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PARSHA INSIGHTS

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

LIFE IS A MARATHON

“...and let them take for Me a portion...” (13:17)

About two years after I arrived in Ohr Somayach I'd had enough. I assumed that after many “mouth-breaking” months of hard work I would have mastered Hebrew and Aramaic, be fluent in both, and be well on my way to becoming a world-class *Talmid Chacham*.

It didn't quite work out that way.

I was standing outside the Beit Midrash when Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Mendel Weinbach (*zatzal*) came over to me and asked how I was.

My sister (*a"h*) used to say that the definition of a bore is someone who, when you ask them how they are – they tell you.

Ignoring my sister's dictum, I proceeded to unload my

deep dissatisfaction on Reb Mendel.

He heard me out then, just said to me, “Yankev Osher. Sprinters are for the record books. Life is a marathon.”

Torah learning is like a business venture: A storekeeper can never close up the shutters once and for all, because however bad business is, the one sure way to fail is to give up.

Torah can be exasperating, exhausting, and unfathomable. But however difficult and frustrating it may be, someone who perseveres is guaranteed to win his own personal marathon.

• Source: based on Rabbi Dovid of Kotzk

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d commands Moshe to build a Mishkan (Sanctuary) and supplies him with detailed instructions. The Children of Israel are asked to contribute precious metals and stones, fabrics, skins, oil and spices. In the Mishkan's outer courtyard are an altar for the burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The Tent of Meeting is divided by a curtain into two chambers. The outer chamber is accessible only to the *kohanim*, the descendants of Aharon. This contains the table of show-

bread, the *menorah*, and the golden altar for incense. The innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies, may be entered only by the *kohen gadol*, and only once a year, on Yom Kippur. Here is the Ark that held the Ten Commandments inscribed on the two tablets of stone that G-d gave to the Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. All of the utensils and vessels, as well as the construction of the Mishkan, are described in great detail.

BAVA BATRA 39 - 45

Rabbah bar Rav Huna said, “When any statement is made in the presence of three other people there is no prohibition of ‘*lashon hara*’ (negative speech).”

This teaching appears in our *gemara* in relation to the proper way a land owner should make a “protest” that someone who does not own his house is living there. With this protest the original known owner who hears about someone else using his land or real estate is protecting himself from the current tenant’s winning a false claim of purchase. Without this protest the new holder of the property is able to establish proof of purchase by staying there for three years, claiming that he had purchased it, and has lost his document of purchase after three years, which is excusable since he is only human. However, if the original owner makes a protest within three years that the property is still his, then the new claimant must be able to produce his purchase document — or lose the case.

Our *sugya* raises the question about the *number* of witnesses who must hear the protest of the original owner, and attempts to line up the various views with the above halacha taught by Rabbah bar Rav Huna regarding the speaking of *lashon hara*.

Rabbah bar Rav Huna’s statement, however, raises a basic question: Does he really mean to teach that it is permitted to speak *lashon hara* in the presence of three people?

The classical commentaries explain this statement in a variety of distinct ways. Here is a sampling of explanations from a sampling of the many Rishonim who weigh in on this issue.

- A statement made in front of three people is assumed to become public knowledge, as the *gemara* says in Erachin 16a, “Your friend has a friend and your friend’s friend has a friend...” We assume that the three original hearers will tell others, who will tell others, and so on. Therefore, the ones who hear a negative statement in this public way — that will become even more public — are permitted to tell others, including the one being spoken about. (Rashbam)

- Our *gemara* is teaching only about a statement made in front of three people that is *ambiguous* in nature. It is not speaking about outright *lashon hara*. Rather, it could be interpreted as being meant as a compliment about the one spoken about, or it could be interpreted as being meant as a negative statement. Since the person made the statement in front of three people, he assumes it will get back to the one he spoke about, and we can therefore assume he intended it in a positive way and not as *lashon hara*. (Tosefot)

