

Double Whammy - Behaalotcha

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ז ויהי בנסע הארץ ויאמר משה קומה ה' ונפצו איביך ונגסו משנאך מפניך.
ובנחה יאמר שובה ה' רבבות אלפי ישראל. ז (במדבר י, לה-לו)

Slap bang in the middle of parshat Behaalotcha we have something that is quite unique in the Torah – a "mini" chumash consisting of only two psukkim. In the Gemara (שבת קטז ע"א) Rebi says that that the two psukkim above constitute an entire chumash on their own. This would mean that there are not five books in the Torah, but seven. Sefer Bamidbar would in essence be divided into *three separate sefarim* - the section before these two psukkim, these two psukkim, and the section following these two psukkim. If so, you would have to find another name instead of "chumash" (meaning five), perhaps "shivash" (meaning seven).

Another opinion (Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel) in the Gemara above says that this is not a separate sefer, it is just a short parsha of two psukkim which are "out of place", they were *relocated* here from a few psukkim above. They should sequentially follow the passuk ונקסעו הקהתים נשאי המקדש והקימו את המשכן עד (במדבר י, כא) –

להפסיק בין פרעות ראשונה לפרעות שנייה. פרעות שנייה מאי היא? "ויהי קצם כמתאננים" (במדבר יא, א). פרעות ראשונה? "ויסעו מהר ה'" (במדבר י, לג)

To separate between two פרענויות. The first is when Am Yisrael hurriedly travelled away from Har Sinai like a "child runs out of school", so that HKB"H should not "add more mitzvot" (כלי יקר במדבר י, לג). It showed a lack of gratitude for receiving the Torah. The second is the parsha of the מתאננים, when Am Yisrael began complaining for no good reason (מלבים במדבר יא, א).

Instead of having two serious קטרוגים against Am Yisrael, one immediately after the other, HKB"H in His mercy told Moshe to separate them with our two psukkim above. The fact that these two psukkim are enclosed between two reverse letters "nun" ז, it is as if they are in parentheses, meaning this is not their true place.

There are many questions on this seeming "anomaly" in the flow of the Torah, for example "Why specifically *these* two psukkim and not any other(s)?"

In this shiur we will try to explore the answer to this pointed question. What makes these two psukkim so special, that they are either considered a

sefer on their own in the Torah, or powerful enough to reduce the קטרוג against Am Yisrael? What power do they have?

Let us begin with the passuk וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעַת הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה. As we know, whenever we take a sefer Torah out of the Aron Kodesh we recite this passuk. The passuk refers to the travelling of the Aron HaBrit in the Midbar.

There were numerous miraculous properties pertaining to the Aron HaBrit.

It was a kind of "anti-gravity" device. The Midrash says that despite its immense weight (from the pure gold Kaporet and Kruvim), not only was it *not* a burden for the Levi'im of the family of Kehat who carried it, on the contrary – the Aron "carried its carriers" (יִלְקוּט שְׁמֵעוֹנֵי, שְׁמוֹאֵל בִּי ה', רְמוֹז קמ"ב).

During their travels in the Midbar, the Aron would travel at the head of the camp and eradicate any snakes, scorpions and thorny brush in its path. It would disperse and defeat any enemies who tried to waylay Am Yisrael (תַּנְחוּמָא פְּרִשְׁתָּא), like a kind of a D-9 Caterpillar tractor (lehavdil).

While travelling in the Midbar, Am Yisrael did not need to climb any mountains or rappel down cliffs. The Aron would turn mountains and valleys into flatland (ר' בחיי, במדבר י, לה).

The Malbim on the passuk וַיִּפְצוּ אֱלִיבָיִךָ וַיִּנְסוּ מִשְׁנֹאֶיִךָ explains the difference between an אֱלִיבָא and a שְׁוֹנָא. An אֱלִיבָא is an enemy who is overt in his enmity to Am Yisrael, one who assembles an army to fight us. HKB"H will rise up and disperse this overt type of enemy and his forces. A שְׁוֹנָא is a more surreptitious type of enemy, who hates Am Yisrael in his heart, but does not openly gather forces to fight us, he does it malevolently behind the scenes, out of the public eye. HKB"H will rise up and make this type of enemy flee.

