

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT DEVARIM · 6 AV 5774 - AUG. 2, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 45

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### A TISHA B'AV STEAK DINNER

*"And these are the words..." (1:1)*

A story is told of a kosher restaurant in Manhattan whose *cordon* was so *bleu* that most of its non-Jewish patrons didn't even realize – or care – that it was *glatt kosher*. Few of them noticed the small and impeccable *kashrut* certificate over the bar, and those who did, mistook it for an amusing piece of *bric-a-brac*.

Very often the non-Jewish patrons outnumbered the Jewish ones. In fact, one day there was but one Jewish diner, a quiet and unassuming man with a *yarmulke* on his head who sat in a side-booth nursing a lemon tea which he refilled from time to time.

Actually some of the patrons were not only not-Jewish but distinctly anti-Jewish. Quite an irony.

Into the restaurant came a large red-faced man draped in an air of power and assurance. He eyed the Jew with an unconcealed look of disdain and loathing. He stood near the Jew and said to the head-waiter in a louder than necessary voice, "I want to order a bottle of Scotch for everyone in this restaurant." The *Maître D'* ran over to him and said, "Do you know how much a bottle Scotch costs in this restaurant?"

"A bottle of Scotch for everyone in this restaurant... except for the Jew!" he said, pointing in the Jew's direction. The bottles of Scotch were duly dispatched.

Seemingly unmoved, the Jew poured a little more lemon tea into his cup. The non-Jew's face darkened to a deeper red.

"I want to order a 700 gram filet mignon steak for everyone in this restaurant." Again the *Maître D'* interposed,

"That's two hundred dollars a plate!" "...for everyone in this restaurant except the Jew!"

A few more sips of tea from the Jew.

The non-Jew was now seething with rage.

"Everyone in this restaurant gets the most expensive dessert on the menu and doggie-bags to take home what they can't eat... except for the Jew!"

The Jew sat totally impassive as vast amounts of out-of-season strawberries coiffed with an outrageous pompadour of sorbet and chocolate made their way between the tables.

The non-Jew could stand no more. He went over to the Jew and hissed through his teeth, "Who are you?"

"I'm the owner," he replied.

The nations of the world condemn us, they accuse us; they abuse us verbally and physically, but we the Jewish People must remember that in the end everything they do is for us.

Tisha B'Av is the saddest day in the year, the day when the nations of the world have vented their fury on us. They burned both of our Holy Temples. They massacred us at Beitar on Tisha B'Av. In 1492 Spain turned us out into the merciless wilds on that day, and on that day in 1942 the first transports left the Warsaw Ghetto bound for Treblinka.

And yet that saddest day of the year is also the birth date of the Mashiach, the Anointed One, the scion of King David, who will return the Kingship to the Jewish People, and all the nations of the world will then realize that everything they did against us was really paying for our Tisha B'Av steak dinner.

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

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

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

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

This Parsha begins the last of the Five Books of The Torah, *Sefer Devarim*. This Book is also called *Mishneh Torah*, “Repetition of the Torah” (hence the Greek/English title Deuteronomy). *Sefer Devarim* relates what Moshe told *Bnei Yisrael* during the last five weeks of his life, as they prepared to cross the Jordan into *Eretz Yisrael*. Moshe reviews the *mitzvot*, stressing the change of lifestyle they are about to undergo: From the supernatural existence of the desert under Moshe’s guidance to the apparently natural life they will experience under Yehoshua’s leadership in the Land.

The central theme this week is the sin of the spies, the *meraglim*. The Parsha opens with Moshe alluding to the sins of the previous generation who died in the desert. He describes what would have happened if they hadn’t sinned by sending spies into *Eretz Yisrael*. G-d would have given

them without a fight all the land from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, including the lands of Ammon, Moav and Edom. He details the subtle sins that culminate in the sin of the spies, and reviews at length this incident and its results: The entire generation would die in the desert; Moshe would not enter *Eretz Yisrael*. He reminds them that their immediate reaction to G-d’s decree was to want to “go up and fight” to redress the sin. He recounts how they wouldn’t listen when he told them not to go, that they no longer merited vanquishing their enemies miraculously. They ignored him and suffered a massive defeat. They were not allowed to fight with the kingdoms of Esav, Moav or Ammon — these lands were not to be part of the map of *Eretz Yisrael* in the meantime. When the conquest of Canaan will begin with Sichon and Og, it will be via natural warfare.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## MEGILLA 23 - 29

“*Rabba said it to keep his student Abaye sharp.*”

When someone said something contrary to halacha, Rabba made a statement that sounded like praise of what the man said. However, when Abaye objected to this praise based on the teaching in a *mishna*, our *gemara* explains that Rabba’s praise was not real. Rabba meant merely to sharpen and test the wisdom of Abaye his student, to make sure he was always alert and sharp to catch anything incorrect (and Rabba’s words were not a false statement if understood in a sarcastic manner).

