

OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT KI TEITZEI · 14 ELUL 5776 · SEP. 17, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 50

PARSHA INSIGHTS

PLEADING POVERTY

“Neither an Amoni nor a Moavi may enter the congregation of G-d... because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt, and because they hired Bilaam ben Beor against you to curse you.” (23:4)

“I’d really love to help you, but I just don’t have the money, right now.” Pleading poverty must be one of the oldest excuses in the world.

Why was it necessary for the Torah to give two reasons why Amon and Moav are perpetually excluded from the congregation of G-d? Wasn’t their hatred sufficiently apparent in their failure to greet the Jewish People with bread and water after the Exodus? Were it not for Avraham there would never have been an Amon and a Moav in the world at all. It was Avraham who saved Lot, their progenitor, from Sodom. Their failure to greet the descendants of Avraham, the Jewish People, after the Exodus, revealed their loathing.

Amon and Moav had an excuse. They could have said, “We would love to have rushed out and brought food to the Jewish People but we just couldn’t pick up the tab for a couple million people. Sorry about that.”

However the lie is given to that excuse, because they certainly found enough money to hire the greediest and highest paid sorcerer in the world, Bilaam, to curse the Jewish People.

So if you can find the bucks to bring in the star wizard of his generation, you could have certainly found bread and water for the Jewish People.

• Source: based on *Mayana shel Torah*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son’s right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father’s desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women’s clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden. *Bnei Yisrael*

are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara’at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers’ pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother’s widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for, in spite of knowing about the Exodus, he ambushed the Jewish People.

BAVA KAMA 107 - 113

“A person does not have the chutzpa and audacity to lie to someone who did him a favor by lending him money.”

This logical idea was verbalized by the Sage Rabbah in explaining why a person who admits to owing part (“*modeh b'miktzat*”) of the amount that is claimed by the lender that he owes must take an oath that he does not owe the remainder. This special oath is required by Torah law. Rabbah explains the reason why the Torah requires the oath in this case of partial admission in the following manner.

“The borrower would like to (falsely) deny the entire amount of the claim, but does not have the audacity to do so. Therefore, he would really like to admit that he in fact owes the full amount claimed by the lender, but he is perhaps hesitant to admit to the full amount since he may not be able to pay it on time. Perhaps he is admitting only to the amount that he can pay now, and is thinking to himself that when he has the rest of the loan he will indeed pay the balance in full. For this reason the Torah imposes an oath upon him to find out what the truth really is.”

This reasoning applies only if a person admits to part of the claim for repayment of a loan. If the person denies the entire claim (“*kofer hakol*”) he is exempt from this Torah oath. The type of person who stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah would not have the audacity to lie and deny the entire amount claimed by the kind lender, and therefore if he actually denied the entire claim he must have been telling the truth, and no further oath or clarification was necessary. (It is worthwhile noting that although the people who stood at Mount Sinai did not have this chutzpah and audacity to lie and deny the entire amount to their lenders, later generations were less upright, and eventually a Rabbinical oath was instituted for the sake of getting the truth out of people who denied the entire amount claimed by the lender).

Rashi states on our *daf* that this logical reason that “A person does not have the audacity to lie and deny owing a loan to the lender” is the reason why a person who denies the entire claim is exempt from a Torah oath. If he denies the entire amount he must be telling the truth.

Tosefot in Bava Metzia (3a), however, apparently disproves this reasoning of Rashi, and instead offers a completely different explanation for why a *kofer hakol* does not require a Torah oath. If the lender dies and the *heir* of the lender is claiming repayment of the loan, the borrower would not be acting in a brazen manner if he were to falsely deny owing the entire amount being claimed by the heir. The heir did not do the kind act of lending money to the borrower in the first place, and the borrower therefore feels no special gratitude to the heir. In addition, the heir was not actually present when the loan took place, and a denial to him is not as brazen, since the heir may not have clear knowledge of the details and history of the loan. Therefore, Tosefot teaches a reason different than Rashi’s to explain why a person who completely denies a claim for loan repayment is exempt from an oath according to the Torah. There is a special teaching in a verse in the Torah from which we learn that one who admits to *part* of the claim for loan repayment must take a Torah oath in which he swears that he does not owe the rest (Ex. 22:8). Since the Torah writes a verse as source for a Torah oath *only* in the case in which the borrower admits to *part* of the claim of the lender, it logically follows that there is *no* Torah oath for a borrower who completely denies owing any of the amount claimed by the lender.