The Or HaChayim on this passuk says the enemies in question here are not physical enemies but spiritual ones. The Or HaChaim's shita is that Am Yisrael had to travel for 40 years in the Midbar to gather up all the lost נִיּוֹצוֹת, the shattered fragments of Adam HaRishon's neshama that were dispersed around the world after he sinned. The enemies אֱלִיבָיִךָ and שְׁנֹאֶיִךָ that the passuk is talking about are none other than the one and only yetzer hara. We know that that the yetzer hara is called אֱלִיבָיִךָ, from parshat Ki Teitzei כִּי תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל (דברים כא, י) and the Kli Yakar (ibid.) says it is talking about the war with our yetzer hara. We also know that another name for the yetzer hara is שְׁוֹנָא from the Gemara (סוכה נב, ע"א). The Aron therefore had a dual role, dispersing both physical enemies and the spiritual forces in Heaven that supported them.

The Aron was a kind of a "smart weapon", that had a kind of "sensor" which could identify the person carrying it. If the identity of the person was

"verified", the weapon would work. If not, it was "disabled". Many modern guns employ such mechanisms to prevent unauthorized usage of the weapon, for example, if a criminal snatches a policeman's gun and tries to fire it at him. We see an example of this in sefer Shmuel when the sons of Eli tried to take the Aron to fight against the Philistines (שמואל א, פרק ו). Since Am Yisrael were not worthy, the "weapon", the Aron was not "verified" and it did not work.

The Aron is a repository for the luchot, which are basically the written contract, the covenant between Am Yisrael and HKB"H. As long as we are upholding the covenant, the Aron wields its power. When we break the covenant, the Aron is "disabled".

The second passuk in this "mini-sefer" is וּבִגְנָחָה יֹאמֵר, which we recite in shul every time we return a sefer Torah to the Aron Kodesh.

The Baal HaTurim says that the word וּבִגְנָחָה in the passuk is spelled with the letter ה, when grammatically it should be the letter ו (וּבִגְנָחוֹ). He explains that the letter ה signifies the encampment of Am Yisrael surrounded by four flags and in the center - the flag of Levi, a total of five flags.

Chazal (פרשה כט, ב) tell us that when HKB"H descended to give Am Yisrael the Torah on Har Sinai, He was accompanied by an assembly of 22,000 angels, as it says in the passuk רָכַב אֲנֹכִי לְקַיֵּם רְבִיתִים אֲלֵפֵי שְׁנָאוֹן (תהילים). The word רְבִיתִים means "two רבבות", i.e. 2 X 10,000 = 20,000. The word אֲלֵפֵי means two thousand (using the principle מְעוֹט רַבִּים שְׁנַיִם – when you have something mentioned in the plural without a specific number, it means two), making a total of 22,000.

These angels were all carrying "flags" symbolizing the purpose/mission that HKB"H had assigned them. Am Yisrael saw these flags and said "We want flags too, like the angels!" HKB"H acquiesced to their request, as it says וּבִגְנָחָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ וּבְשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל, יִמְלֵא ה' כָּל מְשָׁאֲלוֹתֶיךָ (תהילים כ, ו).

