
Ki Tavo: Protecting ourselves against the dangers of power

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Sept 19, 2024/Elul 5784

Sefer Devarim

- משנה תורה
- Moshe's 'valedictory' address/last words

1	2	3
Introduction: How did we get here? Perakim 1-4	Mitzvot (some new, some known) Perakim 5 – 27	The Covenant (revisited?) Perakim 27 - 34
אלה - שמות	ויקרא - ויקרא	וידבר - במדבר

1. Bikkurim & Maaser (26)	Ki Tavo
2. Writing down the Mitzvot (1/2 27)	3. Establishment of stones (1/227, 28)
	4. Tochecha/Admonitions (28)

Ki Tavo

Bikkurim



Brit #2



Tochecha



The bridge between sections 2&3 of Devarim – The covenant of the stones

Devarim 27 (Har Eval)

וְכָתַבְתָּ
עָלֵיהֶן אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת
(pasuk 3)

וּבְנִיתָ שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
(pasuk 5)

וְזָבַחְתָּ שְׁלָמִים
(pasuk 7)

הַקִּמְתָּ לָּהֶם אֲבָנִים גְּדֹלוֹת
(pasuk 5)

ת.

Ki Tavo

Bikkurim



Brit #2 (or 3?)



Tochecha



Mitzrayim as a theme

• וְדַבַּק יְהוָה בְּךָ אֶת־וּדְבַר עַד כִּלְתוּ אֶתְךָ מֵעַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:

- יהוה will make **pestilence** cling to you, until putting an end to you in the land that you are entering to possess. (28:21)

• וְהָיִיתָ מְמַשֵּׁשׁ בְּצָהָרִים כְּאִשֶּׁר יִמְשֵׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאֶפְלָה וְלֹא תִצְלִיחַ אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ עֲשׂוֹק וְנִזְוֵל כָּל־הַיָּמִים וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ:

- You shall grope at noon as the blind grope in **the dark**; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help. (28:29)

• יִכְנֶה יְהוָה וְהָזוּר בְּשִׁחִיו וְעַל־הַבְּרָכִים וְעַל־הַשְּׁלֵמִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל לְהִרְפֹּא מִכָּף רַגְלֶךָ וְעַד קִדְקֹדְךָ:

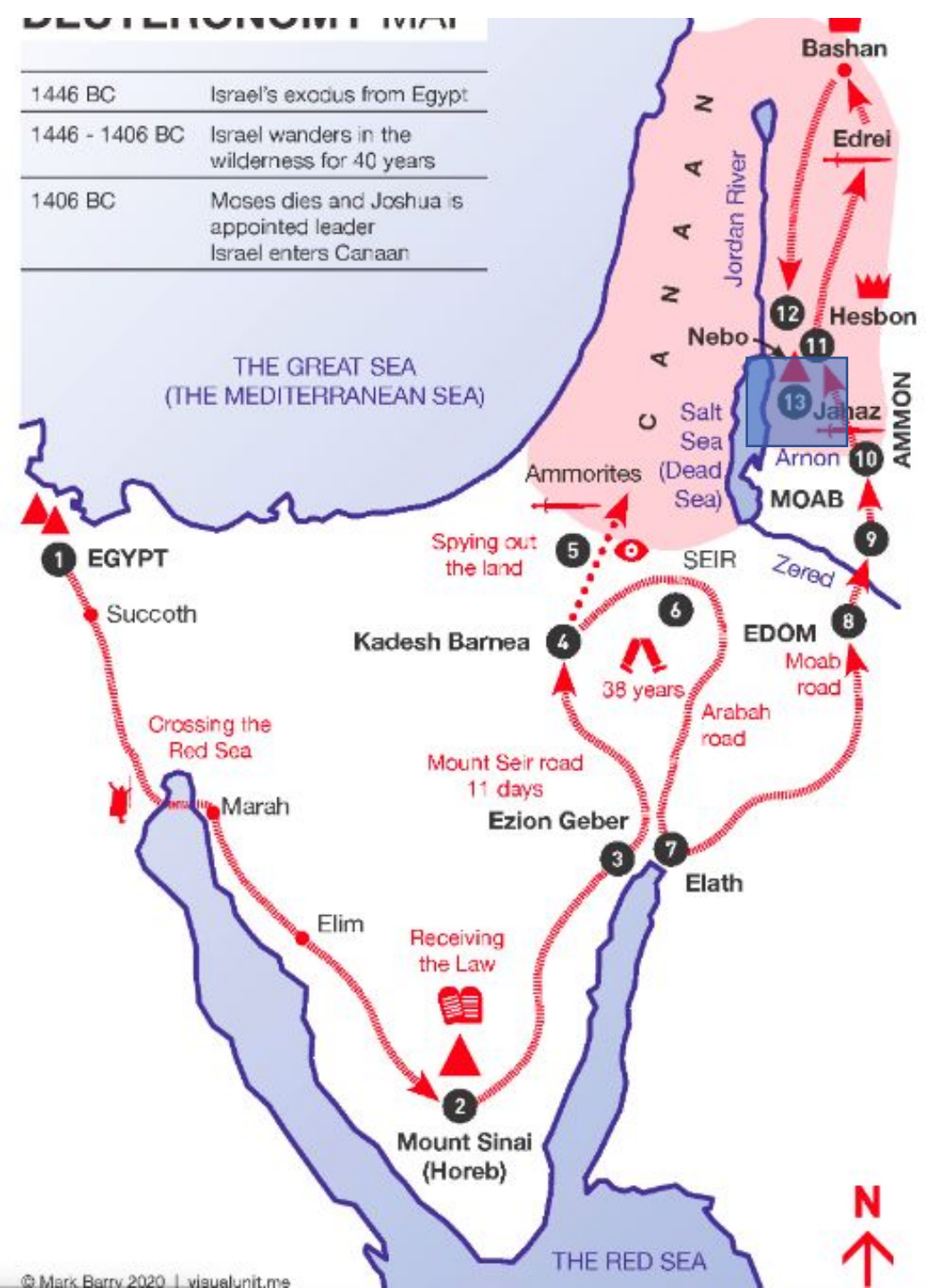
- יהוה will afflict you at the knees and thighs with a **severe inflammation**, from which you shall never recover—from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. (28:35)

