַעֲגֹל, וְזֶה הוּא שְׁחָמַר: "לָמָּה ה' יִדְרֶה חֶפֶץ בְּעַמָּךְ" (להלן כב, יח), לֹא לָהֶם צִוִּית 'לֹא יִהְיֶה לָכֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים', חֲלָל לִי לְבָבִי: מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים. מִבֵּית פְּרַעֲיָה שֶׁהֵייתָם עֲבָדִים לוֹ. חוּ חִינּוּ חוֹמֵר חֲלָל 'מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים' שֶׁהֵיוּ עֲבָדִים לְעֲבָדִים? תַּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "וַיִּפְדֶּךָ מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים מִיַּד פְּרַעֲיָה מִלֶּךְ מִצְרַיִם" (דברים ז, ח), חָמַד מַעֲשֵׂה, עֲבָדִים לְמַלְכָּךְ הֵיוּ וְלֹא עֲבָדִים לְעֲבָדִים:

ג | לֹא יְהִיֶה לְךָ. לָמָּה נִחְמַר? לְפִי שְׁחָמַר: "לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ", חִיֵּן לִי חֲלָל שְׁלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה, הַעֲשֵׂה כְּכֹד מַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלֹא יִקְרָא? תַּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ": אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. שְׁחָמַר חֲלֵהוֹת, חֲלָל חֲחָרִים עֲשָׂאוֹם חֲלֵהוֹם עֲלֵיהֶם. וְלֹא יִתְכַן לְכַפֵּשׁ "חֲלֵהוֹם חֲחָרִים" וּזְלַתִּי, שְׁחָמַר הוּא כְּלַפִּי מַעֲלָה לְקִדּוּמָם חֲלֵהוֹת חֲחָלּוֹ. דְּבַר חָחַר, "חֲלֵהוֹם חֲחָרִים", שֶׁהֵם חֲחָרִים לְעוֹבְדֵיהֶם, עוֹשִׂים חֲלֵהוֹם וְחִינּוּ עוֹנוֹן חוֹתֶם, וְדוֹמָה כְּחָלוֹ הוּא חָחַר שְׁחָמַר מְכִירוֹ מַעֲלוֹם: עַל פְּנֵי. כָּל זְמַן שְׁחָמַר חָחַר, שְׁלֹא תַחֲמוּר, לֹא נִגְטָו עַל עַבְדֵּךְ וְזֶה חֲלָל חוֹתֵי הַדּוֹר:

שְׁחָמַר מִלְּחָסוֹם, כְּשֶׁהֵיָא מְסוּבָה בְּמַתְקָא מִשְׁתַּבֵּה הַנְּחִיד לְחִטּוֹן קָמוֹ:

כה | וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם. הַתְּרַחָה זֶה:

פרק כ

א | וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים. חִיֵּן "חֲלֵהוֹם" חֲלָל דִּין, לְפִי שִׁישׁ פְּקֻדוֹת בְּתוֹרָה שְׁחָמַר עֲשָׂאוֹ חָחַס מְקַבֵּל שְׁכָר וְחָס לָאוֹ חִינּוּ מְקַבֵּל עֲלֵיהֶם פְּרַעֲעוּת, יְכוּל חָח עֲשִׂית הַדְּבָרִים כִּי? תַּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "וַיְדַבֵּר חֲלֵהוֹם", דִּין לְפַרְעֵ: אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. מְלַמֵּד שְׁחָמַר הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲשִׂית הַדְּבָרִים דְּבַר חָחַר, מִה שְׁחָ חֲפֵשׁ לְאוֹר לֹאֵר כִּי חָח כִּי מִה תַּלְמוּד לֹאֵר עוֹד "חֲחָי" וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ? שְׁחָר וְכַפֵּשׁ עַל כָּל דְּבַר וְדַבָּר כְּפַעַל עַמּוֹ: לֹאֵר. מְלַמֵּד שְׁחָ עוֹנוֹן עַל עַל - הֵן, וְעַל לָאוֹ - לָאוֹ:

ב | אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם. כְּדָחַי הֵיָא הַיּוֹצֵאָה שְׁחָהֵיוּ מְשַׁעֲבָדִים לִי. דְּבַר חָחַר, לְפִי שְׁחָלָה פִּיִם כְּכֹד מִלְּחָמָה וְעוֹלָה בָּחוּן בְּחָוֹן מִלֵּא רַחֲמִים, שְׁחָמַר: "וַתַּחַת דְּגָלוֹ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה לְבַבְתָּ הַשְּׁפִיר" (להלן כד, ז), זו הֵיָתֵה לְפַעֲמֵי בְּשַׁעַת הַשְּׁבוּיָה, וְיַעֲבֹר הַשְּׁמַיִם" (סס) מְשַׁחֲחָלּוּ, הוֹחִיל וְחִינּוּ מְשַׁחֲחָה בְּמַתְרָחוֹת, חָל תַּחֲמוּר: שְׁחָ קִשִׁית הֵן! חֲחָי הוּא חָחַר הַיּוֹצֵאתִיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַל הֵם דְּבַר חָחַר, לְפִי שְׁחָ שׁוֹמְעוֹן קוֹלוֹת הַרְבֵּה, שְׁחָמַר "חָח

כא | הָעֵד בָּעַם. הַתְּרַחָה כְּהֵם שְׁלֹא לְעֵלוֹת כְּהֵר: פֶּן יִהְיֶה־סוּ וְגו'. שְׁלֹא יִהְיֶה־סוּ חֵיִת מְנַבֵּס עַל יְדֵי שְׁחָחוֹתֶם "חָל ה' לְרָאוֹת" וְיִקְרָבוּ לְעַד הֵר: וְנִפְל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב. כָּל מִה שְׁיִפְל מִהֶם, וְחֲפֵלוֹ הוּא יְחִידִי, חָשׁוֹב לְכַפֵּי רַב: פֶּן יִהְיֶה־סוּ. כָּל הַרְבֵּה מִסְּפֵדֵת חֲסִיפֵת הַנְּחִיד, חָח הַנְּסַבְדִּין מְמַנְבֵּד חֲשָׁשִׁים הוֹרְסִים חֵיִת הַמְּנַבֵּד:

כב | וְגַם הַפְּהַנִּים. חָח הַכְּבוֹדוֹת שֶׁהַעֲבָדָה כְּהֵם: הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל ה': לְהַקְרִיב קִרְבָּנוֹת, חָח הֵם חָל יִסְמְכוּ עַל חֲסִיבוֹתֶם לְעֵלוֹת. יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ. יְהִי מְזַמְנֵם לְהַתְרַעֵב עַל עַמּוֹן: פֶּן יִפְרֹץ. לָאוֹן פְּרַעֲיָה, וְהַרְבֵּה כְּהֵם וְיַעֲשֶׂה כְּהֵם פְּרַעֲיָה:

כג | לֹא יוּכַל הָעַם. חִינּוּ עֲרִיךְ לְהַעֲד כְּהֵם, שְׁחָרִי מַתְרִין וְעוֹמְדִין הֵם הֵיָם שְׁלֵשָׁה יָמִים, וְלֹא יוּכְלוּ לְעֵלוֹת, שְׁחָ חֵיִת לְהֵם רְשׁוּת:

כד | לִךְ־רַד. וְהַעֲד כְּהֵם שְׁנֵי, שְׁמַתְרִין חֵיִת חֲחָסִים קִרְס מַעֲשֵׂה וְחוֹזְרִין וּמְקַרְזִין חוֹתֵן בְּשַׁעַת מַעֲשֵׂה: וְעֲלִית אִתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן עִמָּךְ וְהַפְּהַנִּים. יְכוּל חָח הֵם "עַמּוֹן"? תַּלְמוּד לֹאֵר: "וְעֲלִית חָחַר". חָמַד מַעֲשֵׂה, חָחַר מַחֲרָה לְעַמּוֹן, וְחָהֵרן מַחֲרָה לְעַמּוֹן, מִשָּׁה נֶגֶשׁ יוֹתֵר מִחָהֵרן וְחָהֵרן יוֹתֵר מִן הַכְּהֵם, "וְהָעַם" כָּל עַקֵּר "חָל יִהְיֶה־סוּ" חֵיִת מְנַבֵּס "לְעֵלוֹת חָל ה'": פֶּן יִפְרֹץ בָּם. חָח עַל פִּי שְׁחָחֵי חָחֵר חִטּוֹן קָמוֹ חִינּוּ זֶה מְגַלְתִּי. כִּי דְבַר כָּל תְּבָה

DISCUSSION

➔ others, as the practical precepts mentioned below are based on the existence of a Commander. Although some of those also have social value, their importance is not due merely to their usefulness within daily life. Rather, the precepts

given on this lofty occasion mainly serve to establish values of good and evil. Furthermore, the opening declaration: "I am the Lord your God" identifies the Giver of the Torah as the One who saved Israel from Egypt, which provides the

legal force for the ensuing commands. These are not statutes that must be fulfilled out of awe of judgment or fear of the police, but rather due to their independent, absolute value.

Examples of original and unique explanations

Book of Exodus | Chapter 20 | *Yitro*

- 4 Furthermore, faith alone is not enough. **You shall not make for you an idol to worship, nor any item that is an image of that which is in the heavens above, or that which is on the earth below, or that which is in the water beneath the earth,** anywhere on earth. The phrase “that which is in the water beneath the earth” might also allude to large, primeval sea creatures, which were considered powerful beings that people would worship.
- 5 **You shall not prostrate yourselves to them, and you shall not worship them, because I am the Lord your God, a zealous God,^D** and cannot stand another god to be worshipped together with Me. I am He who reckons the iniquity of the fathers against the children, against the third generation, grandchildren, and against the fourth generation, great-grandchildren, to My enemies. I recall transgressions and even punish one’s descendants to the fourth generation, in accordance with the wicked deeds of the fathers, if the descendants continue on their evil path. For a lengthy description of this principle, see Ezekiel 18 and *Berakhot* 7a. Some maintain that this principle applies only to the severe transgression of idolatry, whose worshippers are called “My enemies.”²⁷
- 6 **And conversely, I am also a God who engages in kindness for the thousands of generations,** as in the verse: “Who maintains the covenant and the kindness to those who love Him and those who observe His commandments, for one thousand generations.”²⁸ God’s loving-kindness extends far beyond the four generations that apply in the case of a sinner. This kindness is for those who love Me and observe My commandments. God’s zealotness, which demands exclusivity, entails both the negation of all competitors as well as a great love for the faithful.
- 7 The previous precept of not worshipping other gods leads to the requirement to honor and fear God: **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,^D** by swearing falsely or mentioning it for no reason. This is a severe prohibition, as the person who does so disrespects the honor of the one Ruler of the entire world. **As the Lord will not absolve one who takes His name in vain.** It is difficult to achieve atonement for the desecration of God’s name. In general, the Ten Precepts deal with the laws themselves, not the punishments for those who violate them. The desecration of the name of God is an exception in this regard, as the punishment for the violator cannot always be administered by the court or society, and it is far more serious than other sins. Not even Yom Kippur and suffering can atone for the damage to one’s very relationship with God.²⁹ The Sages have said that if there is any remedy for the desecration of God’s name, it is through the opposite type of act, of increasing the sanctification of the name of God.³⁰
- 8 The next precept is one that creates the basic framework for Jewish life: **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,^D** The Sabbath was already given to the Israelites (16:23–30), but here it is granted the lofty status of a uniquely holy day. One of the ways in which this precept is fulfilled is through the recitation of Kiddush, the blessing of Sanctification, on the Sabbath, in which the day is praised and its special value underscored. In the Kiddush of Friday night, one welcomes the holy day.³¹ The remembrance of the Sabbath day and its sanctification are also fulfilled through other customs and *halakhot*, such as the choice food one eats and the wearing of fine garments.³²
- 9 **Six days you shall work and perform all your labor.** The six weekdays are for people to work and accomplish all their necessary tasks.
- 10 **The seventh day is Sabbath for the Lord your God.** On this day God rested, as related at the beginning of the Torah.³³ **You, too, Israel, who are entering a covenant with God, shall not perform any labor^D** on this day. This applies not only to you personally, but also to the members of your extended household: **And your son, and your daughter, your slave, and your maidservant, and your animal, and your stranger who is within your gates.** Since the Sabbath belongs to the entire nation, all are prohibited from performing labor on this day,
- 11 **because in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day,** as the day on which the labor of creation was completed. **And furthermore, He set aside the Sabbath and sanctified it^D**

DISCUSSION

20:5 | **A zealous [kanna] God:** The root *kuf-nun-alef* can be translated as zealous or jealous. The zealousness described here is not based on desire but on love, similar to the verse: “As love is as intense as death, jealousy [*kina*] is as cruel as the grave” (Song of Songs 8:6). This zealousness is characterized by the demand for complete, exclusive ownership. Both here and in its human, social manifestation, jealousy is

expressed not merely through a lack of patience with the closeness of others to the beloved, but is accompanied by a desire for vengeance and a combative spirit (see *Bekhor Shor*). Indeed, the expressions of zealousness attributed to God in the Bible appear invariably in the context of idolatry, which is essentially the betrayal of God (based on Ramban).