• Bava Kama 107a

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

GATES OF CHULDA — MONUMENT TO A PROPHETESS

Two gates in the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem are named for the Prophetess Chulda. One of the seven women whose prophecies are recorded in Scripture, Chulda was a descendant of Yehoshua bin



Nun and the convert Rachav whom he took for a wife. Her prophecy regarding the hidden Sefer Torah discovered during the reign of King Yoshiyahu is recorded in *Melachim II* 22:14-20.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor's house?
2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
3. What will become of a *ben sorer u'moreh* if his parents don't bring him to court?
4. Why is it a degradation to G-d to hang a criminal's body on the gallows overnight?
5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
13. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
16. "Remember what G-d did to Miriam." To what event does the Torah refer?
17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
19. Which two people in this week's *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in G-d's image, and because the Jewish People are G-d's children.
5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
16. 24:9 - G-d punishing Miriam with *tzara'at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the "forgotten bundle" for the poor.
18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother's widow).
20. 25:16 - "An abomination (*to'evah*) to G-d."

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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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Ki Teitzei

THE WAYWARD AND REBELLIOUS SON

One of the more puzzling *mitzvot* in this Parsha concerns the ‘wayward and rebellious son’ who can be executed at the age of 13 for what appear to be relatively minor infractions. Briefly, the Torah describes a 13 year-old boy who does not listen to his parents, even after they discipline him. They bring him to the elders of the city and explain: “This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not listen to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard” (Devarim 21:20). He is then stoned to death by the people of the city in order to remove this evil from the populace and to instill fear in them as well.

Abarbanel explains that on the simplest level ‘wayward’ refers to his deviating from the general path of the *mitzvot*, while ‘rebellious’ refers to his intractable defiance of his parents. He is also guilty of explicitly transgressing the requirement to honor one’s parents. And finally, his drunkenness and gluttony places him even lower than animals, which eat only to satisfy their basic needs. The Talmud also says that he is essentially executed on his likely future behavior: stealing from his parents and committing violent highway robbery against the general public. This illustrates the general principle that “It is better to die innocent of transgression than to die guilty.”

Abarbanel explains further that when we look deeper into this situation we can see how far this young man has deviated from behavioral norms. Normally in Jewish law, no one can be executed without the testimony of two ‘kosher’ witnesses. In this case, the only witnesses are the parents,

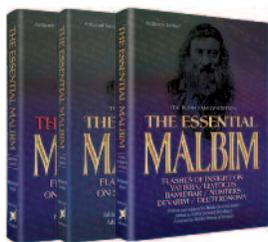
who would normally be disqualified from testifying against their own son. They also must bring him to the court themselves, another indication of their commitment to a procedure which could result in the death of their own offspring. His behavior and attitude would have had to be egregious in the extreme for the parents to overcome their natural inclination to be merciful toward their child. He is judged and executed publicly and the Torah tells us that “...all Israel will hear and they will fear.” Everyone will shudder to think what such a deviant individual would be capable of once he reaches true adulthood.

The severity of his deviance is also indicated by the Torah’s choice of words in describing his personality. The word “*moreh*” — which is usually translated as “rebellious” — is directly related to the word for “teacher”. Not only does he not listen to his parents and rebels against them, he even seeks to reverse roles and become their teacher, attempting to convince them that his disavowal of the Torah and the norms of human behavior are actually the correct way to conduct one’s life. Anti-religious, anti-social, gluttonous and psychopathic behaviors have characterized human society since time immemorial, but rarely if ever have such individuals advocated their codification as the norms of society. This phenomenon is aptly described by King Solomon in Proverbs (30:11-13): “His father he will curse and his mother he will not bless. He will be pure in his own eyes and from his filth he will not be cleansed. One whose eyes are haughty....”