• *Megilla 25a*

“*Everything is in the hand of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven.*”

This well-known statement on our *daf* by Rabbi Chanina seems to be contradicted by another similar teaching in the Talmud (Ketubot 30a): “All is in the hand of Heaven except for cold and heat.” There is no contradiction of course. The difference is that our *gemara* is speaking about “natural traits” of a person, such as his wisdom, wealth and strength. The other statement that puts being cold or hot in the hands of the person is referring to external factors that a person encounters and can choose to avoid or not (Tosefot).

• *Megilla 25a*

## Please Join Us...

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

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

אחינו כל בית ישראל

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How do we see from the beginning of *Parshat Devarim* that Moshe was concerned for the Jewish People's honor?
2. How much time elapsed between leaving Mt. Sinai and sending the spies?
3. Moshe rebuked the Jewish People shortly before his death. From whom did he learn this?
4. Why did Moshe wait until he had smitten the Amorite kings before rebuking the Jewish People?
5. What were some of the achievements that resulted from the Jewish People "dwelling" at Mt. Sinai?
6. Why does the Torah single out the names of the *avot* in connection with the giving of the Land?
7. What did Moshe convey to the Jewish People by saying: "You today are like the stars of the Heavens"?
8. "Apikorsim" (those who denigrate Talmud scholars) observed Moshe's every move in order to accuse him. What did they observe, and what did they accuse him of?
9. Moshe was looking for several qualities in the judges he chose. Which quality couldn't he find?
10. Moshe told the judges, "The case that is too hard for you, bring it to me." How was he punished for this statement?
11. Why did Moshe describe the desert as great and frightful?
12. Which tribe was not represented among the spies?
13. Which city did Calev inherit?
14. How many kingdoms was Avraham promised? How many were conquered by Yehoshua?
15. Why were the Jewish People forbidden to provoke Ammon?
16. Why were the Jewish People not permitted to conquer the Philistines?
17. How did G-d instill the dread of the Jewish People into the nations of the world?
18. Why did Moshe fear Og?
19. Who was instrumental in destroying the Refa'im?
20. What was the advantage of Reuven and Gad leading the way into battle?

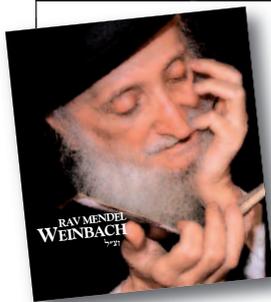
## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 1:1 – Moshe mentions only the names of the places where the Jewish People sinned, but does not mention the sins themselves.
2. 1:2 – 40 days.
3. 1:3 – From Yaakov, who rebuked his sons shortly before his death.
4. 1:4 – So that no one could say, "What right has he to rebuke us; has he brought us into any part of the land as he promised?"
5. 1:6 – They received the Torah, built the *mishkan* and all its vessels, appointed a Sanhedrin, and appointed officers.
6. 1:8 – Each of the *avot* possessed sufficient merit for the Jewish People to inherit the Land.
7. 1:10 – They are an eternal people, just as the sun, moon and stars are eternal.
8. 1:13 – They observed the time he left home in the morning. If Moshe left early, they accused him of having family problems (which drove him from his home). If he left late, they accused him of staying home in order to plot evil against them.
9. 1:15 – Men of understanding.
10. 1:17 – When the daughters of Tzlofchad asked him a *halachic* question, the law was concealed from him.
11. 1:19 – Because the Jewish People saw huge, frightening snakes and scorpions in the desert.
12. 1:23 – Levi.
13. 1:36 – Hebron.
14. 2:5 – Avraham was promised the land of ten kingdoms. Yehoshua conquered seven. The lands of Moav, Ammon and Esav will be received in the time of the *mashiach*.
15. 2:9 – This was a reward for Lot's younger daughter, the mother of Ammon, for concealing her father's improper conduct.
16. 2:23 – Because Avraham had made a peace treaty with Avimelech, King of the Philistines.
17. 2:25 – During the battle against Og, the sun stood still for the sake of the Jewish People, and the whole world saw this.
18. 3:2 – Og possessed merit for having once helped Avraham.
19. 3:11 – Amrafel.
20. 3:18 – They were mighty men, and the enemy would succumb to them.