20:7 | **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain:** This verse teaches that the very name of God must be treated with respect. In addition, it is derived from this verse that there are limitations on mentioning the ineffable name of God for no purpose or in a negative context. God’s name is usually replaced by various other appellations such as *Hashem*, which literally means “The Name,” in order to

Examples of original and unique explanations

ספר שמות | פרק כ | יתרו

ד לא־תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכַל־תְּמוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת
ה וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה
ו ז אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא פֹקֵד עֵוֹן אָבֹת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל־דְּבָעִים לְשִׁנְאֵי:
י וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֵלֶפֶיךָ לְאֵהָבִי וּלְשִׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי: לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־
יא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׂוּא כִּי לֹא יִנְקָה יְהוָה אֶת אִשְׁרֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲת־שְׁמוֹ לְשׂוּא:
יב זְכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעֵשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלֹאכֶתְךָ: וַיּוֹם
יג הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלֹאכָה אֲתָהּ וּבִבְנֶךָ וּבִבִּתְךָ עַבְדְּךָ
יד וְאִמָּתְךָ וּבַהֶמְתָּךְ וּגְרָםְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל־כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה

דש"י

לכבוד תמיד חת יום השבת, שחס טדמון לך חסן יפה תהא מזמיונו לשבת:

ט וְעֵשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלֹאכֶתְךָ. כַּשֶּׁתִּבְרָא שַׁבָּת יְהִי בְעֵינֶיךָ כְּחֵלְוֵי כָּל־מְלֹאכֶתְךָ עֲשִׂיָהּ, שְׁלֵחַ תְּהַקְהֵר חִסְרֵי מְלֹאכָה:

י אֲתָהּ וּבְנֶיךָ וּבִתְךָ. חֲלוּ קַטְעִים. חו חִינוּ חֵלְוֵי גְדוּלִים? חֲמִרְתָּ, הֲדִי כְּבֵד מְזַהְרִין הֵם, חֵלְוֵי לֹא בָּח חֵלְוֵי לְהַזְהִיר גְּדוּלִים עַל שְׂבִיבֵת הַקַּטְעִים, וְחֵזֶה שְׁשִׁנְוֵי: קָטָן שָׂבִיב לְכַבֹּת חִין שְׁמִיעוֹן לוֹ, מִפְּנֵי שְׂבִיבֵתוֹ עֲלֶיךָ:

יא וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי. כְּכֹכֹל הַכְּתִיב בְּעֵגְמוֹ מְנוּחָה,

ז לשוא. חסן, להביל ואי זהו טבועת שוא? נשבע לשנות חת הדוע, על עמוד של חכן שהיא של זהב:

ח "זכור" ו"שמור" בדבור אחד נאמרו. וכן: "מחללה מות יומת" (להלן לו, יד). "ויבוס השבת שני כבשים" (במדבר כח, טו). וכן: "לא תלבש שעטנז", "גדלים תעשה לך" (דברים כב, יח-יג) וכן: "עבדות חשית חידך" (ויקרא יח, טו). "יבמה יבא עליך" (דברים כה, ה) הוא שצמח: "אחת דבר חללים שמים זו שמעתי" (תהלים כב, יב). "זכור" לשון פעול הוא, כמו: "אכול ושתו" (ישעיה כב, יג). "הלון ובה" (שמואל ב' ג, טו) וכן פתרונו: תנו לב

ד פסל. על סם שנפקל כל תמונת דבר "חסר בשמים" וגו':

ה-ו אֵל קַנָּא. מְקַנָּא לְפַדֵּעַ וְחִינוּ עוֹבֵר עַל מִדְתּוֹ לְמַחֵל עַל עֲבוּרָה זָרָה. כָּל לִשׁוֹן 'קנא' חֲפִצֵי חֲפִצֵי מְנַט בְּלַעַ, וְחִינוּ לֵב לְפַדֵּעַ: לְשִׁנְאֵי. כְּתַרְגִּמוֹ, כְּשִׂחוּחִין מַעֲשֵׂה חֲסוּתֵיהֶם בְּדִיהֶם. וְגַר חֶסֶד שְׂאֵלֵם עוֹשֵׂה, לְשִׁלֵּם שָׂבֵר עַד לְחֻלְפִים דוּחַ נְמֻזֵי מְדָה מוֹנֵה יְתָהּ עַל מִדְתַּי פְּרַעְוֵית חֲחִית עַל חֲמֵשׁ מִזּוֹת, שִׁזוּ לְחֻרְבָּהּ וְזוֹת וְזוּ לְחֻלְפִים:

DISCUSSION

→ safeguard people from using the actual name of God in an unseemly manner.

This command is also interpreted as a reference to the desecration of the honor of God in other ways. Since over the course of time the nation of Israel became identified as the people of God, any clearly negative behavior on their part in the presence of strangers serves to desecrate the name of God. Due to the impact of their actions, they do not merely desecrate their own good names and the honor of their families and their nation, but even the name of God Himself (see, e.g., *Pesikta Rabbati* 22; *Sha'arei Teshuva* 2:45; see also *Leviticus* 19:12; *Yoma* 86a).

20:8 | **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy:** In addition to one's actions on the Sabbath itself, one also fulfills this command through his

everyday speech. In Hebrew, unlike most other languages, there are no names for the days of the week; they are simply called first day, second day, and so on. They are numbered in relation to the Sabbath, which is the only one whose name is not relative to the other days of the week (see *Ramban*; *Bekhor Shor*; *Mekhilta deRashbi* 20:8).

20:10 | **You shall not perform any labor:** The revelation at Mount Sinai does not include the details of the prohibitions or the positive commandments of the Sabbath. Clearly, the demand to rest does not mean that the Jews must sit motionless for the entire day. Rather, the prohibition involves the performance of labor, which is a defined act not necessarily synonymous with hard work. Work refers to a physical

action, whereas labor in this context is a creative, deliberate act.