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“NON-JEWISH” JEWS

From: Russell

Dear Rabbi,

I have an interesting history. I was raised as a non-Jew. For all I knew, my entire family, from as far back as anyone knew, was a non-Jewish family. At some point, through a series of events which were so strange I can't even describe them, I found out that my maternal great-grandmother was Jewish (as determined undoubtedly by Orthodox rabbis). I eventually came to learn that although she and the line of daughters descending from her (my grandmother and mother) were married to non-Jewish men, they were all considered Jewish women according to Judaism, which meant I am also Jewish.

If you knew anything about the type of family I come from, you would understand how shocked I was to learn all this. Anyway, over several years and after many strange circumstances, I actually became observant and married a Jewish woman and we are raising a Jewish family.

My question is: My own personal history makes me question how many other people around the world might also consider themselves completely non-Jews when in reality they might be completely Jewish. And what will happen to such people in the future? And can anything be done to let them know their truth so they can decide to return to the Tribe if they choose? If not, they'll probably be lost from the Jewish People forever.

Dear Russell,

Your personal story and experiences are indeed interesting and inspiring. Thanks for sharing them with me. From time to time, such instances occur. Sometimes with famous or influential people. But most do not have the initiative and courage to do anything about it. So I truly commend you on having the fortitude to go through what must have been a long and difficult process.

To answer your question, there are probably a lot more people around the world who fit your description than people realize or consider. Through so much of Jewish history across the globe, because of the trials and tribulations of exile, for so many different reasons, individual Jews were separated from the main body of the Jewish People and intermingled among the non-Jews.

Of course, over so long a time, many have become completely non-Jewish as far as Jewish Law is concerned. Still, I imagine a significant number of people in the world are in fact halachically Jewish without knowing anything about it at all. And I agree with you, that if nothing is done about redeeming them, through purely natural means, it is very likely that they too will eventually be lost from the Jewish People.

That being said, our sources do prophesize that such “non-Jewish” Jews will be revealed by G-d through supernatural means, and thereby be redeemed and restored to the main body

of the Jewish People.

Consider the following prophecy of Isaiah (66:12-21) regarding the future redemption, which is regularly recited in the haftarah when Rosh Chodesh occurs on Shabbat:

“For so says the L-rd, ‘Behold, I will extend peace to you like a river, and like a flooding stream the wealth of the nations... Like a man whose mother consoles him, so will I console you, and in Jerusalem, you shall be consoled. And you shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall bloom like grass, and the hand of the L-rd shall be known to His servants... And I have come to gather all the nations and the tongues, and they shall come and they shall see My glory... And I will send from them refugees to the nations... And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a tribute to the L-rd, with horses and with chariots, and with covered wagons and with mules and with joyous songs upon My holy mount, Jerusalem... And from them too will I take Kohens and Levites,’ says the L-rd”.

We see from here that during the Redemption, G-d will use ostensibly non-Jews as a vehicle through which to transport Jews from their countries of dispersal to the Land of Israel. Yet, it is from these very “non-Jews” that G-d will take *kohanim* and *levi'im*! This is explained by Rashi (v. 21), “‘And from them too’ — From the peoples bringing them and from those brought, I will take Kohens and Levites, for they are now assimilated among nations under coercion. But before Me the Kohens and the Levites among them are revealed, and I will select them from among them, and they shall minister before Me, said the L-rd. Now where did He say it? ‘The hidden things are for the L-rd our G-d’. (Deut. 29:28). In this manner it is explained in the Aggadah of Psalms (87:6)”.

According to the above, the events of the final Revelation and Redemption will be so great that G-d Himself will select people who appear as non-Jews to facilitate the process, but who are actually hidden Jews who are an integral part of that same redemptive process. And they will be miraculously revealed not only as Jews, but some of which as *kohanim* and *levi'im*, elevated among other Jews, leading them and inspiring them to serve G-d!