- A quite novel approach is suggested by Rabbeinu Gershom Ma’or HaGolah and Rashi. Rabbah bar Rav Huna is *not* speaking about *lashon hara* per se. Rather, normally if a person tells another person something private about himself, such as a business trip he plans, or about tragedies and misfortunes that befell him, the assumption is that the person he told it to has no permission to tell it others, since this might result in financial damage or embarrassment to the original teller. However, if the original teller made his statement in the presence of three people it can be assumed that he doesn’t care if everybody knows about it, and therefore the ones who hear it may repeat it. (Rabbeinu Yona and Rashi)

(For a clear and detailed discussion to better understand this extremely practical halacha, see the writings of the Chafetz Chaim in his *sefer* “Chafetz Chaim” *klal beit*, in “Mekor Hachaim” with his extensive notes in “Be’er Mayim Chaim”).

• *Bava Batra 39a*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. How many types of items were the Jews to donate?
2. The donation of silver for the Mishkan differed from the donation of the other items. How?
3. What property do *techelet* and *argaman* share that *orot eilim m'adamim* do not share?
4. What property do the above three share that *shesh* and *orot techashim* do not share?
5. Onkelos translates "*tachash*" as "*sasgona*." Why?
6. What kind of trees did Yaakov plant in Egypt?
7. Describe two uses of: 1) oil, 2) spices, 3) jewels.
8. The *aron* was made with three boxes, one inside the other. Exactly how tall was the outer box?
9. Why is the Torah referred to as "testimony"?
10. What did the faces of the *keruvim* resemble?
11. On what day of the week was the *lechem hapanim* baked?
12. What does *miksha* mean?
13. What was the purpose of the *menorah's gevi'im* (cups)?
14. How did Moshe know the shape of the *menorah*?
15. What designs were embroidered into the tapestries of the Mishkan?
16. What is meant by "standing wood"?
17. How long was the Mishkan?
18. How wide was the interior of the Mishkan?
19. Why was the altar coated with *nechoshet*?
20. Which function did the copper *yeteidot* serve?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 25:2 - 13.
2. 25:3 - No fixed amount of the other items was required. The silver was given as a fixed amount: a half-shekel.
3. 25:4,5 - They are wool; *orot eilim* are not.
4. 25:4,5 - They are dyed; *shesh* and *orot techashim* are not.
5. 25:5 - The *tachash* delights (*sas*) in its multi-colors (*g'vanim*).
6. 25:5 - *Arazim* — cedars.
7. 25:6-7: 1) The oil was lit in the *menorah* and used for anointing. 2) The spices were used in the anointing oil and for the incense. 3) The precious stones were for the *ephod* and the *choshen*.
8. 25:11 - The outer box was one and a half *amot* plus a *tefach* plus a little bit, because it rose a little bit above the *kaporet*. (The *kaporet* was a *tefach* thick — see 25:17).
9. 25:16 - It testifies that G-d commanded us to keep the *mitzvot*.
10. 25:18 - The faces of children.
11. 25:29 - Friday.
12. 25:31 - Hammered.
13. 25:31 - Purely ornamental.
14. 25:40 - G-d showed Moshe a *menorah* of fire.
15. 26:1 - On one side a lion; on the other side an eagle.
16. 26:15 - The wooden beams were to be upright and not stacked one upon the other.
17. 26:16 - 30 *amot*.
18. 26:23 - 10 *amot*.
19. 27:2 - To atone for brazenness.
20. 27:19 - They secured the curtains against the wind.

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Terumah

THE MISHKAN AND DIVINE OMNIPRESENCE

Parshat Teruma introduces us, in detail, to the portable *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) that the Jewish nation constructed and brought with them throughout their 40-year sojourn in the Sinai desert. The importance of the Tabernacle cannot be underestimated, as its detailed description takes up most of the last five chapters of the Book of Exodus in the Torah. Furthermore, the structure of the Tabernacle and its utensils were replicated in both the First and Second Temples, which stood for more than 800 years. Abarbanel devotes a great many pages to the deeper meanings and symbolism of all aspects of the Tabernacle.