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\* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt"l.

# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT DEVARIM

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**T**wo of the main difficulties encountered in Parshat Devarim are the changes that Moshe makes in his recounting of the incident of the spies that had occurred 40 years previously as reported in Parshat Shlach, and his attributing his inability to enter the Land of Israel to his behavior in the incident of the spies rather than his error of hitting the rock to get water rather than speaking to it, which was the reason given earlier in Parshat Chukat.

In his recounting of the incident of the spies Moshe makes three specific changes: 1) In Parshat Shlach it is clearly stated that G-d instructed Moshe to send spies into the Land of Israel, while here Moshe states that the people came to him requesting the mission. 2) In Parshat Shlach Moshe gave the spies numerous instructions about the nature of the Land, its produce and its inhabitants. Here he only asks them to find the best way to enter the Land. 3) In Parshat Shlach the spies return with a comprehensive report, starting with the positive and ending up with the negative assessment that they would not be able to conquer the Land. Here, however, Moshe only mentions that they said, "Good is the Land that the L-rd our G-d gives us", which is hardly a negative report!

Moshe made these drastic changes in order to avoid the possibility of a repeat of what had happened 40 years before. If he would mention that G-d and Moshe were the original impetus for the mission of the spies, which ended in disaster, then the people would blame Moshe and G-d for the inci-

dent and would therefore lose faith in their ability to conquer the Land. He also ignores specific details about the Land and the spies' doubts and concerns so as not to plant negative ideas in the peoples' minds. Instead, he pins the blame squarely on the people of that generation, not this new generation poised to enter the Land. This re-telling of the story is an example of what our Sages teach us in the Talmud (Bava Metzia 87) that it is permitted to change the facts in the interest of peace. In regard to Moshe's punishment of not being permitted to enter the Land of Israel, it is clear that this punishment is the result of Moshe's miscalculations with the spies. The additional instructions that he gave them backfired and gave them more ammunition for a negative report. However, since Moshe's transgression was unintentional, unlike the brazenly false report of the spies, G-d did not want Moshe's punishment to be mentioned in the same context as the spies'. Additionally, G-d wanted to protect Moshe's honor and status by not mentioning his punishment in the context of the serious transgression of the spies and the people. In essence He put the decree "on hold" until the incident of the water from the rock, through which the decree was sealed. This is the reason that the incident of the rock is not mentioned in Parshat Devarim at all. That incident alone would never have resulted in such a drastic punishment. The real reason for the decree was Moshe's role in the incident of the spies.

### LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## "ERETZ HACHAYIM" – LAND OF THE LIVING

**A**fter prophesying the utter destruction of Israel's foremost enemies, the Prophet Yechezkel thus promises, in the Name of G-d, that the grandeur which was theirs will be bestowed upon Eretz Yisrael:

"I shall establish My glory in the land of the living."  
(Yechezkel 26:20)



Our Talmudic Sages in *Mesechta Ketubot* (111a) explain that Eretz Yisrael is called the "land of the living" because it will be the scene of the eventual resurrection of the dead. The remains of those buried outside of Eretz Yisrael will be transported in miraculous fashion to the "land of the living" for a return to life.

## OF GAZA AND PALESTINIANS

From: Frederick

Dear Rabbi,  
I have heard a claim that the Palestinians are descendents of original inhabitants of Israel that pre-dated even the Israelites. Is there any truth to that or any indication one way or the other according to Jewish sources?

Dear Frederick,

This is a common misconception and worth clarifying.

The Philistines were an ancient people who lived in part of the Land of Israel along the coast. The Torah refers to this people as *Pelishtim*, which literally means “foreign invaders”, since they were a people of probable Phoenician origin who invaded the Land of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea and settled along the coast.

This people engaged in continual warfare against the Israelites who were settled throughout the heart of the Land of Israel. There are many references to this animosity throughout the Scriptures, the story of Samson and the Philistines being one well-known example.