• זָרַע רַב תּוֹצִיא הַשָּׂדֶה וּמַעֲט תִּאֶסֹף כִּי יִחַסְלֶנּוּ הָאֲרָבָה:

- Though you take much seed out to the field, you shall gather in little, for the **locust** shall consume it. (28:38)
-

DETERMINING THE

1446 BC	Israel's exodus from Egypt
1446 - 1406 BC	Israel wanders in the wilderness for 40 years
1406 BC	Moses dies and Joshua is appointed leader Israel enters Canaan



Ki Tavo

Bikkurim



Brit #2 (or 3?)



Tochecha



"...Power can turn those who fled Egypt into Egyptians themselves."

Morality is an external limitation on the use of power. But it is an artificial limitation. It stems from the conscious choice of the person in power. Imagine two people together on a desert island. One has a black belt in karate, and the other has a degree in philosophy. The karate master holds the keys to a storehouse full of food and drink. The weak intellectual has to forage in nature. He is aware of the existence of the storehouse, and he wishes he could enjoy its delicious contents. When he is asked why he doesn't fight the man who has the keys, break into the storehouse, and eat to his heart's content, he submits that he is an ethical person. But more likely, what holds him back is not his high moral standards but his understanding of the dynamics of power.

What would happen if the philosopher were the one in possession of the keys and the karate master were the hungry one? What if the strong man were the one who restrained himself from breaking into the storehouse and stealing the delicious food? What if it were he who professed that he avoided the use of force on ethical grounds? Obviously it would be much easier to believe that he avoided striking his fellow because he held himself to a certain moral standard. We would understand that what held him back from using force was not the limits of his own power, but the restraining power of morality, that artificial limitation placed on man's power. A moral person is one who chooses to be weaker than he really is.

And so, power can be the enemy of morality. ... it is possible psychologically speaking to be both powerful and ethical at the same time?

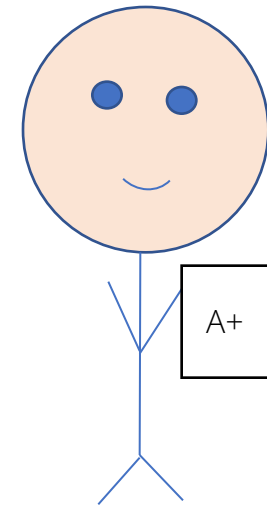
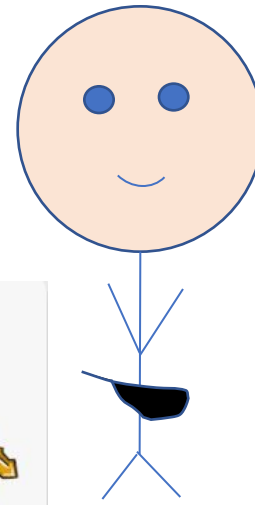
The challenge then is to give rules enough power to transform the world for better without being transformed for the worse.

Devarim confronts the power trap.

(Michah Goodman, *The Last Words of Moses*, pages 73-74)

The power trap

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Devarim confronts the power trap.

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Bikkurim

וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וַיְרַשְׁתָּהּ וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בָּהּ:

וְלִקְחָתְךָ מֵרֵאשִׁית וְכָל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְיֵא מֵאֲרָצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וְשָׂמַתְּ בַסֵּנַי וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמִּקְוִים אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁכְנֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם:

וּבָאתְךָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יְהִיָּה בַיָּמִים הַהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בָאתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לָתֵת לָנוּ:

וְלִקַּח הַכֹּהֵן הַסֵּנַי מִיָּדְךָ וְהֵנִיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

וְעָנִיתְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיִּרְדֵּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּגְרֵ שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מֵעֹט וַיְהִי־שֵׁם לְגֹי נִדְוָל עֲצוּם וְרָב:

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה:

וְנִצַּעְתָּךְ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא אֶת־עַנְיֵנוּ וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחְצָנוּ:

וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמַרְא נִדְל וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּיִם:

וַיְבִאֵנוּ אֶל־הַמִּקְוִים הַזֶּה וַיִּתֵּן לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲרָץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְזָבֵשׁ:

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הֵבִיאֹתִי אֶת־רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לִי יְהוָה וְהִנְחִיתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבִיתְךָ אֶתְּהָ וְהִלּוּ וְהִגְרֵ אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ: {ס}

Bikkurim

וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּת בָּהּ:

וְלָקַחְתָּ מִרֵאשִׁית וְכָל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְרֵא מֵאֲרָצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ וְשָׂמֵת בְּטָנָא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁנֹן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם:

וּבֹאֲתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַיָּמִים הֵהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בֹאֲתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לַאֲבֹתֵינוּ לֵאמֹר: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטָּנָא מִיָּדְךָ וְהֵנִיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

וְעֲנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי וְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרַמִּי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיִּרְדַּ מִצְרַיִמָּה וַיִּגַּר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מִעֵט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגֹי נְדוּל עֲצוּם וָרֵב: וַיִּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:

וְנִצַּעְתָּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹלָנוּ וַיִּגְרָא אֶת־עַבְדֵינוּ וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחֲצָנוּ: וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמָרָא נָדָל וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם:

וַיַּבְאֵנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּתֵּן לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲרָץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הֵבֵאתִי אֶת־רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתָּה לִּי יְהוָה וְהִנְחִיתוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתְךָ אֶתְּהָ וְהִלּוֹי וְהִגַּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ: {ס}

Bikkurim	Tochacha
1 st person narrative	Individual
Plenty	Famine/low crop
Redemption from Egypt	Return to Egypt

Ki Tavo

Bikkurim



Brit #2



Tochecha



When a person is in control, he should remember his servitude.
When she is successful, she should remember her dependence.
Micah Goodman, The Last Words of Moses, page 94

וְלָקַחְתָּ מִרְאשֵׁיתוֹ כָּל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּבְיֵא מֵאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וְשָׂמַתָּ בַטֶּנֶא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לְשֵׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם:

you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which
you harvest from the land that your God יהוה is giving you,
put it in a basket and go to the place where your God יהוה
will choose to establish the divine name. (Devarim 26:2)

וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֶּנֶא מִיָּדְךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it
down in front of the altar of your God יהוה. (Devarim 26:4)

Etymologically, the word TeNEh is connected to the Aramaic
TuNA meaning a burden or load, and the TeNEh therefore
differs from the basket in that it is used not as a receptacle
but rather as a container for conveyance of goods and
possessions. (Rav Michael Hattin VBM.org)

בְּרוּךְ טֶנֶאָךָ וּמִשְׁאַרְתְּךָ:

Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading
bowl.
(Devarim 28:5)

אָרוּר טֶנֶאָךָ וּמִשְׁאַרְתְּךָ:

Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.
(Devarim 28:17)