By your own admission, you yourself have experienced indescribably strange events which led to your revelation and redemption as a Jew. Situations like yours, at this time in history so close to Redemption, are very likely a modern-day fulfillment of this ancient prophecy. G-d, as Rashi explained, has His ways of supernaturally revealing these hidden matters. Is there anything we can do to let these non-Jewish Jews know their truth? You may not be literally a *kohen* or *levi*, but you very well may be one of these chosen by G-d as a vehicle to lead and inspire both revealed and hidden Jews toward Redemption. Perhaps sharing your personal story through lectures, documentary or in a book could be your practical way of reaching out to and revealing these non-Jewish Jews in preparation for the pending Redemption!

SITTING IN A PLACE DESIGNATED FOR PRAYER

One who is already sitting down does not need to stand up if someone else comes and stands next to him while praying the Shemoneh Esrei, since the latter has entered into his space (Shulchan Aruch 102:3). Haga: Nevertheless, even though one is not required, it is considered pious to stand up in this situation.

The above ruling is brought by the Tur, in the name of his father the Rosh. In explaining the application of this rule, the Kaf Hachaim writes that according to the Tur there is no difference whether one is praying in shul or at home. In all cases, if the person was already sitting he does not need to stand. This also seems to be agreed upon by the Shulchan Aruch.

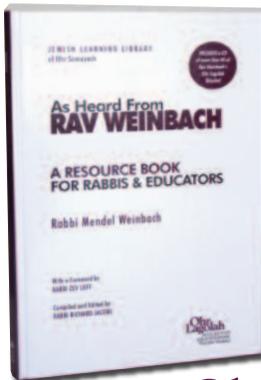
However, the Bach, in his comments on the Tur, explains that the above rule applies only when one prays in a place that is not designated for prayer, like a home or the like. If, however, one was praying in a place designated for prayer, like a shul, then even someone already sitting would be required to stand up, since a person does not have the right to hinder one from praying in a place designated for prayer. Accordingly, in this case it is considered as though the person sitting is intruding into the space of the worshiper. The Magen Avraham, Gra, Shulchan Aruch Ha'Rav, Aruch

Ha'Shulchan, Mishnah Berurah and many other *poskim* all rule in accordance with the Bach.

A question, however, arises regarding Sefardic Jews. Since they have accepted to follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, in this case it would seem that they would be allowed to remain seated even if someone was praying next to them in a shul.

Regarding this point the Halacha Berurah, (by Rabbi David Yosef) explains that even though the opinion of the Shulchan Aruch is not to limit permitting one to remain seated only to a place not designated for prayer, one should be strict and stand up when someone prays next to him in shul, in accordance with the overwhelming majority of *poskim*, including the Chida, Ben Ish Chai, Kaf Ha'Chaim (Sofer) and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

Another reason mentioned by Rabbi David for being strict is that there is a "double doubt", which requires one to be strict. The first doubt is a result of a dispute among the *ris-honim*. Rabbi Manoach (in his commentary on the Rambam) disagrees with the Rosh's qualification allowing one who is already seated to remain seated; and even if the law is like the Rosh on this point, perhaps the law is like the Bach and not the Tur.



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TEN EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

Jewish-German linguist and anthropologist Franz Boas (1858-1942) claimed that the Eskimos of Arctic North America have more than 25 words that refer to ice. The commonly given explanation for this phenomenon is that because ice is so important to Eskimo culture, they pick up on all the nuances of different types of ice and their uses, labeling each one with its own name. Similarly, the Hebrew language contains a multitude of words to express the concept of *praise*, precisely because offering praise to G-d is such an important part of Judaism.

In the Jewish liturgy there are nine expressions of praise, all of which seem to be somewhat synonymous — thanking, praising, lauding, glorifying, extolling, beautifying, blessing, exulting, and exalting (*leHodot*, *leHallel*, *leShabe'ach*, *leFa'er*, *leRomem*, *leHader*, *leVarech*, *leAleh*, and *leKales*). The Sefard rite, which follows the teachings of Arizal (1534-1572), adds a tenth expression “eternalizing” (*leNatze'ach*) after “beautifying”; while *Nusach Ashkenaz*, following the opinion of the Maharal of Prague (1525-1609), omits “eternalizing” from this list. (Interestingly, Abudraham recognizes only seven of these forms of praises, because he also omits “blessing” and “exalting”.) These ten expressions are enumerated at the end of the *Pesukei deZimrah* (Verses of Hymns) services on Shabbat and Yom Tov morning, in the Passover Haggadah, and at the concluding benediction of *Hallel*. In order to better understand the meanings of these ten expressions we must highlight the nuanced differences between them.

