

Parashat Behar, the first of the two *Parashot* we read this week, opens: "Speak to *Bnei Yisrael* and say to them, 'When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a *Shabbat* rest for *Hashem*.'" On the *Pshat* level, this verse introduces the *Mitzvah* of *Shemittah* / the sabbatical year for the land, the details of which follow in the *Parashah*. On that level, the "*Shabbat*" referred to is the *Shemittah* year.

R' Aharon Lewin *z"l Hy"d* (the *Reisher Rav*; killed in the Holocaust) offers an additional explanation on the level of *Drush*. In this verse, he writes, we find a statement about *Eretz Yisrael*, telling us how the Land is different after *Bnei Yisrael* settled it compared to the way it was before. He explains:

During the workweek, the typical individual is immersed in his mundane affairs. His soul cannot soar to spiritual heights because all of his thoughts are wrapped up in his daily needs, which do not cease pursuing him. When *Shabbat* arrives, however, a person is elevated from the depths of the material world to spiritual heights, for the holiness of *Shabbat*, in all its beauty, envelopes him. This rise to lofty levels is assisted by the *Neshamah Yeteirah* / "extra soul" that is placed within him.

Similarly, R' Lewin continues, *Eretz Yisrael* could not display its spiritual beauty so long as it was inhabited by the Canaanite nations that filled it with idols and abominations. That period in *Eretz Yisrael*'s history was like the weekdays. When *Bnei Yisrael* entered the Land, it was liberated and able to display its holiness. Then the Land itself could observe a *Shabbat* rest for *Hashem*. (*Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun* #261)

Shabbat

"My Sabbaths you shall observe and My Sanctuary you shall revere--I am *Hashem*. If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them--I will provide your rains in their times . . ." (26:2-4--in this week's *Parashah*)

Rashi z"l explains: "Rains in their times" means "when people do not usually go out on journeys--i.e., on Friday nights." [Until here from *Rashi*]

Why is the promise of "rains in their times" juxtaposed to observing *Shabbat* and revering the *Bet Hamikdash*? R' Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim *z"l* (1843-1905; rabbi of Ponovezh, Mir and Yerushalayim; known as "the *Aderet*") writes:

The *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 6a) derives from the first verse quoted above that we may not build the *Bet Hamikdash* on *Shabbat*. This seems to be redundant We have already read (*Shmot* 36:6), "Moshe commanded that they proclaim throughout the camp, saying, 'Man and woman shall not do more work toward the donation for the Sanctuary!'"--which is understood to be an instruction that they should not carry donations for the *Mishkan* from their private domains to the public square on *Shabbat*. Thus, we already know that building the *Mishkan* and *Bet Hamikdash* does not supersede *Shabbat*, so why is our verse necessary?

In reality, writes the *Aderet*, there is a dispute among the *Rishonim* / early medieval sages whether the foregoing is a valid question. In *Bnei Yisrael*'s second year in the desert, the year when the *Mishkan* was built, *Yom Kippur* fell on Tuesday. According to the *Ba'al Ha'turim* (R' Yaakov ben Asher *z"l*; Germany and Spain; 1269-1343), Moshe Rabbeinu descended from *Har Sinai* with the second *Luchot* on the day after *Yom Kippur* (Wednesday). - **Continued in box inside** -

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“Im (אִם) / If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them. Then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit.” (26:3-4)

The *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 5a) teaches: The word “*Im*” connotes beseeching. *Rashi z”l* explains: *Hashem* beseeches us to keep His Torah.

R’ Moshe Zuriel z”l (1938-2023; *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Sha’alvim and a prolific author) elaborates: *Hashem* beseeches us to keep His Torah in order that He can do good for us. (This is implied by the progression of the verses quoted here.)