20:11 | **Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and He sanctified it:** The Sabbath is not merely a day of prohibitions and restrictions, on which one refrains from labor in commemoration of God's cessation of work at the completion of the creation of the world. Rather, it is also God's weekly celebration, which is why it is not only a day of rest, but a holy day as well. This feature of the day links the Sabbath to the preceding precepts, which deal with one's exclusive faith in God. Since the people of Israel are now entering into a covenant with God, He instructs them to participate in His private holiday. For this reason, remembering the Sabbath

from the beginning of creation.³⁴

- 12 Honor your father and your mother.**^D Honoring one's parents does not involve a ritual act, but is a requirement of daily life, so that your days will be extended on the land that the Lord your God gives you. The reward for one who honors his parents is a long life in this world.³⁵ In addition, in a society where the elderly generation is respected, there will be long life, as aging parents will be confident that they can rely on the younger generation, and they will be valued as important members of the family and the wider society.³⁶
- 13 You shall not murder.**^D **You shall not commit adultery.**^D This prohibition of adultery is defined by Jewish law and the traditional commentaries as pertaining to the relationship of a married woman with a man other than her husband.³⁷ The commands against taking the life of another and damaging his family structure are followed by a prohibition against taking his

property: **You shall not steal.**^D Following the absolute prohibitions that define the basic behavior required toward one's fellow man, such as murder, adultery, and theft, the Torah presents a command that is seemingly less severe than the previous ones, but which refers to a common social situation: **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**^D The halakhic definition of this prohibition is the submission of untrue or invalid testimony over the course of a trial in court. Such testimony undermines the trust between people.

- 14 You shall not covet**^D **your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his slave, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.** This coveting is the notorious, unshakable sin of envy, which has not disappeared in more than three thousand years since the Torah was given.

The Experience of the People during the Revelation at Sinai

EXODUS 20:15–18

The precepts that God pronounces to His people at Sinai were the verbal and intellectual features of the revelation. However, they were accompanied by an unprecedented sensory and suprasensory experience. As a result, the nation felt that it was unable to cope with the force of the vision. The same individuals who before the giving of the Torah had apparently yearned to ascend the mountain en masse, and who had required several warnings not to approach it, now recoiled in terror from the direct encounter between man and the Eternal.

- 15 All the people were seeing the thunder, and the lights that** *Seventh* **glowed like flames, and the blast of the shofar, and the** *aliya*

mountain smoking;^D **the people saw these phenomena and trembled,** instinctively recoiling, **and stood at a distance.**

DISCUSSION

is the first practical commandment of regular Jewish life.

20:12] **Honor your father and your mother:** Although this precept was not explicitly mentioned previously, it was already a basic value one thousand years before the giving of the Torah, as indicated in the story of Noah's sons (see Genesis 9:20–23).

Honoring one's parents is now presented as a fundamental principle of the Torah. It is not presented here as part of the obligation to respect one's elders, alongside the commandment: "You shall rise before the graybeard, and show deference before the elderly" (Leviticus 19:32). Instead, it appears as one of the Ten Precepts, which detail the basic principles of worshipping God, as one's attitude toward his parents should parallel his attitude toward God. The first precept connected the people of Israel to God by virtue of the fact that He fashioned them as a nation: "Who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (verse 2). The precept to observe the Sabbath, which appears just before this one, is associated with God's creation

of the entire world. The duty to honor one's parents extends this theme in that it is not dependent upon the individual personalities of the parents, but on the fact that they, like God, are the source of a person's existence (see Ramban; *Kiddushin* 30b).

20:13] **You shall not murder:** The basis for social coexistence is the security of each individual and the confidence that others will not kill him. In a society where murder is permitted, humanity in general, and each individual in particular, is in a constant state of peril. Even in the animal kingdom, in many species, animals in a pack do not attack one another. However, in the Ten Precepts this fundamental prohibition is imbued with meaning that goes beyond its social utility, as evident from the fact that it is formulated in the future tense: You shall not murder [*lo tirtzah*], rather than the command form: Do not murder [*al tirtzah*]. In effect, the Torah is saying: There shall be no murder, as acts of this kind shall not be part of your world. This style is repeated in the subsequent precepts as well.

You shall not commit adultery: Other sexual prohibitions, e.g., incest and forbidden relations that stem from the elevated status of Jews or of certain segments of the Jewish people, are not included in this precept. This is true despite the fact that they are no less severe than adultery, and the punishment for some of them is in fact more severe. The reason adultery appears here is because it shatters the most basic social unit, the family. In addition, it harms a relationship that goes back to the beginning of the Creation: "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and he shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Likewise, the prohibition against murder relates to a verse in the first part of Genesis (9:6): "One who sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, as He made man in the image of God."

You shall not steal: The Sages maintain, based on the context, that this precept is referring to stealing people, kidnapping, whereas the prohibition against taking another's property appears in Leviticus 19:11 (see *Sanhedrin* 86a; see

Examples of original and unique explanations

ספר שמות | פרק כ | יתרו

יב אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: כִּי־אֶת־אֲבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּן
 יג יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: תִּרְצַח
 תִּנְאַף
 יד תַּעֲנֶה בְרַעַךְ עַד שָׁקֵר: תַּחֲמוֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ
 טו וְכָל־הָעַם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִם וְאֵת קוֹל הַשֹּׁפָר וְאֶת־הַהָר עֹשֵׂן וַיֵּרָא שְׁבִיעֵי

רש"י

תקצת, לא תנאף, מיתת בית דין, חף "לא תגנב" דבר שחיביו עליו מיתת בית דין.
 טו | וְכָל הָעַם רֹאִים. מלמד שלא היה בהם חיד סומא ומען שלא היה בהם חלם? תלמוד לומר: "ויענו כל העם" (לעיל יט, ח). ומען שלא היה בהם חלם? תלמוד לומר: "עשה וגשמע" (להלן כד, ז): ראים את הקולות. רואים את הגשמע, שחי חקשך לרחות במקום חר:

יג | לא תנאף. חין רחוק חלף באשת חם, שנאמר: "מות יומת הנאף והנאפת" (ויקרא כ, ז), וחומר: "האשה המנאפת תחת חמה תחן את זרים" (יחזקאל טז, לב): לא תגנב. גונג נפשות הפנוג מדבר. "לא תגנב" (ויקרא יט, יח) גונג ממון. חו חינו חלף זה גונג ממון ולהלן גונג נפשות חמת, דבר למד מענגנו, "לא

ללמד הימנו קל ויחזק לחדם שכלחכתו בענגל וביעשה שיהא נח בשבת: ברוך... ויקדשהו. פרקו במנו, לכפל פשטי להם משנה, וקדשו במנו, שלא היה יורד בו.
 יב | לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּ יָמֶיךָ. חם תבד - יחריבו, וחס לחו - יקניו, שדברי תורה נוטריקון הם גדקשים, מכלל הן לחו ומכלל לחו הן.

