

Parshat Ekev: The Beautiful Land

Seven that are Legend

אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וְשֵׁעִרָה וְגִפְנִים וְתַאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ זֵיתֵי שֶׁמֶן וְדִבְשׁ:

a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; (Devarim 8:8)

וְכֵן הִקְוִיָּצָר תְּבוּאָהּ אוֹ קִטְנִית אוֹ הַבּוֹצֵר עֲנָבִים אוֹ הַגּוֹדֵר תְּמָרִים אוֹ הַמוֹסֵק זֵיתִים אוֹ הָאוֹרֶה תְּאֵנִים. (משנה תורה הלכות שבת 7:4)

What's so Special About These Seven?

Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, do this: take some of the choice products of the land in your baggage, and carry them down as a gift for the man—some balm and some honey, gum, ladanum, pistachio nuts, and almonds (Bereshit 43:11)

They took the bull that was given them; they prepared it, and invoked Baal by name from morning until noon, shouting, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound, and no one who responded; so they performed a hopping dance about the altar that had been set up (Kings I 18:26)

Precious Metals

אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְמִסְכָּנָהּ תֹאכַל-לֶבֶה לֶחֶם לֹא-תִחְסַר כָּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבִינִיהָ בְרָזָל וּמִהַרְרֶיהָ תִּחְצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת:

a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. (Devarim 8:9)

Iron is taken out of the earth,
And copper smelted from rock. (Job 28:2)

Broken and Whole

וְאֶכְתֹּב עַל-הַלְחֹת אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל-הַלְחֹת הָרִאשִׁים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשִׁמַּתָּם בְּאָרוֹן:

I will inscribe on the tablets the commandments that were on the first tablets that you smashed, and you shall deposit them in the ark. (Devarim 10:2)

Rav Yosef fell ill and his studies were forgotten. Abaye restored his studies before him. This is the background for that which we say everywhere throughout the Talmud, that Rav Yosef said: I did not learn this halakha, and Abaye said to

him in response: You said this to us and it was from this baraita that you said it to us. (Nedarim 41a)

Rav Yosef teaches a baraita: This verse teaches that both the tablets of the Covenant and the pieces of the broken tablets are placed in the Ark. One should learn from here that with regard to a Torah scholar who has forgotten his Torah knowledge due to circumstances beyond his control, e.g., illness, one may not behave toward him in a degrading manner. (Menachot 99a)

How Many Arks?

בַּעֲתָהּ הָיָה אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי פָּסַל־לִי שְׁנֵי־לוּחוֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֹאשֵׁימַי וְעָלָה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְעָשִׂיתָ לִּי אָרוֹן
עֵץ:

Thereupon God said to me, “Carve out two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain; and make an ark of wood. (Devarim 10:1)

Rashi: Now this was not the Ark which Bezaleel made for the Tabernacle, because with the Tabernacle they did not occupy themselves until after the Day of Atonement, for only when he came down from the mountain on that day did he give them the command regarding the construction of the Tabernacle, and Bezaleel made the Tabernacle first and afterwards the Ark and the other articles (Berakhot 55a). It follows, therefore, that this was another Ark; and it was this, that went forth with them to battle, whilst that which Bezaleel made went forth to battle only once, in the days of Eli

It was stated: “Rebbi Jehudah ben Laqish says, two arks were travelling with Israel in the desert; one in which the Torah was deposited and one in which the broken pieces of the tablets were deposited. The one in which the Torah was deposited was put into the Tent of Meeting; that is what is written: Moses and the Ark of the Eternal’s covenant did not move from the camp. The one in which the broken pieces of the tablets were deposited was going out and coming in with them. But the Rabbis say, it was only one, and once it went out in the days of Eli and was taken prisoner. (Shekalim 6:1)

Ivrit or Ashurit?

וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחָת כַּמִּכְתָּב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלַיכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ
בְּיוֹם הַקֹּהֵל וַיִּתְּנֶם יְהוָה אֵלַי:

After inscribing on the tablets the same text as on the first—the Ten Commandments that God addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly—God gave them to me. (Devarim 10:4)

Mar Zutra says, and some say that it is Mar Ukva who says: Initially, the Torah was given to the Jewish people in Ivrit script, and the sacred tongue. It was given to them again in the days of Ezra in Ashurit script and the Aramaic tongue. The

Jewish people selected Ashurit script and the sacred tongue for the Torah scroll and left Ivrit script and the Aramaic tongue for the commoners. . .