When Am Yisrael encamped, וּבִגְנָחָה יֹאמֵר, it was with אֲלֵפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, 22,000, in the camp of Levi (במדבר ג, לט). The entire encampment of Am Yisrael had 27 (rounded off from 27.272727) assemblies of 22,000, making a total of 600,000. The number 27 is אָדָּם indicating the purity of Am Yisrael (also a reference to the Menorah at the beginning of the parsha). 27 is also אָדָּם, as in the passuk וַיִּזְדֶּן יַעֲקֹב נֶזֶד (בראשית כה, כט). Yaakov was not simply mixing a stew, he was creating the blueprint for the Geulah of his descendants. אָדָּם יַעֲקֹב in gematria is כַּמֶּנֶפֶץ – the letters of the Hebrew alphabet that differ when they appear at the end of a word (sofit letters אָדָּם). Each of these five letters contains a codeword for the different stages of the Geulah (במדבר רבה, קרת, פ' – יח, כא) –

The first Geulah was when Avraham was redeemed from the furnace of Ur Casdim, (בראשית יב, א) לך-לך double ד.

The second was when Yitzchak was saved from Avimelech, ויאמר אל יצחק לך מעמנו כי עצמת ממנו (בראשית כו, טז) מ double מ.

The third was when Yaakov was saved from Eisav, הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו (בראשית לב, יב) נ double נ.

The fourth was when Moshe returned to Egypt with HKB"H's "code word" for the Geulah פקד פקדתי אתכם (שמות ג, טז) פ double פ.

The *fifth* and final Geulah is when HKB"H sends Mashiach, הנה איש צמח שמו ומתחתינו יצמח ובנה את היכל ה' (זכריה ו, יב) צ double צ.

Now we have a deeper understanding of these two psukkim. It is not simply two random psukkim creating a buffer between two פּרָעֲנוּיּוֹת. They are two specific psukkim with enormous power, here on earth against human enemies *and* in Heaven, against the spiritual enemy. These two psukkim give us a greater insight into the encampment formation of Am Yisrael in the Midbar, which reflects the מְרֻכְבָּה of HKB"H.

The Baal HaTurim says that the passuk ויהי בנסע הארון ויאמר משה קומה ויבא אל בני ישראל ויאמר להם קומה ונצאו אל בני ישראל ונגסו משנאיד מפניך ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורה הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל.

Similarly, the passuk ויבנהה יאמר שובה ה' רבבות אלפי ישראל has seven words in it, corresponding to the first passuk in the Torah which also has seven words בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ.

Therefore, these two psukkim encompass the Torah "from beginning to end" and are therefore, like Rebi says in the Gemara, a sefer all on their own.

The Ba'al Haturim goes on to say that these two psukkim combined have 85 letters. The Gemara (שבת קטו, ע"ב) says the minimum number of letters a כתב קדוש (like a megillah or a klaf of a sefer Torah) has to have in order to permit saving it from a fire on Shabbat, is 85 letters and brings the example of our two psukkim above. The Baal HaTurim says that brit milah (the word מילה is 85 in gematria) therefore saves a Jew from the fire of גיהנום. The חיד"א says that saying these two psukkim every day is a segula against any kind of צרה (for those who believe in segulot).

The Shiblei HaLeket (קטו) brings it in the reverse order to the Baal HaTurim. He says that since מילה is 85 in gematria and brit milah is דוּחָה שְׁבֵת,

We have no conception of the awesome power of שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת and what we are risking when we race through it (or skip it entirely, chalila). We must say each word precisely, without combining or swallowing letters, for example על-לְבָבְךָ, we must pause between the lamed at the end of על and the lamed at the beginning of לְבָבְךָ. If we do not it reads like one word, עֵלְלְבָבְךָ and we have *missed* one body part – it could be a fingernail, or it could be an *aorta in the heart*. Are you prepared to take that chance? Other examples are וְאַבְדַתֶּם-מִהֲרָה separating the last mem of וְאַבְדַתֶּם and the first mem of מִהֲרָה, עֵשֶׁב-בְּשָׂדֶךָ, etc. Some siddurim have a "hyphen" separating such word combos that are often not read correctly. Similarly, we must say all words with the letter zayin audibly and not whispered – it is impossible to pronounce a zayin properly בְּלֶחֶשׁ. Words like תִּזְכְּרוּ, זְנִים, וּזְכַרְתֶּם, מְזֻזוֹת.