DISCUSSION

→ also 21:16; Rav Se'adya Gaon; and Ibn Ezra, long commentary on Exodus).

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor: This precept may include a broad range of situations where one speaks falsely about another (see *Bekhor Shor*, 23:1). If people would refrain from speaking falsehoods entirely, everyone could rely on others, not only due to the knowledge that his life, family, and property are secure, as required by the previous precepts, but in full confidence that the statements he hears are spoken in good faith.

20:14 | **You shall not covet:** Ostensibly, a prohibition of this kind has no place in a legal system, as legal codes regulate actions rather than people's thoughts and desires. God alone can command people not to want something and set limits to the hidden desires in the heart of man.

Due to the singular nature of this prohibition among the other precepts, most of which apply to actions and words, the Sages interpreted

this prohibition in a more limited manner, as prohibiting taking action to deprive another of an item that belongs to him (see Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, negative commandment 265). Consequently, it is prohibited to apply pressure or other forms of manipulation in order to gain possession of another individual's property, or to acquire another person's wife, even if the acquisition itself is performed legally. This manifestation of coveting is somewhat akin to the villainy identified as the sin of the generation of the flood (Genesis 6:11–13), as it too was motivated by lust for the property of another. Accordingly, this final precept serves to prohibit practical planning and scheming for the purpose of appropriating that which belongs to someone else.

However, it should be noted that this limited interpretation does not negate the simple meaning of the term. Indeed, in the parallel account of the Ten Precepts in Deuteronomy (5:17), the word "covet" is replaced by "desire,"

which refers to a passion that does not necessarily have any practical effect (see Rambam, *Sefer Nezikin, Hilkhot Gezeila* 1:9–12).

20:15 | **Were beset by the thunder, and the flames, and the blast of the shofar, and the mountain smoking:** Although the verse states that the people saw the thunder and the blast of the shofar, some commentaries explain that this means they saw the visual sources from where such sounds came (Rashbam; Rabbeinu Bahya). However, the attribution of seeing to auditory phenomena can be understood as a precise description of an experience beyond the realm of ordinary human senses (see Rashi). The speech of God cannot be recorded by any device, nor can its waves be measured. One's senses do not play a central role in the absorption of the word of God, as His statements penetrate directly into the consciousness (Ibn Ezra). A prophecy is the transfer of content from the consciousness of God, as it were, to human consciousness, without the use of external aids, such as pictures or

Examples of original and unique explanations

Book of Exodus | Chapter 14 | *Beshalah*

the night. **And one**, the Egyptian camp, **did not approach the other**, the Israelite camp, **the entire night**, due to the thick fog separating them.

21 Moses extended his hand^D over the sea, and the Lord moved the sea with a powerful east wind the entire night, and it rendered the sea dry land, and the water split.

22 The children of Israel came into the sea, but on dry land; and the water was a wall for them on their right and on their left. The sea did not disappear entirely. Rather, a path, or perhaps several paths, took shape, through which the Israelites could pass. Although dry strips of land may naturally appear in the water during low tide, here the water stood up like walls on either side of the Israelites.

23 Egypt pursued and came after them. It is probable that as morning approached, the pillars of fire and cloud disappeared, and the Egyptians caught sight of the Israelites marching into the sea and gave chase. **All Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen pursued them into the sea.**

24 It was at the morning watch,^D the final third of the night, and the Lord looked down at the camp of Egypt and struck at them **with a pillar of fire and cloud** that approached the camp, and the Lord **confounded the camp of Egypt.**

25 He removed the wheels of its chariots and caused them to drive with difficulty. The pillars of fire and cloud caused the wheels to separate from their chariots. Even if only some of the wheels fell off, it caused the chariots to lose their balance, so that the horses could not pull them. This caused panic in the camp. The Egyptians could not move, let alone fight, so **Egypt said: I will flee from before Israel, as the Lord is making war for them against Egypt.** Now there can be no doubt that some supreme power is aiding them. This place is strange and dangerous; we would do well to flee.

26 The Lord said to Moses: Extend your hand over the sea again, so that the water will return to its place, upon Egypt, upon its chariots, and upon its horsemen.

Fourth
aliya

27 Moses extended his hand over the sea that had turned in just a few hours into dry land, **and the sea returned to its original vigor before morning**, as morning approached.⁶ The waters previously stood as walls on either side of the dry path; they now came crashing down into the Egyptians' path as they fled toward the shore. **And thus, Egypt was fleeing toward it**, the water that came crashing down between them and the shore, **and the Lord shook up the Egyptians in the sea.**

28 The water returned to its normal state, and it covered the chariots and the horsemen, all the army of Pharaoh that came after them into the sea. The walls of water collapsed onto the Egyptians so forcefully that they wiped out their entire army. **Not one of them remained.** The chariots, horsemen, and infantry disappeared; all of them drowned in the supernaturally stormy waters.

29 While the Egyptians drowned in the water, the children of Israel walked on the dry land in the sea;^{BD} and the water was a wall for them on their right and on their left. It seems that these walls guided their route through the sea.



Main opinions on where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, indicated by arrows

DISCUSSION

14:21 | **Moses extended his hand:** This verse, along with the two verses preceding it, describes the beginning of the Israelites' miraculous journey. Although they relate events that occurred before the splitting of the Red Sea, according to ancient tradition, these verses conceal within them God's great name. Seventy-two letters comprise each of these verses. These letters, when properly arranged, spell the sacred

name of God consisting of seventy-two secret words, also hinted at in prayers from the Second Temple period. This unique, esoteric name is hidden within the story of the parting of the sea (see *Sukka* 45a, and Rashi ad loc.; *Sechel Tov*).

14:24 | **It was at the morning watch:** The night is divided into three parts. The last part of the night is thus called the morning watch (see Rashi; *Berakhot* 3b).

14:29 | **The children of Israel walked on the dry land in the sea:** It is not clear from the verses whether the children of Israel actually crossed the sea from west to east. There is a tradition that states that they did not cross the sea, but actually returned to shore on the same side of the sea as they had entered (see *Tosafot*, *Arakhin* 15a; Radak, *Judges* 11:16).