The concept of “thanking” someone refers to an admission that said someone did something good for him and deserves a show of gratitude. The act of “praising” someone refers to the act of relaying that someone’s virtue(s) to a third party. The act of “lauding” another is when one focuses on conveying another’s positive traits or characteristics, regardless of one’s own personal interactions with the other. Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) notes that, in general, “thanking” G-d is always mentioned before “lauding” Him, because one’s personal responsibility to show gratitude by praising G-d precedes one’s general obligation to praise Him.

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus (1944-2001) explains the difference between *leFa'er* (to glorify) and *leHader* (to beautify), as well as the difference between *leRomem* (to extol) and *leAleh* (to exult). To “glorify” someone means to focus on

one specific praiseworthy aspect of that person, while to “beautify” him stresses his symmetrical and all-encompassing praiseworthiness in all aspects. In praising G-d, both *leRomem* and *leAleh* refer to raising His status, but they do so in different ways: *leRomem* indicates the admission that G-d is above *us*, while *leAleh* means that G-d is above *everything*.

The concept of “blessing” (*leVarech*) G-d is somewhat of a misnomer. A mere mortal cannot “bless” the Creator of the world in the way that He blesses them. Instead, the accepted understanding of “blessing” G-d means that one acknowledges G-d as the source of all blessing. So, in this context, “blessing” actually means “attributing to Him all blessings”. Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner (1749-1821) elaborates on this deep idea in his *magnum opus*, *Nefesh haChaim* (*Sha'ar* 2).

LeKales, the last of the ten forms of praise, is somewhat controversial. Some authorities recommend omitting this form of “praise” because the verb *leKales* in Biblical Hebrew means “to disparage”, despite the fact that in Rabbinic Hebrew, it means “to exalt”. Nonetheless, Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau — whose work is frequently cited by the more famous Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) — reconciles this apparent contradiction by explaining that the type of praise meant by “exalting” has a somewhat negative connotation attached to it. He offers three ways of understanding this phenomenon: Firstly, when one “exalts” another, he means to offer undeserving, embellished praise simply as a means of inspiring the other to continue a slightly positive behavior. An example of this may be a parent who praises his child’s poor handwriting in order to motivate the child to continue practicing his writing. Secondly, when one “exalts” another, he verbally insults him, but his intention is to do the opposite. For example, one might call a handsome child “ugly” so that he will not become arrogant and haughty on account of his excessive beauty. Thirdly, when one “exalts” another, one actually means to denigrate him by exaggerating his merits in order to illustrate the depravity of something wrong that he did. For example, one might say, “Joe Doe — who is so honorable and esteemed — did such-and-such disgusting act”.

THE DOUBLE-HEADER HAFTARAH FOR 2016

Directly due to recent interesting circumstances of *Parshat Re'eh/Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul*, an unusual occurrence will transpire on *Parshat Ki Teitzei*: a “double haftarah”. Not a printing mistake, this double haftarah will actually be recited by the vast majority of Ashkenazic congregations worldwide.

Many don't realize this special occurrence even exists. In fact, one recent time this occurred when I mentioned the uniqueness of this situation to the *gabbai* on that Shabbat itself, he responded that he had never heard of a double haftarah! However, his skeptical response was quite understandable, as the previous occurrence of a double haftarah to that Shabbat was fourteen years prior!

Haftarah History

To properly understand why there can be a double haftarah, some background is needed.

The *haftarot* were established when the wicked Antiochus (infamous from the Chanukah miracle) outlawed public reading of the Torah. The *Chachamim* of the time therefore established the custom of reading a topic from the *Nevi'im* similar to what was supposed to be read from the Torah. Even after the decree was nullified, and prior to the *Gemara's* printing, this became custom of the Jewish People.