R’ Zuriel adds: We read (*Devarim* 6:3), “You shall listen, *Yisrael*, and take care to perform [the *Mitzvot*], so that it will be good for you. . .” R’ Meir Leibush Weiser z”l (1809-1879; Poland, Romania, and Ukraine; known as “*Malbim*”) comments: We are taught that we should not perform *Mitzvot* in order to receive reward. However, if one’s goal is to earn long life, good health, etc., because he knows that *Hashem* wants to reward man, and because enabling *Hashem* to shower goodness on man will bring Him pleasure, so-to-speak, that is permitted and commendable. (*Lekket M’hegyonei Ha’Torah* p.1298)

“I am Hashem, your Elokim, Who took you out of the land of Egypt from being their slaves; I broke the staves of your yoke and I led you Komemiut / erect.” (26:13)

R’ Aryeh Shapira *shlita* (Yerushalayim) writes: In addition to its literal meaning--that *Hashem* enables us to stand up straight--the morning blessing, “*Zokeifkefufim*” / “He straightens the bent,” praises *Hashem* for the fact that He will one day enable the Jewish People to stand erect, no longer “bent” by the exile. In this regard, *Midrash Bereishit Rabbah* comments on our verse: “I led you erect--with straight posture, afraid of no one. The *Midrash* continues: Rabbi Yudan says, “One hundred *Amot* / cubits tall, like Adam.” Rabbi Shimon says, “Two hundred.” Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon says, “Three hundred, for the word ‘*Komemiut*’ is a contraction of ‘*Komah*’ / height--a reference to 100--and ‘*Me’ot*’--200.” (For a possible metaphorical interpretation of these numbers, see below.) We see from this *Midrash*, R’ Shapira concludes, that “standing erect” refers to returning to the state of Adam before his sin. (*B’shimcha Esah Kapai* p.43)

R’ Yitzchak Ze’ev Yadler z”l (1843-1917; Yerushalayim) writes: In this world, a person who stands erect in a haughty way is considered to be stepping on the toes of the *Shechinah*, so-to-speak. In the future, however, the *Shechinah* will rest upon the countenance of each person, so one will have to stand erect in its honor. The sages who argue about how tall man will be--100, 200, or 300 *Amot*--are alluding to the fact that the *Komah* / height of the *Bet Hamikdash* was 100 *Amot*. They are debating how each individual’s holiness will compare to the holiness of the Temple. (*Tiferet Tziyon*)

“If the means of a *Ger Toshav* / sojourner who resides with you shall become sufficient, and your brother becomes impoverished with him . . .” (25:47)

Rashi z”l explains: This refers to a gentile resident of *Eretz Yisrael* who is uncircumcised--i.e., he has rejected idolatry but has not converted to Judaism. *Rashi* continues: What has caused him to become rich? The merit of being with you. And what has caused your brother to become poor? Being with him. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ Eliyahu Meir Bloch z”l (1894-1955; *Rosh Hayeshiva* of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio) writes: The Torah is teaching that at the same time that a *Ger Toshav* reaches new heights because of his association with you, you are at risk because of your association with him. He adds: This is something for those engaged in outreach to beware. (*Peninei Da’at*)

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Moshe gave the instruction to build the *Mishkan* on that very day, the people brought donations on Thursday and Friday, and Moshe announced on *Shabbat* that they should not bring any more donations. According to the *Tosafot* (*Bava Kamma* 82a), however, Moshe came down from *Har Sinai* on *Yom Kippur* itself, so the day when he announced that no more donations should be brought was Friday. According to the latter opinion, Moshe’s announcement had nothing to do with the laws of *Shabbat*; it was simply that no more donations were needed. Thus, our verse is needed to teach that building the *Mishkan* does not supersede *Shabbat*.

But, this raises a different question: How could Moshe descend from *Har Sinai* on *Yom Kippur*, thus transgressing the law of *Techum Shabbat*, which prohibits traveling more than a certain distance in an uninhabited area? The answer must be that *Techum Shabbat* does not apply more than 10 *Tefachim* (about 30-40 inches) above ground level (see *Eruvin* 43a). Indeed, since we are taught that *Hashem* Himself keeps the Torah, this must be so, for how else could rain fall from the distant clouds on *Shabbat*, as our verse promises?

Now, concludes the *Aderet*, we can understand the juxtaposition of the verses: According to the view that Moshe descended from *Har Sinai* on *Yom Kippur* itself, we need to be reassured that *Techum Shabbat* does not apply more than 10 *Tefachim* above the ground, and the Torah does this by telling us that rains will fall “in their times,” meaning on Friday night. But, according to that opinion, Moshe’s declaration took place on Friday, not on *Shabbat*, so we need a different source to teach that we may not build the *Mishkan* on *Shabbat*, i.e., the first of our verses quoted above.

(*Seder Parshiyot*)