A stone altar, such as described in this week's parashah, was discovered atop Mt. Ebal. Is this the altar Y'hoshua was commanded to erect there?
## TORAH STUDY

### This Week: Shabbat Parashat Ki Tavo

**D’varim 26.1-29.8, pages 1140-1159**  

**FIRST ALIYAH:** Why must the “fugitive Aramean” in verse 26.5 refer to Yaakov, and not Lavan (in the Haggadah, the verse is translated as “a fugitive Aramean troubled my father, meaning Lavan)?

**SIXTH ALIYAH:** How does verse 28.36 relate to the Law of the King in D’varim 17, and is that consistent with how the Sages of Blessed Memory interpreted that law?

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**Next Week: Shabbat Parashiyot N’tzavim & Vayelech**  

**D’varim 29.9-31.30, Pages 1165-1179**  

**FIRST ALIYAH:** Verse 29.17 talks about “some man or woman, some clan or tribe,” but the punishments here are clearly national in scope. How can this be reconciled?

**FIFTH ALIYAH:** With the recitation of the blessings and curses, Moshe has finished teaching the people Torah, so what is left about which to “instruct” Y’hoshua, or does God actually have something else in mind?

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*adapted from the JPS Torah Commentary to Deuteronomy*

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**For haftarot, we follow S’fardi custom.**

### THE COVENANT CONUNDRUM

Chapter 27 interrupts the connection of chapters 26 and 28, which clearly belong together. In those chapters, Moshe is the speaker; here, three headings refer to him in the third person, and other speakers accompany him. Only verses 9-10 deal with the covenant being made in Moab at this point in D’varim, as shown by “today” / “this day” in those verses. In them, Moshe and the kohanim seem to restate what Moshe himself says in 26:16-19. The rest of the chapter is about covenant ceremonies the Israelites are to perform later, when they arrive in the Land.

What ties the chapter’s three sections together, and with the surrounding chapters, is that they are all about covenant ceremonies. Some scholars see here evidence of the existence of numerous independent traditions about precisely when Israel formally became God’s people and concluded the covenant with Him: at Mount Sinai-Horeb (Sh’mot 19-24 and D’varim 4-5), at Moab (D’varim 28:69 and 29:9–28), or at or near Shechem after the conquest of the Land (D’varim 27 and Y’hoshua 24).

D’varim reconciles these traditions by showing them all as aspects of the same covenant. Chapters 5:19-6:3 show that the covenant made in Moab is a reaffirmation, with further details, of the one made at Sinai-Horeb. Chapter 27, by weaving the instructions about the covenant ceremonies at Mount Ebal into Moshe’s speech about the Moab covenant, shows the ceremonies at Ebal are a reaffirmation of the Moab covenant, and hence of the Sinai-Horeb covenant.

The multiplicity of ceremonies D’varim 27 prescribes for Mounts Ebal and Gerizim may be due to the momentous nature of the event these ceremonies mark: Israel’s long-awaited arrival in the promised land. In its importance, this event is comparable to the Exodus, which is also accompanied and commemorated by ceremonies that are described with seemingly redundant and overlapping details (Sh’mot 12-13).

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**CBIOTP STANDARDS & PRACTICES**

1. Men must keep their heads covered in the building and must wear a talit when appropriate. Women may choose to do either or both, but it is not mandatory.
2. Anyone accepting a Torah-related honor must wear a talit, regardless of gender.
3. Only one person at a time may take an aliyah.
4. No one should enter or leave the sanctuary during a K’dushah. One should not leave the sanctuary when the Torah scroll is being carried from or to the ark.
5. No conversations may be held in the hallway outside the sanctuary, or while standing in an aisle alongside a pew.
6. The use of recording equipment of any kind is forbidden on sacred days.
7. Also forbidden are cell phones, beepers and PDAs, except for physicians on call and emergency aid workers (please use vibrating option).
8. No smoking at any time in the building, or on synagogue grounds on Shabbat and Yom Kippur.
9. No non-kosher food allowed in the building at any time.
10. No one may remove food or utensils from the shul on Shabbatot. An exception is made for food being brought to someone who is ailing and/or homebound.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Today
Michelle Blatteis
Phil Kamil
Leslie Petersen

Did we miss a birthday, anniversary, or other simchah? Let us know. We can’t print what we don’t know.

Why not sponsor The Shabbat Booklet? Use it to mark a yahrzeit, celebrate a simchah, or for whatever legitimate reason. It’s only $36 per booklet.

THE IMAHOT:
Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:

MITZVAH MEMO
There is still time to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey. Send us a donation The Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey’s “Hurricane Relief Fund.”

The Imahot:
Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:

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Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:

When to bow—and how to bow
Bowing at Bar’chu, although halachically controversial, is so ingrained an Ashkenazi custom that to eliminate it also is questionable. That being said, the procedure is:
1. At Bar’chu, bow from the waist (not from the knees).
2. Before saying Hashem’s Name, stand erect.
3. At Baruch shem, bow again from the waist.
4. Again, before saying Hashem’s Name, stand erect.

During the Amidah, we bow at various points. Bowing at other times actually may be a violation of halachah. The method is:
1. At the opening of the Avot blessing, at Baruch, and again at the end of Avot (Magen Avraham), bend the knees.
2. At Modim, we have an exception to the bowing procedure. We do not bend our knees. Instead, we simply bow from the waist. At Hashem’s Name, we stand erect.
3. At the end of the Modim blessing (v’al kulam…hatov shimcha), we repeat the full procedure: Bend the knees at Baruch; at the second word (Ata), bow from the waist; at Hashem’s Name, stand erect.

There is, of course, yet another “bowing,” but it is not technically part of the Amidah. As we recite oseh shalom bimromav, we take three steps backward, as if we are taking leave of our King, bowing first to our left (oseh), then to our right (shalom), and then forward, as we take three steps back. The gemara credits the practice to Rava, who said we should bow first to Hashem’s right, which is our left.
Chapter 27 raises several difficult questions of coherence, it interrupts the connection of chapters 26 and 28, and different combinations of speakers introduce its three main sections. These sections seem inconsistent and redundant both internally and in relation to each other. Here we shall note some of the major difficulties and some attempts to resolve them, although in the end many questions will remain.

**When are the steles to be erected?**

Verses 2-3 seem to require that the steles be erected, plastered, and inscribed immediately upon entering the Land, on the day that Israel crosses the Jordan. This is implied by the temporal clauses “on the day when you cross” in verse 2 and “when you cross over” in verse 3. This means the ceremony is to be performed at a site near the Jordan.

The timing and location are what give the ceremony its significance: Israel’s very first act in the Land is to dramatize how its life there must be based on Moshe’s Teaching.

This understanding is complicated by verse 4, which repeats that the steles are to be erected “upon crossing,” but adds that they are to be erected on Mount Ebal, which is too far from the Jordan to reach on the same day as the crossing. Read in the context of verse 4, the temporal clauses in verses 2-3 must be understood loosely, meaning “once you have crossed,” not necessarily on the same day.

This is not the natural way to construe verse 2, however. The phrase “on the day when,” in its grammatical construct, commonly refers to a specific day, and in the context of a law it is not likely to refer to an undefined future time. The immediacy of the command is so clear that a manuscript of Y’hoshua from Qumran places the story of how Y’hoshua carried it out right after the crossing of the Jordan in Y’hoshua 3-4, instead of later in the book as we have it (Y’hoshua 8.30-35).

Likewise, most of the rabbinic commentators felt obliged to adopt farfetched explanations of how the Israelites reached Ebal and Gerizim in a single day. According to one view, a miracle made it possible; according to another, these were not the well-known Mounts Ebal and Gerizim by Shechem, but a smaller pair of mountains with the same names, located near Gilgal, where the Israelites entered the Land!

It appears, then, that D’varim 27.4 goes against the natural sense of verses 2-3. Furthermore, apart from adding that the steles are to be erected “on Mount Ebal,” the verse is completely redundant after verses 2-3. This suggests an interpolation aimed at overriding the plain sense of verses 2-3. By repeating the clause “upon crossing the Jordan” and then adding “on Mount Ebal,” verse 4 implies that the time when Israel reaches Mount Ebal also counts as “the day when you cross the Jordan.”

What was the aim of this revision? Why was the location of the ceremony, with its dramatic immediacy, changed to Mount Ebal?

Verses 2-3 must have intended the ceremony to take place at Gilgal, near Jericho. This was the Israelites’ first camp in the Land. According to Y’hoshua 4, when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they took 12 stones from the river and set them up at Gilgal as a memorial of the event.

While Israel was encamped there, several momentous firsts occurred: Y’hoshua circumcised all the males who had been born in the wilderness, the people celebrated the first Pesach in the Land, the manna ceased, the people produce the Land, an angel appeared to Y’hoshua, and the Israelites launched their military campaign for the Land from there.

Later, Gilgal was the site of an important sanctuary in the days of the prophet Sh’muel and King Shaul. In the 8th century BCE, it was one of the most frequented sanctuaries in the northern kingdom of Israel.

Given the clear meaning of verses 2-3 and all the firsts that occurred at Gilgal, it seems likely that verses 2-3 stem from a tradition that the Israelites were commanded to erect inscribed steles at Gilgal. For some unknown reason, however, there developed among some Israelite circles a belief that Mount Ebal, by Shechem, was the more suitable location for the ceremonies prescribed in chapter 27.

Shechem, too, had played a venerable role in Israel’s early history, not the least because it was the first place in the Land where Abraham built an altar to God. Perhaps, because of its central location, the Shechem movement originally intended Mount Ebal to become “the place that the LORD will choose to establish His name.” For this or some other reason, 27.2-3 were “overwritten” with verse 4 so as to replace Gilgal with Mount Ebal.

**Which stones to inscribe?**

Verse 27.8 seems to imply that the “Torah” was to be written on the stones of the altar, since they are the stones mentioned last before this verse (verses 5-6). If that is the case, the stones of the altar would be identical to the inscribed stones of verses 2-4. Yet this is unlikely, for several reasons:

- the altar stones must be left uncut, which would make them rough and unsuitable for writing on;
- had the stones of the altar been those of verses 2-4, the requirement that they be uncut would have been introduced in verse 2, where the other characteristics of the inscribed stones are given, and verse 5 would have begun “And you shall take those stones and build an altar.”

It seems clear, then, that the inscribed steles and the altar stones are different stones, just as the stones and the altar in the covenant ceremony in Sh’mot 24 are separate.

These two views have been debated since ancient times. A minority rabbinic view holds that the Torah is to be written on separate stones. The Mishnah and other ancient sources hold it is to be written on the altar.

The book of Y’hoshua, which describes the fulfillment of this instruction, may be the earliest source to adopt the latter view. Y’hoshua 8.30-32 states:

“At that time Y’hoshua built an altar to Adonai... on Mount
Ebal…, as Moshe had commanded—an altar of unhewn stone upon which no iron had been wielded. They offered sacrifices on it. And there, on the stones, he inscribed a copy of the Torah that Moshe had written for the Israelites.”

In Y’hoshua’s abbreviated account, no other stones are mentioned, which suggests the stones are those of the altar.

If, as we claim, verses 2-4 do not mean the writing is on the altar, how are we to explain why verse 8 gives the impression that it is? There are several possibilities:

1. Verse 8 is simply recapitulating the point of verse 2 to emphasize that the terms of the Torah, not the altar and the sacrifice, are the most important part of the ceremony; the impression is the unintentional result of the recapitulation.

2. Some scholars suggest that verses 5-7 are an interpolation and that verse 4 was originally followed by verse 8. If so, the impression is the unintentional result of the interpolation.

3. Michael Fishbane holds that the impression is likely intentional and correctly divined by Y’hoshua 8. He agrees that the law of the altar in verses 5-7 is an interpolation, and that verse 8 resumes the interrupted command of verses 2-4. He nevertheless holds that the verse also means to reinterpret the stones of those verses as altar-stones in order to suppress their original character as the matzevot, sacred pillars, like those used in the covenant ceremony of Sh’mot 24.4. D’varim reinterprets the stones because it considers such pillars illegitimate (D’varim 16.22), the Torah having so declared. If this is the case, then the ceremony is an old one that D’varim is revising, and verses 1-8 in their present form do indeed mean to imply that the inscribed stones of verses 2-4 are those of the altar, not separate, free-standing steles.

—Adapted from the JPS Torah Commentary to Deuteronomy
May He who blessed our ancestors bless and heal all those whose names are listed here, those whose names will be called out, and those whose names we do not know because either we are unaware of their illness or they are.

We pray He mercifully quickly restore them to health and vigor. May He grant physical and spiritual well-being to all who are ill.

We pray for their safe return...

May He who blessed our ancestors bless, preserve, and protect the captive and missing soldiers of Tzahal—Ron Arad, Zecharia Baumel, Guy Chever, Zvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, and Zeev Rotshik—as well as those U.S. and allied soldiers, and the civilians working with them and around them, still missing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and all other areas of conflict, past and present.

And may He bless the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Tzahal, and those who serve the United States and Israel in foreign lands in whatever capacity, official or unofficial, members of our community or related to members, and their colleagues and companions. Guide them in peace and return them speedily to their families alive and unharmed.

HONOR YOUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES
WITH A PLAQUE ON OUR
VIRTUAL MEMORIAL BOARD.

CALL THE OFFICE TO ADD THEIR NAMES
TO OUR MEMORIAL BOARD.


Yahrtzeits for Today Through Next Friday
— May their memories be for a blessing!

9 Sidney Greenfield*
  Bessie Woltz*
  Maurice Hall*
10 Roz Strongwater
11 David Baer Zlotnick*
  David Siegel*
  Harriet Barbara Lipkin*
  Rose Finger*
  Harry Katz*
12 Rebecca Freesman*
  Gilbert Lubin
  Joseph Fink*
  Rose Cohen*
  Lena Aaron*
  Freda Pearson*
13 Regina Blank
  David Winograd, father of Ora Kiel
  Mayer Chalom
  Alan Linick, brother of Shari Linick
  Samuel Feigelson*
  Elsie Isaacs*
14 Matthew Korsun*, grandfather of Mark & Philip Weiss
  David Reich
  Pauline Levine*
  Celia Katz*
  Mathew Korsun*
  Daniel Slonim*
15 Louis Linett*
  Yetta Laster*
  Anne Hoffman*
  Dr. Boris London*
  Krana Schaiman*

* A plaque in this person’s name is on our memorial board.

Kaddish list
Selim Chamuel
Yaakov Chamuel
Francine Feder
Dr. Jerry Finklestein
Blanche Friedman
Honora Gershman
Lawrence Glazer
Moshe Glickman
Frieda Gutfriend
Jeanette Shandolow Herman
Rebecca Kaplan
Fred B. Katz
Haviva Khedouri
Peter Koenig
Leon Levy
Harold Rappoport
Norman Harry Riederman
David Shandalow
Paul Singman
Alan Silverstein

Are we in your will?
Shouldn’t we be?

When people prepare their wills, they usually look to leave a mark beyond the confines of their families. Thus it is that general gifts are left to hospitals, and other charitable organizations.

All too often ignored, however, is the synagogue, even though its role in our lives often begins at birth, and continues even beyond death. We come here on Yom Kippur and other days, after all, to say Yizkor, the prayer in memory of our loved ones.

Our Virtual Memorial Plaques remind everyone of who our loved ones were, and why we recall them. All of us join in saying the Kaddish on their yahrzeits.

Considering this, it is so unfortunate that, in our final act, we ignore the one institution in Jewish life that is so much a part of us. The synagogue is here for us because those who came before us understood its importance and prepared for its preservation. By remembering it in our wills, we will do our part to assure that the synagogue will be there for future generations, as well.

Think about it. We have always been here for anyone who needed us in the past. Do not those who need us in the future have the same right to our help?

Of course they do. Do not delay! Act today! Help secure the future of your communal home.

Form of bequest to CBIOTP
The following form is suggested for guidance in preparing a bequest:

I, the undersigned, give and bequeath to Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades, or its successor, the sum of $_________ for its educational and religious work.
Signed:     Date:
Witness 1:   Witness 2:
Rosh Hashanah arrives in just 11 days!

Have you reserved your seats yet?

Have you responded to our High Holy Days appeal?

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If you’re not yet a member of JWV Post 76, YOU SHOULD BE!

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Shabbat ends tonight with havdalah at 7:58 p.m. DST