Examples of original and unique explanations

ספר שמות | פרק יד | בשלח

וַיְהִי הָעֵנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאדָר אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה וְלֹא־קָרַב יְיָ אֶל־זֶה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה: וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיֹּלֶךְ יְהוָה וְאֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קְדִים עֶזְהָ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשֶׁם אֶת־הַיָּם לַחֲרֹבָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם: וַיִּבְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וַיִּבְשׂוּ אֶת־הַיָּם חוֹמָה מִיַּמִּינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם: וַיִּרְדְּפוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּבְאוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם כָּל־סוּס פָּרְעֹה רַכְבּוֹ וּפָרָשָׁיו אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַיָּם: וַיְהִי בְּאַשְׁמֹרֶת הַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁקֹף יְהוָה אֶל־מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ וְעָנָן וַיִּהְיֶה אֵת מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּסַּר אֶת אַפְּן מִרַבְּבֹתָיו וַיִּנְהַגְהוּ בְּכַבְדָּת וַיֹּאמֶר מִצְרַיִם אָנוּסָה מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי יְהוָה נִלְחַם לָהֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נִטֵּה אֶת־יָדְךָ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם עַל־מִצְרַיִם עַל־דָּבָר רַבִּיעִי וְעַל־פָּרָשָׁיו: וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּשָּׁב הַיָּם לַפְּנוֹת בְּקֶדֶר לְאִיתָנּוֹ וּמִצְרַיִם נָסוּם לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיִּנְעַר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם: וַיִּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת־הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת־הַפָּרָשִׁים לְכָל־חֵיל פָּרְעֹה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וַיִּבְשׂוּ אֶת־הַיָּם עַד־אֶחָד: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלְכוּ בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי לְחַמֵּי הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֶת־הַיָּם עַד־אֶחָד: וַיִּבְשׂוּ אֶת־הַיָּם עַד־אֶחָד:

רש"י

במגננים, גזרן מגננים: שקשם שחלו לוקים על הים כך לוקים חותם שגשגרו מגננים: כו | וישבו המים, שיקופים ועומדים בחומה, ישובו למקומם ויכסו "על מגננים": כז | לפנות בקר, לעת שהבקר פונה ללח: לאיתנו, לתקופה הראשון: נסים לקראתו, שהיו מהממנים ומטקפים וקצין לקראת המים: וינער ה', פחדם שמשער חת הקדקה והספק העליון למשה והתחנן למעלה, כך היו עולין ויודין ומשתבחים בים ונתן הקדוש ברוך הוא ביום חיות לקבל היסודין. וישקף, הוא לאון טרויך גלשון חרמי, והקפה יש ממדקשי חציה:

כח | ויבשו את הרכב... לכל חיל פרעה, כן דרך המקראות לבתג למיד יתרה, כמו: "לכל פלוי תעשה נחשת" (להלן כו, ג). וכן "לכל פלי המשכן בכל עבדתו" (שם פסוק יט), "ויתתם ומיתריהם לכל פליהם" (במדבר ז, לב), וחינה חיל תקון לאון:

כד | באשמות הבקר, שלשת חלקיו הלילה קרויו חשמלת, וחזקה שלפני היום קרוי חשמלת הקר, וחומר חג שהיא חלוק למגמלות שר מלחכי השדת פת אחר פת לשלשה חלקים, לכן קרוי חשמלת, וזהו שתרם חזקתו: "מטרת" וישקף, ויבט, כלומר פנה חליהם להשחיתם. ותרמונו: "חשמתי" חף הוא לאון הבטה, כמו: "שדה צפית" (במדבר כג, יד). "חבל סביבתי" בעמוד אש וענן, עמוד ענן יורד ועושה חיות כטויע, ועמוד חם מקריתו, וטלפו סוסיהם משתמעות: ויהם, לאון מהויה, חסודר"סון בלע, עקבם גטל סגנוות שלשה ושנו בקרתי רבי חליעקי כגו של רבי יוסי הגלילי, כל מקום שחמיר מהויה, הקעשת קול הוא, וזה חב לבקר: "יירעם ה' בקול גדול" על פלשתים ויהם" (מנח"ל ח' ז, י):

כה | ויסר את אפן מרבבותיו, מפני החש נשקטו הגלגלים, והמקבנות נגרות, והישטם פה ענים וחיבתיו מתפקדים: וינהגו בכבדת, בהנהיגה שהיו כבדה וקשה להם גמדה שפדדו, ויכבד לבו הוא ויבדדו (לעיל ט, לד) חף כאן וינהגו בכבדת: גלחם להם במצרים, במגננים, דבר אחר

למטים לפני חזבים מחליו, נתנו על זרועו ונלחם פהם, כך: "וחכי תקבלת לחזבים הים על זרועתי" (הושע יא, ג). ויטע עמוד הענן, כשהשדה והשלים עמוד הענן חת המחנה לעמוד החש, לח נשמלה הענן כמו שהיה גדל להשתלח ערבות למגרי, חיל נשע והלך לו מחזריהם להשיך למגננים: ויהי הענן והחשך למגננים: ויאר, עמוד החש "חית הלילה" לשלחל, והולך למניהם בקרבו ללכת כל הלילה, והחשך של ערבול למד מגננים: ולא קרב זה אל זה, מחנה חל מחנה:

כא | ברוח קדים עזה, קרוי קדים שהיה עזה שפרוחות, היא קרוי שהקדוש ברוך הוא נפיקה פה מן הקשעים, שחמיר: "קרוי קדים חפינים" (ירמיה יח, יז), "בית קדים רוח ה'" (הושע י, טז), "רוח הקדים שבך בכל ימים" (חזקיהו כו, כז): "הנה ברוח הקשה ביום קדים" (ישעיהו כ, ח): ויבקעו המים, כל מים שבעולם:

כג | כל סוס פרעה, וכי סוס אחד היה? מעד שחין כלם חסובין לפני המקום חיל כסוס חסר:

BACKGROUND

14:29] **The children of Israel walked on the dry land in the sea:** There are various theories as to the Israelites' route. According to one the-

ory, the Israelites followed a northern route and the splitting of the sea occurred at Lake Bardawil. They continued in the direction of present-day

El Arish before turning southward toward Mount Sinai. Another theory has the Israelites crossing the sea in the region of the Great Bitter Lake and

39 1 From the sky-blue, purple, and scarlet wool they made woven, or mesh,⁵ fabrics for service in the Sanctuary. This refers to the coverings of the Tabernacle, the screen of the gate of the

Tabernacle, and the cloths that covered the vessels during the Israelites' travels. They also made the sacred vestments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses.



Vestments of the High Priest, front view



Vestments of the High Priest, rear view

The Making of the Priestly Vestments

EXODUS 39:2–31

After enumerating the materials used to construct the Tabernacle itself, the Torah turns to the other main use of the donated fabrics, metals, and precious stones: The production of the garments of the High Priest. It would seem that the ephod was considered the High Priest's principal garment, as the other garments are associated with it. The breast piece is tied to the ephod, and the robe is referred to as the "robe of the ephod" (see 28:31, 39:22). Following this, the Torah will describe the production of the vestments of the ordinary priests.