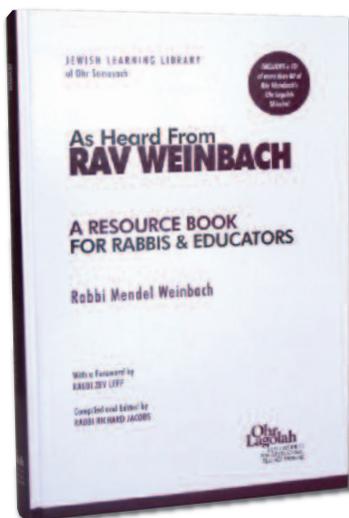
During the next several centuries, the invading Philistines were routed, and the Jewish monarchy consolidated its control over the entire Land of Israel. This period of Jewish autonomy in the Land of Israel, albeit with interruptions, lasted approximately 1,000 years, culminating in the ruthless suppression of Jewish independence and ultimate destruc-

tion of the Temple by the Romans in approximately 70 CE.

In order to totally eradicate the Jewish claim and presence in the Land of Israel, the Romans insidiously renamed the Land of Israel after the Jews’ early enemies, the invading Philistines, thus calling the entire country *Palestina*, despite the fact that even the invading Philistines had occupied only part of the coastal region alone. This is the source of Land of Israel being referred as Palestine until modern times.

It is therefore false to assert that the Arabs who refer to themselves as Palestinians originate from the Philistines. The Philistines were Phoenician — not Arab. Even Arabs in Egypt are not descendents of the ancient Egyptians. Rather, Arabs originate from Arabia from which they spread relatively much later on during their Islamic conquests of the Near-East and North Africa, their being indigenous to neither area.

So the use of the term “Palestinian” to refer to those Arabs who migrated to the Land of Israel is curious. If the usage refers to post-Roman times, once the Land of Israel came to be known as Palestine, Arabs are no more “Palestinian” than Jews who also lived in Palestine throughout the centuries. And if the use of the term intends to conjure ancient contexts, its usage is self-incriminating: either because it adopts the insidious attempt of the Romans to supplant the Jews’ original and rightful claim to the Land of Israel or because it makes Palestinian Arabs akin to the Philistines — a foreign, non-indigenous invader of the Land of Israel.



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# COMING SOON!

# LEST WE FORGET

## What do we get from Tisha B'Av?

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH, *zt'l*

**W**e Jews have a long memory. Something that happened almost two thousand years ago comes back to haunt our collective consciousness as if it happened yesterday.

This is what so impressed the French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte when he looked in on a synagogue in Paris on Tisha B'Av and saw Jews sitting on the floor chanting lamentations and shedding tears. After inquiring about the cause for their mourning and hearing that it was the destruction of their Holy Temple in Jerusalem, he expressed astonishment that he had heard nothing about this tragedy from his reliable intelligence sources. When it was explained that this event took place close to 1,800 years earlier, he reportedly declared that “a people who can still mourn for their Temple and their homeland after so many years have a real hope for regaining them”.

Napoleon distinguished something unique about the long memory of the Jewish people but could not truly understand its meaning.

A Jew mourns the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and the two-thousand year exile which followed, not out of a sense of nostalgia for the glory and prosperity of bygone days. For a Jew loyal to his conviction that he is the proud member of “a nation of priests and a holy people” who were chosen to receive the Torah at Sinai and to serve as “a light unto the nations” there is much more involved in remembering the past.

Rambam points out (Laws of Fasting 5:1) that the purpose of the fast days which were ordained by our Prophets is to reflect on the mistakes made by our ancestors which were the catalysts for the tragedies which took place on those days, mistakes which we perpetuate in our own days. By learning the lesson of history we can hope to avoid repeating it as we take to heart the need to correct those mistakes and fully return to the lofty spiritual level with which we once served our Creator.

Such a full return requires the return of all of our people to our Holy Land and the return of a Beit Hamikdash in which we can encounter the Divine Presence and beam its rays of holiness to an entire world. As long as we lack these indispensable ingredients for our spiritual perfection we feel the pain of being unfulfilled in regard to our historic destiny and we weep!

But weeping and fasting are only the beginning of what Rambam calls “an opening of the heart” to a correcting of the mistakes of past and present. On Tisha B'Av both the first Beit Hamikdash and the second one were destroyed. Reflecting on

those tragedies leads to an analysis of the sins which were responsible for both of those tragedies.