Most of us take between 2-3 minutes to say שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת. The Baal HaTania, used to take over ten minutes to recite שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת. His talmidim asked him why he took so long? He responded "If you had 248 precious diamonds in your pocket, wouldn't you count each one meticulously to make sure none were missing?"

It is such a fundamental principle - it is the *first* mitzva with which the Mishna/Gemara begins - אֶת שְׁמַע בְּעֶרְבִית (ברכות א, ע"א) -

Birkot שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת after בְּרַכּוּ begin by describing the shira of the angels (בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד ה' מִמְּקוֹמוֹ and קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ). These are followed by the bracha *immediately* preceding שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת which is all about לְקַיֵּם אֶת כָּל דְּבַרֵי תִלְמוּד - referring to עֲשֵׂהָ, observing the Torah. Finally, it is followed by יִשְׂרָאֵל itself – referring to שְׁמִיעָה. It is the exact template of נְעֻשָׁה וְנִשְׁמָע that Am Yisrael declared at the foot of Har Sinai! a technique used by angels. The Gemara (שבת פח, ע"א) says בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהִקְדִּימוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל נְעֻשָׁה לְנִשְׁמָע יָצְתָה בֵּת קוֹל וְאַמְרָה לָהֶן מִי גִילָה לְבַנֵי רָז זֶה שְׁמִיעָה הַשְׂרֵת מִשְׁתַּמְשִׁין בּוֹ.

Reciting שְׁמַע קְרִיאַת is therefore equivalent to *standing at Har Sinai and receiving the Torah!* It is therefore also the tikkun for Am Yisrael running away from Har Sinai like school children.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל are amongst the first words we learn as children. Even the furthest removed from Yiddishkeit, hearing יִשְׂרָאֵל, reawakens some lost memory within them. There are many stories that tell of young Jewish children in tsarist Russia who were kidnapped and conscripted into the Russian army and decades later were walking past a shul and heard יִשְׂרָאֵל which brought them back to their roots.

After WWII, HaRav Yitzchak Isaac Halevi Herzog zt"l (grandfather of the now president), the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, travelled through Europe trying to find all the lost Jewish children who were taken by their

parents to monasteries and convents and hidden from the nazis, and lost their Jewish identity. The Church denied that any Jewish children were there at all. How to determine whether they were Jewish or not? HaRav Herzog zt"l, in the short time they allocated to him in each monastery and convent, called out **שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Suddenly he noticed a few children in response, raised their hand and covered their eyes. "They are Jewish children!" cried HaRav Herzog, who managed to save over 500 Jewish children whose parents perished in the Holocaust.

When the IDF was trying to identify the survivors of the October 7 massacre amongst the ruins of the Kibbutzim surrounding Gaza, they called out **שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל** and waited for a reply, to distinguish between Jewish survivors and Hamas terrorists wearing IDF uniforms waiting to ambush them!

שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל has become the war cry of IDF units before engaging in battle!

It is the most powerful rallying cry of our nation, because it lies at the heart of every Jew, religious or not. It is the symbol of our everlasting connection to HKB"H and our covenant with Him, as strong today as it was over 3531 years ago when it was first uttered by the Twelve Tribes.

When the Torah wants to make a break between the double whammy of Am Yisrael running away from Har Sinai and then complaining for no reason, it uses the most powerful weapon in the arsenal against the double whammy, the Aron HaBrit and **שְׂמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד**. This is not a random rearranging of psukkim simply to provide a buffer, it is a formula for future generations to prevent and repair whatever **צָרוֹת** will occur until the Mashiach eventually arrives with the codeword beginning with the letter **צ**, the last letter of the series of **כמנפ"ץ**.

בבי"א.

Shabbat Shalom

Eliezer Meir Saidel

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