His first, and most obvious, question is: Why did G-d command the construction of a Tabernacle in the first place? And, especially, why did He issue this command with the expressions, “I will dwell within it” and “Make me a Sanctuary that I should dwell amongst you”? Does G-d have a physical dimension that can be contained in such a place? As the Prophet Isaiah states in reference to G-d, “The Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; what house could you build for Me, and what place could be My resting place?” Additionally, King Solomon says, “Would G-d truly dwell on earth? Behold, the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain You, and surely not the Temple that I have built.”

Abarbanel answers that the main reason G-d commanded the building of the Tabernacle was to instill among the people a sense that the Divine presence and providence never

abandons them. An actual physical structure gave the people a tangible sense that G-d “dwelt among them” in the same sense that He was providing for them and protecting them directly. This was in direct contrast to other religious beliefs that completely separated a supreme spiritual being from the physical world. Such a being, according to their mistaken belief, has no control or influence over the details of Man or his physical environment on a daily basis. In order to remove the possibility of this errant belief from the hearts of the people, G-d commanded the construction of a holy Sanctuary which would strengthen their faith in G-d whose presence, influence and protection is tangible and eternal.

All the components of the Tabernacle were designed to reinforce this fundamental truth. They became the means through which the nation could serve the King of the Universe, not because G-d needed their service, but rather because the *people* needed to connect with G-d through that service. This fundamental idea that G-d is always with us is expressed beautifully and poetically by Solomon in Song of Songs, “I thought I would be forever alone, but, behold, He was standing behind our wall, observing through the windows, peering through the lattices.” Similarly, in describing the concept of G-d’s constant presence, the Prophet Isaiah states in reference to G-d, “My hand created all these things” — i.e. the nation should build the Tabernacle in order to be reminded that G-d is the Creator and Sustainer of all existence.

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

MOSES, KING OF CUSH

From: Don

Dear Rabbi,

I am curious as to whether Moses was in Africa after having fled Egypt on account of killing the Egyptian task-master when saving the Jew he was beating, and before having returned to Egypt in order to redeem the Jews. I have heard something to this effect, but it is so peculiar that I'd like clarification. Thanks.

Dear Don,

In Ramban's commentary on the verse, "Now it came to pass in those *many* days that the king of Egypt died" (Ex. 2:23), he asks why the verse mentions "many" days, where the word "many" seems superfluous. He answers by elucidating another verse, which is the one you refer to: "Pharaoh heard of (Moses' slaying the evil task-master), and he sought to kill Moses; so Moses fled from before Pharaoh. He stayed in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well" (Ex. 2:15). Ramban writes that although it seems from this earlier verse (2:15) that the events of his flight and settling in Midian were sequitur, that can't be so. Firstly, as a fugitive fleeing death he wouldn't settle in one place. Secondly, if so, the verse should have said directly, "Moses fled to Midian".

Rather, Ramban explains that the otherwise superfluous word "many" in the latter verse (2:23) reveals that Moses was actually in exile for many years after fleeing Egypt before eventually settling in Midian. He estimates that this period of exile was approximately sixty years, of which his stay in Midian, where he married Tzipora the daughter of Yitro, was only a small span of several years at the very end of this period, before returning to Egypt in order to redeem Israel. But Ramban gives no indication of where Moses was or what he did during that very long time of exile.

However, the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, 1:168; Sefer HaYashar, Parshat Shemot) portrays in amazing detail the fantastic events of Moses' life during that absence, of which the following is a meager synopsis: Moses is 18 when he flees Egypt and arrives in Cush, which is ancient Ethiopia. There he wages war on behalf of King Kokinus who had been deceitfully ousted by the wicked Bilaam (former advisor to Pharaoh), who also bewitched the people and cunningly fortified the city. At the age of 27, after 9 years of fighting to restore the rightful king, Moses finally re-conquers the capi-

tal through ingenious means, but only after the king's death. The grateful populace bestows wealth and favor upon Moses, elects him as their new king and confers upon him the widowed Queen Adoniya as his wife. However, because the queen asserts her idolatrous ways, Moses never consummates the marriage with her.

