

א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

September 18, 2021



ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה:

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Ha'azinu
Consists of: Deuteronomy 32:1-52
Sequence—
in annual Torah cycle: 53rd of 54
in Deuteronomy: 10th of 11



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Deuteronomy 32:1-18

Context: Deuteronomy, last of the Five Books of the Torah, consists of Moses's farewell address to the Jewish people, in which he reviews—and formally renews their commitment to—the Covenant they and their parents had made at Mount Sinai a generation earlier.

This week's portion contains Moses's final farewell to the Israelite nation he has forged during the previous forty years... but not until he cements his moral legacy for all time by reading into the record the great Song taught to him as witness to the ages.

הקהילו אלי את-כל-זקני שבטיכם ושטריכם ואדברה באזניהם את הדברים האלה

A) Deuteronomy 31:28-30 - “Assemble to me all the leadership of your Tribes, and their respective officials, that I may speak in their hearing these words,

ואעידה בם את-השמים ואת-הארץ

“and that I may summon heaven and earth as witness against you.

כי ידעתי אחרי מותי כי-השחת תשחתון וסרתם מן-הדרך אשר צויתי אתכם

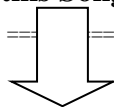
“For I well know that after my death you will surely go astray, turning aside from the way that I have instructed you,

וקראת אתכם הרעה באחרית הימים כי-תעשו את-הרע בעיני יהוה להכעיסו במעשה ידיכם

“so that subsequently evil will befall you because you have done what is evil in the Sight of The Eternal One, angering God with the works of your hands.”

וידבר משה באזני כל-קהל ישראל את-דברי השירה הזאת עד תמם

Whereupon Moses spoke in the hearing of the entire assemblage of the Israelites the words of this Song, until they were completed.



ותשמע הארץ אמרי-פי

האזינו השמים ואדברה

32:1] - Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;
let the earth hearken to the words of my lips—

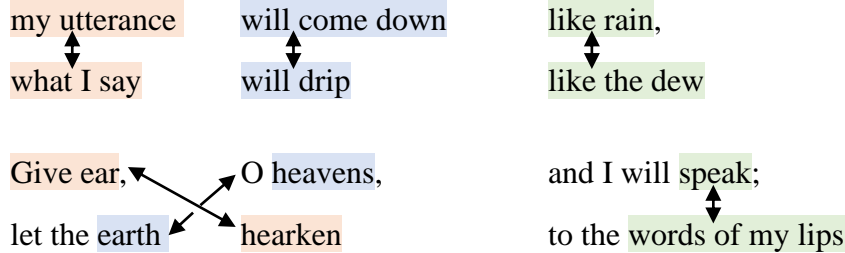
- more over

תִּזְלַח כַּטֵּל אִמְרָתִי
וְכַרְבִּיבִים עָלַי-עֹשֵׁב

יַעֲרוֹף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי
כַּשְּׁעִירִים עָלַי-דְּשָׂא

32:2] - for my utterance will come down like rain,
what I say will drip like the dew;
like droplets upon the grass,
and like drizzle on the growing herbage.

“Parallelism” - central convention of Biblical poetry



הִבּוּ גִדְל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
כִּי כָל-דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט

כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא
הַצּוֹר תַּמִּים פְּעָלוֹ

32:3-4a] - When I proclaim the Name of The Eternal One,
render greatness to our God!
The Rock— flawless is His every deed,
for all His ways are just.

צְדִיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא
בְּנֵי מוֹמִים דּוֹר עֲקֹשׁ וּפְתִלְתַּל

אֵל אֲמוּנָה וְאֵין עֲוֹל
שְׁחַת לוֹ לֹא

32:4b-5] - A faithful God, in Whom there is no iniquity,
Who is just and upright!
Could any injustice be His? No!
The corruption belongs to His children, O generation warped and corrupt!

עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכָם
הוּא עֹשֶׂה וַיִּכְנֶנֶה

הַלְיִהְיֶה תִּגְמְלוּ-זֹאת
הַלּוֹא-הוּא אָבִיךָ קִנְיָה

32:6] - Is it thus that you repay The Eternal One,
O foolish nation devoid of wisdom?
Is God not your Parent, Who engendered you;
the One Who formed you and established you?

בִּינוּ שְׁנוֹת דָּר וְדָר
זְקֵנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ

זְכֹר יְמוֹת עוֹלָם
שְׂאֵל אָבִיךָ וַיִּגְדֶּךָ

32:7-9] - Remember the days of long ago;
ponder the years of generations long past.
Ask your parents— they will recount it to you;
your elders, who will say to you:

בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם
לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

בְּהִנְחֹל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם
יַצֵּב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים

כִּי חֶלֶק יְהוָה עָמוֹ יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ

32:8-9] - “When the Most High assigned the legacies of the nations and apportioned the world amongst the families of humanity, **He defined the borders of the peoples proportionate to the number of the Israelites!**”

For His People are God's Own portion;
[the descendants of] Jacob are the index of God's legacy.

יְמַצְאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוּ יֵלֵל יִשְׁמֹן
יִסְבְּבֵנָהוּ יְבוֹנְנָהוּ יִצְרְנָהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָו
כְּנֹשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחֹף
יִפְרֹשׁ כְּנַפָּיו יִקְחָהוּ יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל-אֲבָרְתוֹ

32:10-11] - He found them in a wilderness land, in a howling empty wasteland. He surrounded them, and gathered them close, guarding them as the apple of His Eye. Even as the eagle stirs up its nest, brooding over its nestlings, So did He spread His Wings, taking them up and bearing them on His pinions.

וַאִין עָמוֹ אֵל נֶכְר הָיָה בְּדָד יִנְחָנוּ

32:12a] - The Eternal One, Alone, conducted them (for there was no strange god there with Him!).

יִרְכְּבֵהוּ עַל-בְּמוֹתַי אֶרֶץ וַיִּנְקָהוּ דָבֶשׁ מִסֵּלַע
חֲמֵאת בָּקָר וְחֵלֶב צֹאן חֲמֵאת בָּשָׂן וְעֵתוּדִים
וְדָם-עֵגֶב תִּשְׁתֶּה-חֶמֶר וַיֹּאכַל תְּנוּבַת שְׂדֵי
וַשְּׁמֹן מִחֲלָמִישׁ צוּר עִם-חֵלֶב כְּרִים וְאֵילִים
עִם-חֵלֶב כְּלִיֹּת חֹטָה עִם-חֵלֶב כְּלִיֹּת חֹטָה

32:12b-14] - He drove them over the high places of the earth, feeding them with the bounties of the heights: Suckling them with honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty crag; Butter of cows and milk of sheep, with fat choice lambs and rams; Of the choicest breeds of Bashan with fat of kidney and lush grain, And from foaming grapes you drank wine.



וַיִּשְׁמֹן יִשְׂרָאוֹן וַיִּבְעֵט שְׂמֹנֶת עֵבִית כְּשֵׁית
וַיִּטֵּשׂ אֶלּוּהָ עֲשָׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ

32:15] - **But the upright ones got fat and sassy.** you got fat; you grew thick; you became coarse—

They forsook God, Who made them;
they rebelled against the Rock of their Redemption.

לְכַב שָׁמַיִם בְּעֶזְרָךְ

אִין כָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְגִאֲוֹתוֹ שְׁחָקִים

B) Deuteronomy 33:26 -
There is none like the God of **the upright ones**,
Who rides from the heavens to your aid,
And down from the sky in His Glory!