Most *haftarot* share some similarity with at least one concept presented in the Torah reading. The *Gemara Megillah* (29b-31a) discusses the proper haftarah readings for the various holidays throughout the year. The *Pesikta*, (an early Midrash cited by many early authorities including Tosafot and the Abudraham) continues the teachings of Chazal as to the proper haftarah readings, starting from the Fast of *Shiva Assur b'Tammuz*.

During the “Three Weeks” from Tammuz 17 until Tisha B'Av, we read '*Tilata d'Paranuta*', 'Three Readings of Punishment'. After Tisha B'Av (starting with *Shabbat Nachamu*, dubbed so due to its haftarah, *Nachamu Nachamu Ami*) until Rosh Hashanah, '*Shiva d'Nechemta*', or 'Seven Readings of Consolation' are read. This is followed by a reading of *Teshuva*, during the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, aptly named 'Shabbat Shuva', for its repentance-themed haftarah starting with '*Shuva Yisrael*'. The Abudraham as well as Rabbeinu Tam conclude that these special haftarah readings are so important that they are never pushed off!

Head-To-Head Haftarah

Our dilemma arises when that rule goes head-to-head with another rule. The *Gemara* (Megillah 31a) states that whenever Rosh Chodesh falls out on Shabbat, a special haftarah is read: '*Hashamayim Kisi*', as it mentions the topics of both Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. If Rosh Chodesh falls out on Sunday, then on the preceding Shabbat the haftarah of '*Machar Chodesh*' is read, as it mentions the following day being Rosh Chodesh.

The \$64,000 question becomes, what happens when Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out on Shabbat or Sunday? Which ruling trumps which? Do we follow the *Gemara* or the *Pesikta*? Do we stick with the '*Shiva d'Nechemta*' or the special Rosh Chodesh reading?

The answer is that there is no easy answer! In fact, the Mordechai cites both as separate, equally valid *minhagim*, with no clear-cut ruling! So what are we supposed to do? Which *minhag* do we follow? It turns out that the correct answer, as well as the double haftarah, depends on the divergence of Sefardic and Ashkenazic custom.

Sefardic Selection

The Beit Yosef writes that the halacha follows the Abudraham, as he was considered an expert in these topics. Consequently, in his authoritative Codex, the *Shulchan Aruch*, he rules that on Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul, only that week's haftarah of consolation, '*Aniyah So'arah*' is read. This would also hold true if Rosh Chodesh fell on Sunday, that only that week's haftarah of consolation would be read, and not '*Machar Chodesh*'. This is the general *Sefardi* ruling on this topic.

Ashkenazic Action

Yet, the Rema, citing the *Sefer Haminhagim* of Rabbi .Yitzchak Isaac Tyrnau, argues that since the special reading of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh also contains words of consolation, it is therefore the proper reading, even for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. Moreover, this reading is mentioned specifically by the *Gemara* as the proper reading for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, with no special dispensation given for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. Additionally, since it is recited more often (as Shabbat Rosh Chodesh falls out at least twice a year) one will fulfill the Talmudic dictum of '*tadir v'sheino tadir, tadir kodem*', that preference is given to the more common practice, by reading this haftarah instead.

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Parenthetically, and conversely, if Rosh Chodesh would fall out on Sunday, all would agree that only that week's haftarah of consolation would be read, as there is no conciliatory theme in 'Machar Chodesh'.

Ground-Rule Double

However, by maintaining the Rosh Chodesh priority, it would seem that we would miss out on one of the 'Shiva d'Nechemta', as there are not enough weeks before Rosh Hashanah to fit in all seven of these special *haftarot* when one of the *haftarot* [occurring when Rosh Chodesh falls out on Shabbat *Parshat Re'eh*] is taken up by 'Hashamayim Kisi'. Yet, the *Pesikta* and *Rishonim* stressed the importance and necessity of each and every one of them being read.