After Moses reigns for 40 years until the age of 67, the disgruntled, idolatrous queen beseeches the populace to dethrone Moses in favor of Munchan, her son from Kokinus. But due to their great love of Moses they are reluctant to do so, until Moses steps down. The people then send him off with great honor and gratitude, and from there he finally travels to Midian where he resides with Yitro for 10 years before marrying Yitro's daughter Tzipora at the age of 77. G-d then appears to him in the Burning Bush and commands him to return to Egypt in order to redeem the Jewish People, which he does at the age of 80, together with Aaron who was 83 (Ex. 7:7). Accordingly, these events occurred to Moses from the age of 18 to 80, which was a period of 62 years.

Interestingly, the Jewish historian Josephus also relates these general events, but with significant differences. (Of course, as an alienated Jewish historian in hire of the Romans, Josephus is only partially reliable, and authentic Jewish sources take precedence, but his account is worth noting in that it concurs with the basic description of Moses as King of Cush.) According to Josephus (Antiq. 2:10:2), Moses' military campaign in Ethiopia occurs while he is still a royal prince of Egypt, before he returns and re-discovers his oppressed Jewish brethren. Another difference is that in Josephus' account it is the daughter of the king of the Ethiopians, Tharbis, whom Moses marries in return for her aid in conquering the city. It is possible that even in Josephus' version, Moses does not consummate the marriage, since according to the conclusion of the Tharbis legend, Moses fashioned a miraculous ring which caused Tharbis to forget her love for him, and he then returned to Egypt alone (Raleigh, Sir Walter. The History of the World: Section IV, 'Of Moses Flying out of Egypt', 1829 edition). There he later slew the Egyptian, fled to Midian, married Tzipora the daughter of Yitro and again returned to Egypt by the word of G-d to liberate the Jewish People.

WHAT TO DO WHEN ARRIVING LATE — PART 2

If one arrives late to the Synagogue and sees that the congregation has already begun “Yotzer” (the first of the blessings of the *Shema*), and there is no time to say even the shortest form of “*Pesukei D’zimra*” (i.e. “*Baruch Sh’amar*”, “*Ashrei*” and “*Yishtabach*”), he should recite *Shema* and its blessings, and say the Shemoneh Esrei with the congregation. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 52:1; Elia Rabba; Shulchan Aruch HaRav; Aruch HaShulchan; Yalkut Yosef)

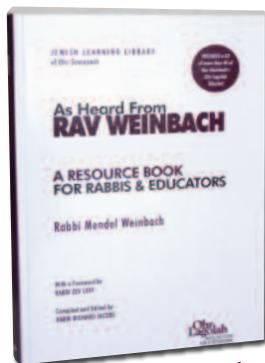
The Aruch HaShulchan explains why one should skip *Pesukei D’zimra* entirely when there is no time. The reason is because the power of “*tefillah betzibur*” (praying with the congregation) is very great. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav adds that the reason we say *Pesukei D’zimra* at the beginning of the prayer service is in order to help our prayers gain acceptance. We are taught that one’s prayers will certainly be accepted when praying together with the congregation. Therefore, when there is no time, it is preferable to pray with the congregation than to say *Pesukei D’zimra*.

If there is not enough time to put on one’s *tallit* and *teffilin* even with skipping *Pesukei D’zimra*, one should pray without

skipping, at his own pace. (Aruch HaShulchan; Halacha Berurah)

The Piskei Teshuvot writes in the name of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach that if one already fulfilled his Biblical obligation to recite *Shema*, he says only the blessings of *Shema*, while leaving out the *Shema*, in order to catch up and pray the Shemoneh Esrei together with the congregation.

In Teshuvot Mishkenot Yaakov, cited in the Mishneh Berurah (6), it is stated that the blessings of “*Baruch Sh’amar*” and “*Yishtabach*” date back to the times of the Tannaic (before the Common Era). As such, it is better to pray by oneself rather than leave out these two blessings. The Mishneh Berurah seems to agree with the ruling of the Mishkenot Yaakov that he should pray without omitting these. He adds that when the *chazzan* prays slowly it is best for one to at least say “*Baruch Sh’amar*”, “*Ashrei*”, and “*Yishtabach*”, while catching up to the congregation in time to pray Shemoneh Esrei with them. One doing so must remember to say *Shema* properly, since it is a Biblical mitzvah.