- Second aliya (Fifth aliya)*
- 2** He made the ephod of gold, and of sky-blue, purple, and scarlet wool, and linen, all spun together. It is difficult to combine gold threads with interwoven wool and linen threads. No earlier use of gold for a similar purpose is known.⁶
 - 3** This may have been the first use of this complex technique: They hammered out the sheets of gold, and then cut wires to work in, to weave, with the sky-blue wool, with the purple wool, with the scarlet wool, and with the linen. This was artfully crafted, as it involved unique craftsmanship.
 - 4** They made shoulder pieces for it, the ephod, and attached it; it was attached at the two ends. The ephod, which resembled an apron or a skirt, was held in place by the two shoulder pieces.

- 5** The belt of his ephod that is on it is from it; the belt was not fashioned separately, but was part of the woven fabric of the ephod; and therefore, the band was made like its work, in the same manner as the ephod: Of gold, and of sky-blue, purple, and scarlet wool, and linen, spun together as the Lord had commanded Moses.
- 6** They made the onyx stones surrounded with settings of gold. These stones were engraved with the engravings of a signet. Each was engraved with writing, like a seal, with the names of the tribes of the children of Israel.
- 7** He placed them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of remembrance for the children of Israel, as these

לט א

וְאֵת כָּל־יְתֹדֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־יְתֹדֹת הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב: וּמִן־הַתְּכֵלֶת וְהָאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי עָשׂוּ בְגָדֵי־שָׂרָד לְשָׂרֵת בַּקֹּדֶשׁ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

שני
/חמישי/

קצותיו

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הָאֵפֹד זֶהְבַּ תְּכֵלֶת וְאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר: וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת־פְּחֵי הַזֶּהָב וְקִצְצֵן פְּתִילִם לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּתוֹךְ הַתְּכֵלֶת וּבְתוֹךְ הָאֲרָגְמָן וּבְתוֹךְ תוֹלַעַת הַשָּׁנִי וּבְתוֹךְ הַשֵּׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב: כְּתַפֵּת עָשׂוּ־לוֹ חִבְרַת עַל־שְׁנֵי קְצוּוֹתָיו חִבְרַת: וְחֹשֶׁב אֶפְדָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו מִמֶּנּוּ הוּא כְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ זֶהְבַּ תְּכֵלֶת וְאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־אֲבְנֵי הַשֵּׁהָם מִסִּבַּת מִשְׁבָּצָת זֶהְבַּ מִפְּתַחַת פְּתוּחֵי חוּטֵם עַל־שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתָם עַל כְּתַפֵּת הָאֵפֹד אֲבְנֵי זָפְרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן מַעֲשֵׂה חֹשֶׁב כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֵפֹד זֶהְבַּ תְּכֵלֶת וְאֲרָגְמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁזָר: רְבֹועַ הִיָּה כְּפֹל עָשׂוּ אֶת־הַחֹשֶׁן זֹרֵת אֲרָכּוֹ וְזֹרֵת רְחִבּוֹ כְּפֹל: וַיִּמְלְאוּ־בּוֹ אַרְבַּעַת טוּרֵי אֲבָן טוּר אֶדָם פְּטֹדָה וּבִרְקַת הַטּוּר הָאֶחָד: וְהַטּוּר הַשֵּׁנִי נֶפֶךְ סַפִּיר וַיְהִלֵּם: וְהַטּוּר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לַשֵּׁם שִׁבּוֹ וְאַחֲלָמָה: וְהַטּוּר הָרְבִיעִי

רשי

תעלכת עם כל מין ומין פחשן וחפוד, שנחמד בקון "זקב" (לעל כח, ג טו), חוט חרד של זקב עם ששה חוטין של תכלת, וכן עם כל מין ומין, שכל הפנים חוטין כפול ששה, והזקב חוט שביעי עם כל חרד וחחד:

ג וירקעו. כמו: "לקעקע החרין" (תהלים קלג, ו) בתקומה "ירקיעו". טסין היו מרדדיו מן הזקב, חשטנדר"ח בלעז, טסין דקות. פחן הוא מלמדך היסוד היו טווין חת הזקב עם החוטין: מרדדיו הטסין זקין וקונגין מהן פתילים לחורך הטס. לעשית חוטין פתילים

פרק לט

א | ומן התכלת והארגמן וגו'. שש לח נחמד פחון מפיחן חני חומר שחין בגדי קלד הללו בגדי פהנה, שבגדי קהנה היה שש, חלחל הם בגדים שמכסים פהם פלי הקלש בשעת סליח מסעות, שכל היה פהם שש:

stones bore their names, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

- 8 He made the breast piece, artfully crafted, like the work of the ephod, with the same materials: Gold, and sky-blue, purple, and scarlet wool, and linen, spun together.
- 9 It was square; they made the breast piece folded, such that it formed a pouch into which, according to tradition, holy names were inserted,⁷ its length a span and its width a span, folded. A span [zeret] is approximately half a cubit, slightly more than 20 cm. It is roughly the distance between the tip of

one's little finger [zeret] and the tip of one's thumb, when one spreads his fingers to their full extent.

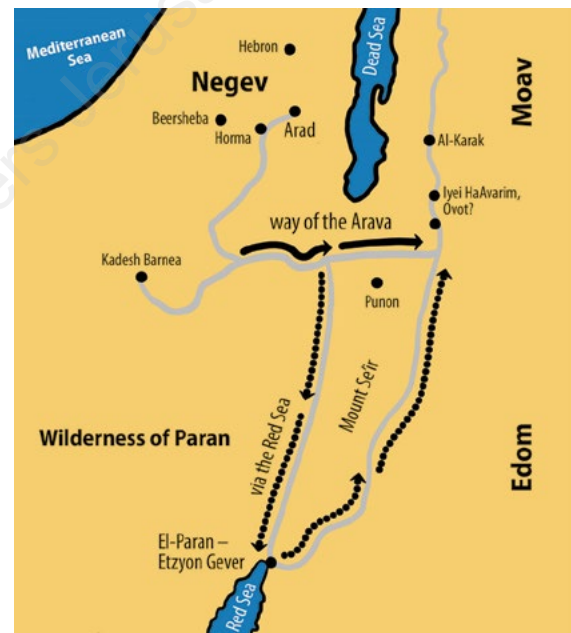
- 10 They mounted in it, the breast piece, four rows of stones: A row of a ruby, a peridot, and an emerald, the first row;
- 11 and the second row: a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a clear quartz;
- 12 and the third row: a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst;
- 13 and the fourth row: a beryl, an onyx, and a chalcedony; surrounded in settings of gold in their mountings. Each