י-ש-ר “be straight, honest” → יִשְׂרָאֵל “those upright and faithful”
ש-ר-ה “struggle, strive” → יִשְׂרָאֵל “Israel/the God-wrestlers”

יִקְנֵאוּהוּ בְזָרִים

בְּתוֹעֵבֹת יִכְעִיסוּהוּ

32:16] - They incited Him with **foreign things**,
angered Him with **detestable things**;

כַּמַּעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבְּתֶם-בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ

C) Leviticus 18:3 - You are not to do **in accordance with the deeds of the Egyptians**,
amongst whom you formerly had dwelt;

וּכְמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ

neither are you to do **in accordance with the deeds of the land of Canaan**, to which I am
bringing you—

וּבְחַקֵּיהֶם לֹא תֵלְכוּ

for you are not to walk **in their paths**.

חוקת הגוי: cultural and halachic shorthand

כִּי אַתָּה בָּא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ לֹא-תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּתוֹעֵבֹת
הַגּוֹיִם הַהֵם

D) Deuteronomy 18:9 - When you arrive in that land which The Eternal One, your
God, is giving you, **you are not to learn to do according to the abominations of those
nations**.

verb ת-ע-ב “abominate as something morally corrupt or ritually repugnant”
noun תוֹעֵבָה “abomination, as being morally corrupt or ritually repugnant”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לֹא נִכּוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כִּן כִּי תוֹעֵבֹת מִצְרַיִם נִזְבַּח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

E) Exodus 8:22 - But Moses replied [to Pharaoh]: “It is not right that we should [make
our sacrificial offering within the cities of Egypt]; for **we will be offering up** to The Eternal
One, our God, **that which the Egyptians find detestable**.

הֲוֵן נִזְבַּח אֶת-תוֹעֵבֹת מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקְלוּנוּ
“Certainly, if we offer up in their sight **that which the Egyptians find detestable**, will they
not stone us?”

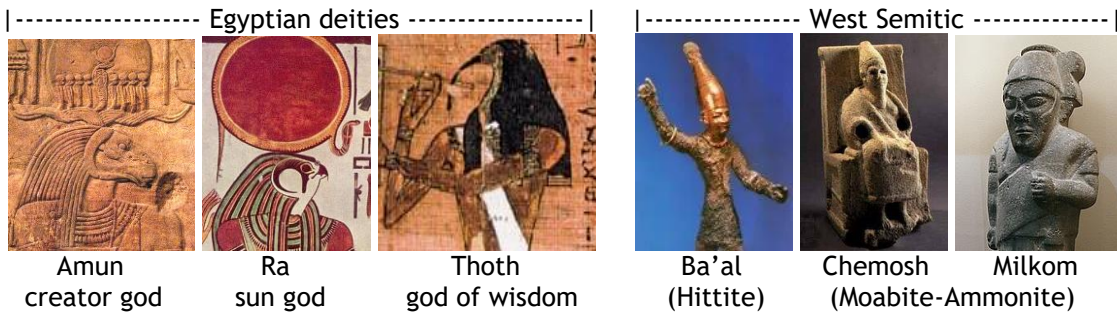
יִזְבְּחוּ לַשְׂדִּים לֹא אֱלֹהִים
 חֲדָשִׁים מִקְרֹב בָּאוּ
 צוּר יִלְדָּךְ תִּשְׁתַּי

אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם
 לֹא שָׁעְרוּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶם
 וַתִּשְׁפַח אֵל מִחֲלָדָךְ

32:17-18] - Sacrificing to demons which are no-gods,
 gods **they had never experienced**—

Novelties, newly arrived,
which their forebears had never revered...

While the Rock, Who engendered you, you forsook;
 you forgot God, Who had formed you.



The Israelites behold Pharaoh's army drowned at the Sea



by Lucas Cranach, 1530

וַיְהִי-לִי לַיְשׁוּעַ

עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה

F) Exodus 15:2 -

The Eternal One is my strength and might,
 and has become my deliverance.

אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאַרְמְמִנְהוּ

זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאַנְוְהוּ

**This is my God, Whom I will enshrine;
 the God of my forebear, Whom I exalt!**

FOCUS: Deuteronomy 32:8 -

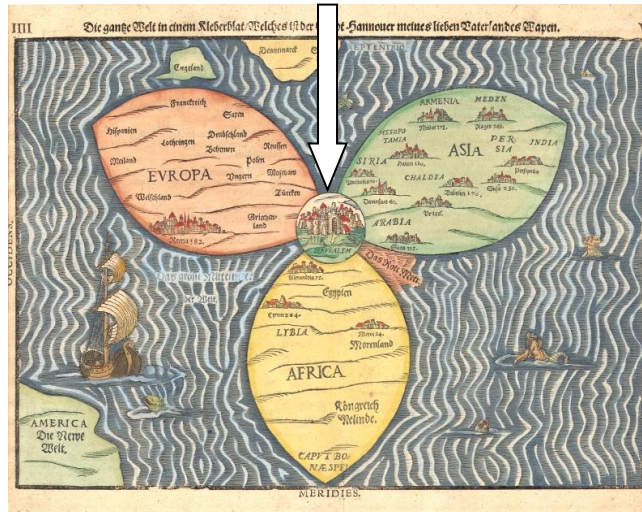
בְּהִנְחַל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם

When the Most High assigned the legacies of the nations
and apportioned the world amongst the human families,

יָצַב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

He defined the borders of the peoples
proportionate to the number of the Israelites!”

Jerusalem as the Center of the Earth



from *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae* by Heinrich Bünting, 1581

יָצַב גְּבֻלַת עַמִּים - והציב גבולות עמים בהפלגה ולא אבדם לגמרי כמו שהיו חייבים

G) OvadYah S'forno (1475-1550) on Deuteronomy 32:8 - “He defined the borders of the peoples” – God established the national borders of the peoples **at the time of their dividings-up** [when they scattered across the face of the earth, after giving up on building a Tower to assail heaven - Genesis 11], rather than destroying them altogether as they so richly deserved.

לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - בשביל בני ישראל שהיו מתי מספר והיו עתידים אז לצאת מאותם העמים

“**For the sake of** the Children of Israel” - inasmuch as the Israelites were but few in number; yet even then they were destined to be the fountainhead of numerous other nations.

- בהנחל עליון וגוי יצב גבולות עמים

H) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), Or haChayim on Exodus 20:2 - “When the Most High apportioned” etc. “He defined the borders of the nations” -

ואמרו ז"ל כי ה' חלק מקומות העולם לשרי מעלה זולת ארץ כנען אשר בחר לו לשמו כביכול

Now regarding this passage our sages of antiquity have said [in Midrash Sifrei on this book

- continued

and Numbers] that The Eternal One apportioned the places of the earth each under the dominion of its respective Celestial prince— **with the exception of the land of Canaan, which God chose to be called “YisraEil” after His Own Name.**

והוא אומרו בֵּית עֶבְדִים פִּירוּשׁ מְקוֹם שֶׁהוּא שֶׁל עֲבָדִים שֶׁל ה'

And the reason Scripture makes reference [in the Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:2] to “the place of servitude” is [that this Promised Land was to be] **the home of a nation of servants of The Eternal One.**

פִּירוּשׁ שֶׁמִּמְשַׁלְתוּ מִמְשַׁלֵּת שֶׁר אֶחָד מֵעֲבָדֵי ה' וְלֹא רָצָה ה' שִׁיְהִיו יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחַת מִמְשַׁלֵּת הַשָּׂרִים אֲלֵא תַּחַת מִמְשַׁלְתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּכָל

The meaning being that their governance would be under a dominion unique to all the agents of The Eternal One— for **The Eternal One did not wish Israel to be under the dominion of any of the celestial princes, but rather under the Dominion of The One Who Is Blessed Above All Others.**

אֵין כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ , אֵין כְּאֲדוֹנֵינוּ , אֵין כְּמַלְכֵנוּ , אֵין כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