Therefore, the *Sefer Haminhagim* maintains that we need to make up the missing haftarah, and it is done as an addition, on *Parshat Ki Teitzei*, two weeks later. The reason is that the haftarah of *Parshat Re'eh*, 'Aniyah So'arah' in the original *Navi* (Yeshaya 54:11), follows consecutively after the haftarah of *Parshat Ki Teitzei*, 'Runi Akara' (Yeshaya 54:1). Therefore, this solution turns two separate *haftarot* into one long double-header, and thereby fulfills everyone's requirement to hear all seven of the Conciliatory *haftarot*.

This resolution of having a double-header haftarah on *Parshat Ki Teitzei* when Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out two weeks earlier on *Parshat Re'eh* is cited and actually codified

in halacha by many authorities, and is the definitive Ashkenazic ruling. Sefardim, on the other hand, do not have this interesting occurrence, as they follow the *Shulchan Aruch's* rule of never pushing off any of the 'Shiva d'Nechemta', and thereby never having the need to double up *haftarot*.

One need not worry about flipping pages to keep up with this double haftarah; it can be easily found in its full (combined) glory as the singular haftarah of *Parshat Noach*, as one of the topics mentioned in it is a reference to the Great Deluge, referred to as the 'Mei Noach'.

Those who miss this unique opportunity should not fret too much, as we don't have to wait an additional fourteen years to have a Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. In fact, besides last year and this year, it will fall out several times over the next few years. Hopefully by then the *gabbai* will remember that double-headers are not exclusively reserved for ballgames.

The author wishes to thank R' Yoel Rosenfeld and R' Shloime Lerner for raising awareness of this unique issue, and serving as the impetus for my interest and research in this topic.

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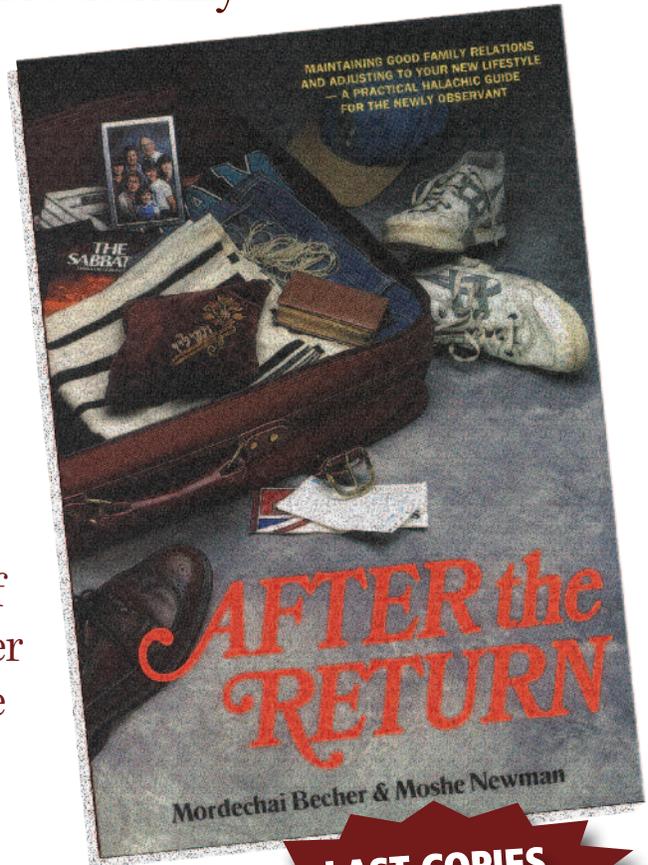
...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

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

An old friend's wedding, an uncle's funeral, Passover at the family homestead — these are but a few of the challenging real-life events that are fraught with conflict and anxiety for the newly observant.

After returning to the faith of their ancestors, many re-enter the secular world without the tools to respond to the inevitable challenges to their newly adopted set of beliefs.



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BY RABBI MORDECHAI BECHER AND RABBI MOSHE NEWMAN
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TO PURCHASE A COPY CONTACT:

Ohr Somayach Jerusalem (main office)
22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Jerusalem
Tel: 02-581-0315 ext. 0 • ohr@ohr.edu