Informative images & maps

- your fathers.** I will not allow any of these men to see the land,
- 36** **except for Caleb son of Yefuneh, he shall see it, the land; and to him I will give the land in which he trod, and to his children, because he followed the instruction of the Lord wholeheartedly,** and provided an accurate description of the land, while assuring the people that they could conquer it.
- 37** **Also the Lord was incensed with me because of you, saying:** Due to your sin, **you too shall not come there.** Although Moses sinned on a different occasion,¹⁶ he already received a hint in the aftermath of the sin of the spies that he too would not enter the land.¹⁷
- 38** **Joshua son of Nun, who stands before you, to serve you, he shall come there; strengthen him, for he shall bequeath it to Israel.**
- 39** God addresses the people: **And ironically, your children, whom you said would be taken by your enemies as captives and killed, and your young sons, who today do not know how to distinguish between good and evil, they will come there, to the land of Canaan, and to them I will give it, and they will take possession of it.**
- Fourth aliya*
- 40** Meanwhile **you, turn back and travel into the wilderness** via the route leading to **the Red Sea**, as you will wander in the wilderness until you die.
- 41** **You answered and you said to me: We sinned against the Lord, we will go up and make war, in accordance with everything that the Lord our God had commanded; and you girded each man his weapons of war, and decided to ascend to the mountain.** Alternatively, this means: And you dared to ascend to the mountain, or: And you readied yourselves to ascend to the mountain.¹⁸
- 42** **The Lord said to me: Say to them: Do not go up and do not make war, as I am not in your midst, and if you obey Me, you will not be routed before your enemies.**
- 43** **I spoke to you** and told you not to set out to war, reminding you that all your previous victories were achieved only through divine assistance, not your own military power; **but you did not heed, and you defied the directive of the Lord, and you intentionally ascended to the mountain.**
- 44** **The Emorites, who live on that mountain, came out toward you, and pursued you, as bees would do, and they beat and broke¹⁹ you in Se'ir until Horma.** The Emorites surrounded you like a swarm of bees, leaving no avenue of escape. This place was later called Horma, in commemoration of the destruction [*hurban*] that occurred there.



Swarm of bees



Circling of Mount Se'ir

- 45** **You returned and wept before the Lord,** in regret for your sins, begging for forgiveness and mercy; **but the Lord did not heed your voice, and He did not listen to you.**
- 46** **You lived in Kadesh many days, like the days that you lived there.**
- 2 1** **We turned and we traveled back into the wilderness via the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me; and we circled Mount Se'ir**

Informative images & maps

ספר דברים | פרק ב | דברים

לו לאבתיכם: זולתי בלב בין יפנה הוא ידאנה ולו אתן את הארץ אשר דרך בה
 לו ולבניו יען אשר מלא אחרי יהוה: גם בלי התאנף יהוה בגללכם לאמר גם אתה
 לח לא תבא שם: יהושע בן נון העמיד לפניך הוא יבא שמה אתו חזק כיהוה
 לט ינחלנה את ישראל: וטפכם אשר אמרתם לבו יהוה ובניכם אשר לא ידעו
 מ היום טוב ודע המה יבאו שמה ולהם אתננה והם יירשוה: ואתם פנו לכם
 מא וסעו המדברה דרך ים סוף: ותענו ו ותאמרו אלי חטאנו ליהוה אנחנו
 נעלה ונלחמנו ככל אשר צונו יהוה אלהינו ותחגרו איש את כלי מלחמתו
 מב ותהינו לעלת ההרה: ויאמר יהוה אלי אמר להם לא תעלו ולא
 מג תלחמו כי אינני בקרבכם ולא תנגפו לפני איביכם: ואדבר אליכם
 מד ולא שמעתם ותמרו את פי יהוה ותזדו ותעלו ההרה: ויצא האמרי הישב
 מה בהר ההוא לקראתכם וירדפו אתכם כאשר תעשינה הדברים ויפתו אתכם
 ב משעיר עד חרמה: ותשבו ותבכו לפני יהוה ולא שמע יהוה בקלכם ולא
 ב האזין אליכם: ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים בימים אשר ישבתם: ונפן
 ונסע המדברה דרך ים סוף כאשר דבר יהוה אלי ונסב את הרשעיר

רש"י

"בימים אשר ישבתם" בשאר המסעות, והם היו שלשים ושמנה שנה, תשע עשרה מהם עשו בקדש ותשע עשרה שנה הולכים ומטקפים וחזרו לקדש, כמו שצאמר: "וינעם במדבר" (במדבר לב, ט). כך מציאתי בסדר עולם (פרק ח):

פירק ב

א | ונסע המדברה. חלו לא חטאו היו עובדים דרך הר שער לפנים לדרך מדומו לצונו, ובגבול שקלקלו הכנו לגד המדבר שהיו בין ים סוף לדומו של הר שער, והלכו חזק דומו מן המערב למזרח דרך יציאתן ממזרים שהיו במקצוע דרומית מערבית, משם היו

מא | ותהינו. לאן: "הגנו ועלינו חל המקום" (במדבר יג, ט). זה הלשון שחמרתם, לאן הו, כלומר טדמנתם: מב | לא תעלו. לא עליה תחל לכם חלח וידיה:

מד | כאשר תעשינה הדברים. מה הדבורה הזאת כשהיא מכה חת החכם מנד מתה, חף הם כשהיו ונעיס בכם מיד מתיס:

מה | ולא שמעו ה בקלכם. כביכול עשיתם מנדת דחמיו כחלו חקרו:

מו | ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים. תשע עשרה שנה, שצאמר:

לו | אשר דרך בה. חבדו, שצאמר: "ויבא עד חבדו" (במדבר יג, כב):

לז | התאנף. נתמלא רגז:

מ | פנו לכם. חמרתני להעביר חתכם דרך רחב חרן חדום לגד עפון לפנים לחרן, חלקלתם וזממתם לכם עבוב: פנו לכם. לחזוקיכם, ותלכו במדבר לגד ים סוף, שהמדבר שהיו הולכים בו לדומו של הר שער היה, מפסיק בין ים סוף להר שער, עתה הפאכו לגד הים ותסגו חת הר שער כל דומו מן המערב למזרח: