

# "AL HAPEREK"

## A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

### Yehoshua Perakim 7-8

After the miraculous conquest of Yericho comes the time for the military campaign. Between the two battles, between loss and victory, appears the sin of Achan. Within this experience lies an important lesson that the entire nation must learn if they are to succeed in inheriting the Land.

### General Overview < "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

#### Perek 7

- ❶ Prior to the description of the conquest of Ai in 7:2-9 is a long and detailed introductory pasuk (7:1). How does each detail of this pasuk help us understand the reason for the failure of the battle of Ai?
- ❷ Unlike the Battle of Yericho, the Battle of Ai was a military campaign conducted through natural means. Why, then, do you think Yehoshua and the people were so distressed by the deaths of 36 fighters during the battle?
- ❸ Regarding the place where Achan was stoned, the pasuk states: "Therefore the name of that place is called the Valley of 'Achor' to this day" (8:26). Read the pesukim below in which both the name of the character and the valley changes over time. What is the significance of these changes and the ultimate fate of the location?

*"And the sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who committed a trespass concerning the devoted thing." (1 Divrei ha-Yamim 2:7)*

*"And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down in, for My people that have sought Me" (Yishayahu 65:10)*

*"And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall respond there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." (Hoshea 2:17)*



מכון תורני לנשים ע"ש שרה בת יצחק יעקב רעננר  
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- 4 Compare the battle of Yericho (perek 6), the first battle of Ai (7:2-5), and the second battle of Ai (8:1-29). Please take note of the following: Who is in command? How is the battle waged? Through what plots or machinations is the battle conducted? How are the people commanded to handle the spoils of the conquest?

## In-depth Study < "מִפְּרָשׁ וְשׁוֹם שְׂכָל" >

- 5 On Devarim 29:28, "*The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law,*" Rashi comments, "'The secret things belong to the Lord our God': 'I [God] will not punish you for the hidden things' because they belong to the Lord our God," and He will punish that particular individual. However, 'things that are revealed belong to us and to our children,' that we should remove any evil from among ourselves. And if we do not bring judgment upon these evil-doers, then the whole community will be punished. The vowels placed over the words 'to us and to our children' teaches that even for things that are revealed (i.e. sins committed openly), God did not punish the whole community until the people crossed the Jordan, because it was then that the people accepted upon themselves the oath at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, thereby becoming responsible for one another."

Where does the principle of "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Sanhedrin 27b) find expression in our perek?

- 6 In the covenant at the plains of Moav (Devarim 11:26-29), the pesukim state: "*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you will listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and the curse, if you will not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord your God shall bring you into the land where you go to possess it, that you shall set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.*"

In pesukim 30-35 of perek 8, this commandment is carried out. Rashi writes (on Yehoshua 8:30), "'Then Yehoshua built': This episode is written so that earlier and later events are combined, for from the day they crossed the Jordan, he did so." What could be the reasons for including this episode in this perek (8) and not earlier (when it actually occurred)?

## Appendix < "וַיְבִינוּ בְּמִקְרָא"

In 1872, the first settlers of Petah Tikva attempted to settle near the city of Yericho in hope of fulfilling the prophecy in Hoshea 2:17: "And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for an opening of hope". The name of the settlement, which means 'opening of hope', was meant to symbolize the settlers' dream of turning a cursed region into a flowering one. Ultimately the founders did not purchase that area in the Valley of Achor, but in the year 1878 the settlers purchased a piece of a land in the lowland region of the country. They called it "Petah Tikva" as a symbol of their aspirations. Unfortunately, the change in location did not ease their difficulties, and the name took on a meaning similar to the original "Valley of Achor" (trouble) because of the troubled environment the settlers found themselves developing. The hope of the founders was that this first settlement would be the beginning of additional agricultural settlements in the land of Israel, and thus it was.

In the spring of 1879, the founding group of Petah Tikva celebrated the first Passover in the new agricultural colony. While sitting around the Seder table, they recited with excitement: "Tonight is the night Israel commemorates the wonderful miracles the God of our forefathers did during the Exodus from Egypt, from slavery to freedom, from bondage to redemption--redemption of the spirit and redemption of the body. Tonight it is incumbent upon us to recite the blessing "Shehechyanu" with two meanings: that we merited to establish the first agricultural colony in our Holy Land and that we are forging a path for those who will follow us. Today we are like the first birds announcing the light of dawn, and God is shining the light of hope upon us, illuminating before us a Holy path. In this place, there was a glimmer of light, and very soon the sun of righteousness and healing will shine forth upon all those who fear God. The soul of Israel will return and arise clothed in holiness and purity as in former years, and again we will merit to establish holy prophets on high for our redemption and the redemption of the world."

From Sefer HaYovel: Fifty years after the establishment of Petah Tikva—1929, pp. 26-27.

מִתַּן מַתָּן

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