The first Beit Hamikdash, say our Talmudic Sages, was lost because of the grave sins of idol worship, intimate immorality and murder. These are sins which repeat themselves in every generation in gross or subtle forms. We may not be living in a time when Jews bow down to actual idols, but how many of our people have abandoned their ancient faith for other religions, cults or political ideologies? And do we not share in their guilt by failing to properly reach out and educate them? Immorality parades before us in the permissiveness of dress and unrestrained immoral interpersonal interactions. And it reaches new depths with the efforts to even legitimize activities that were clearly understood to be immoral in the past. Have we done enough to condemn this mode of behavior which is wreaking havoc on so many families and society in general? Murder is the extremist form of violence, but its subtler forms of physical and verbal abuse are so prominent that even in secular schools in our Jewish state there is much violence by pupils towards teachers and fellow pupils, and the number of battered wives and abused children keeps growing.

Are our government and our educational system doing enough to control this modern form of murder?

During the second Beit Hamikdash period these mistakes were corrected because the trauma of a 70-year exile shocked our ancestors into repentance. But something else went wrong. The rebuilt Beit Hamikdash was once again destroyed and we were once again exiled because of the sin of “unjustified hatred” of one Jew for another. Two millennia of fasting for this mistake has still not completely cured us. Lack of tolerance, aggressive competitiveness and destructive dissension continue to plague our families and our communities. The lesson we must learn from our fasting on this Tisha B'Av, if we wish to build a glorious future rather than relive the consequences of ignoring history, is that we must individually and collectively eliminate from our lives all of the aforementioned sins. Faith, morality and concern for human life and dignity must eradicate the sins that caused the first destruction. Unlimited love for our fellow Jew must replace the intolerance and hatred which caused our present exile.

If we do our part in committing ourselves to this goal we can be sure that G-d will do His part and send Mashiach to return all of us to our Land, build the Beit Hamikdash and turn the sad day of Tisha B'Av into a day of celebration.

## PRAYER – TISHA B'AV

# Remaining Together

***“Though I have removed them far away among the nations, and though I have scattered them among the lands; yet I have been for them a ‘small sanctuary’ in the lands where they arrived.” These are the places of worship which remain with the Jewish People throughout their exile.***

From the beginning of our journey as a nation, the heart and soul of our existence has been the fact that G-d’s presence has resided with us. In fact, while still wandering in the desert we were commanded to build a Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) which served as the central and unifying dwelling of the Jewish nation, as it is written: “They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them.”

Later, in the Land of Israel, the nation was blessed with the Beit Hamikdash (Holy Temple), which was surrounded by open miracles. The purpose of ascending to the Temple was both to see and to be seen. Not only did we experience seeing G-d’s presence, but G-d also desired to see us. In addition, one would see the holy Priests and Sages, learning and becoming greatly inspired until the next visit. Yet from a national and world perspective, the daily services in the Temple represented the spiritual lifeline for both the Jewish People, as well as for the rest of the world. The Temple served as the link between Heaven and earth. All of the prayers ascended from there, and from there all blessing descended, spreading out to the world.

However, as the sun must set and bring on the darkness, so too the Jewish People would no longer live secure in their Land as a result of their sins. The Sages and Prophets of that era foresaw through prophetic vision that a long and unbearable exile was approaching. How was the Jewish nation, a

sheep scattered among seventy wolves, going to survive?

***“For which is a great nation that has a G-d Who is close to it, as is the L-rd, our G-d, whenever we call to Him (in Prayer)?”***

Where can one go today to see and to be seen, to hear and to be heard? To the house of G-d, to the Beit Haknesset (Synagogue), where the Divine Presence still remains, even today.

The Men of the Great Assembly established organized prayer to be said three times daily, corresponding to the offerings of the Temple service of yore. These prayers were to be said in public gatherings wherever Jews would find themselves. Without our Land or the Beit Hamikdash, the new central home for the Jewish People would become the Synagogue, the “small Sanctuary”. A home to G-d as well, there He would remain with us, as it is taught: “Wherever there are ten Jews gathered together, the Divine Presence is among them.” Throughout the ages, through the suffering and the betrayal of each passing generation, the Beit Haknesset has been our refuge. A place to gather, whether in times of crisis or in times of joy. Through it all we have had a home to share, and there we are never alone.

It is hard to forget the memories of sitting on the floor in the darkened Synagogue, listening to the melancholy melodies of the *kinot* lamentations with special Tisha B’Av melodies. We experience our past through song, knowing in our hearts that one day, things will change in an instant, and the tune will change to a song of triumph and redemption. We will arise with laughter and dancing at the end of our journey, when we will be home once again.

לע"נ

מרת אסתר בשא בת ר' משה יחזקאל ע"ה

ד' מנחם אב

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.