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Initially, the Torah was given to the Jewish people in this script, [Ashurit. Once the Jewish people sinned, it turned into an impairment for them [and they began writing with a different script, Libona'a]. Once they repented, the first script was returned to them, (Sanhedrin 21b)

Israel and Egypt

כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹא-שְׂמֶהָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כָאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע אֶת-
זֶרְעֶךָ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְּרִגְלֶךָ כְּגֹן הַיֵּרֶק: וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שְׂמֶהָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶרֶץ הָרִים וּבִקְעֹת לְמִטְר
הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתֶּה-מֵיִם: אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ דֹרֵשׁ אֹתָהּ תָמִיד עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּהּ מִרְשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה
וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה:

For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden; but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. It is a land that the Eternal your God looks after, on which the Eternal your God always keeps an eye, from year's beginning to year's end (Devarim 11:10-12)

Rain Reward

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוְהָ אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לֹאֲהַבָּהּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעַבְדּוֹ
בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטְר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֶה וּמִלְקֹשׁ וְאֶסַּפְתִּי דִגְלֶךָ וְתִירְשֶׁהָ וַיִּצְהַרְרָה
(דברים 11:13-14)

I therefore withheld the rain from you
Three months before harvesttime:
I would make it rain on one town
And not on another;
One field would be rained upon
While another on which it did not rain
Would wither. (Amos 4:7)

Rabbi Abbahu said: The day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead. The reason is that while the resurrection of the dead benefits only the righteous, rain benefits both the righteous and the wicked.

Rav Yehuda said: The day of the rains is as great as the day on which the Torah was given, as it is stated: "My doctrine [likhī] shall drop as the rain" (Deuteronomy 32:2) (Ta'anit 7a)

Rain in its Time

וְנָתַתִּי מִטְר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֶה וּמִלְקֹשׁ וְאֶסַּפְתִּי דִגְלֶךָ וְתִירְשֶׁהָ וַיִּצְהַרְרָה:

I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil (Devarim 11:14)

יורה. גשם שיורה על שנה טובה והוא בתחלת השנה: (אבן עזרא)

וַתִּנֶּה רַבָּנָן: "יורה" — שְׁמוֹרָה אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת לְהִטִּיחַ גְּבוּלֵיהֶן, וּלְהַכְנִיס אֶת פִּירוֹתֵיהֶן, וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל צָרְכֵיהֶן. דָּבָר אַחֵר: שְׁמוֹרָה אֶת הָאָרֶץ וּמִשְׁקָהּ עַד תְּהוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "תִּלְמִיָּה רוּחַ נַחַת גְּדוּלָּהּ בְּרַבִּיבִים תִּמְלֹגְנָה צִמְחָה תִּבְרֹךְ". דָּבָר אַחֵר: "יורה" — שְׁיֹרֵד בְּנַחַת וְאִינוּ יוֹרֵד בְּזַעַף. . . "מִלְקוֹשׁ" — אָמַר רַב נְהִילָא בְּרַ אִידִי אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל: דָּבָר שֶׁמֶל קִשְׁיוֹתֵיהֶן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל. דְּבִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל תֵּנָא: דָּבָר שֶׁמֶמְלָא תְּבוּאָה בְּקִשְׁיָהּ. בְּמַתְנֵיתָא תֵּנָא: דָּבָר שְׁיֹרֵד עַל הַמְּלִילוֹת וְעַל הַקִּשְׁיִין. (תענית ו)

The Sages taught: The first rain falls in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan. Do you say that the first rain is in Marḥeshvan, or perhaps it is only in the month of Kislev? The verse states: "I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain" (Deuteronomy 11:14). Just as the last rain falls in its due time, so too, the first rain falls in its due time. Once Nisan has ended and the rains subsequently fall, this is not a sign of a blessing (Taanit 6a)

Bringing the Temple Home: Grain, Wine and Oil דגן תירוש ויצהר

O children of Zion, be glad,
Rejoice in the ETERNAL your God.
For you have been given the early rain out of kindness,
Now the rain is made to fall [as] formerly—
The early rain and the late—

And threshing floors shall be piled with grain,
And vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. (Yoel 2:23)