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SACRED SPACES

There are two words which refer to the accumulation of holiness on a spatial level: *Mishkan* and *Mikdash*. Although the Talmud (*Eruvin* 2a) admits that these two words can sometimes be used almost interchangeably, they are not truly synonymous. They actually refer to two specific types of holy places, and other usages are simply borrowed meanings. The word *Mishkan*, commonly translated as “Tabernacle”, generally refers to the temporary, portable Temple that the Jews would erect and disassemble as they travelled through the wilderness. Its root is associated with the words *le-shaken* and *shechina*, which refer to the “dwelling” of G-d’s Holy Presence. The term *Mikdash* or *Bet ha-Mikdash*, usually translated as “the Holy Temple”, is a reference to the permanent Temples built in Jerusalem upon Mount Moriah.

The *Mishkan* remained mobile for the forty years that the Jews traversed the desert, and then stood stationary at Gilgal for the first fourteen years that the Jews settled in the Holy Land (while they conquered and divided the Land). Afterwards, the *Mishkan* was transferred to the city of Shiloh where it stood for three-hundred and sixty-nine years. When the Phillistines destroyed the *Mishkan* at Shiloh, it was relocated to Nov and then Givon, for a total of fifty-seven years. By that time, the Davidic dynasty had already begun its reign, and King Solomon then built the First Temple in Jerusalem. The Babylonians destroyed the First Temple about 410 years after its destruction, and sent the Jewish nation into a seventy-year exile in Babylon. Upon returning from exile, the Jewish People came to Jerusalem and built the Second Temple under Persian rule. That Temple also lasted some four centuries until it was destroyed by the Roman legionaries in the year 69 CE.

So what is the difference between a *Mikdash* and *Mishkan*? In the *Mishkan*, the Holy of Holies (the chamber that housed the Ark of the Covenant) was marked off with a special curtain. In the First Temple it was marked off with a wall (although, in the Second Temple it was demarcated with two curtains). Similarly, the *Mishkan* was covered with ten cloth curtains, while the *Mikdash* had a real roof. The *Mishkan* used cloth and curtains whereas the *Mikdash* used more concrete materials, because, by its very nature the *Mishkan* was merely temporary, while the *Mikdash* was meant to be permanent. The dimensions of the *Mikdash* were obviously greater than those of the *Mishkan* precisely because the latter was meant to be a permanent structure, not a movable, temporary one.

Another major difference between the *Mishkan*-era and *Mikdash*-era was the halachic permissibility of private altars. That is, when the central place of worship was the *Mishkan*, then halacha allowed for private altars for the offering of cer-

tain types of sacrifices (except for the forty years in the desert and the three-and-a-half centuries that the *Mishkan* stood at Shiloh). However, once the *Mikdash* was built all private altars became permanently forbidden.

The Mishna (*Zevachim* 14:6) explains that the *Mishkan* that stood at Shiloh had “quasi-*Mikdash*” status. At Shiloh, the *Mishkan* was built differently than at other places: The stone walls of the *Mishkan* in Shiloh exhibited the properties of a permanent edifice (unlike at the other places where the *Mishkan* rested), but it was nonetheless covered with a curtain as it was when erected at other places. Moreover, as mentioned above, the *Mishkan* stood at Shiloh for almost four hundred years, which certainly gave it some sort of permanence. So the *Mishkan* at Shiloh was not a temporary Sanctuary like the *Mishkan* at other places; it was a semi-permanent stepping-stone between the temporary *Mishkan* and the permanent *Mikdash*.

The Talmud (*Yoma* 9a-9b) reveals the reasons for the tragedies of the destruction of the *Mishkan* at Shiloh and the two Temples in Jerusalem. The *Mishkan* at Shiloh was destroyed as punishment for the desecration of holy food-stuffs and for intimacy impropriety; the First Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed because of the three cardinal sins (idolatry, intimacy impropriety, and murder); and the Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred amongst fellow Jews. The destruction of the two *Batei Mikdash* is mourned yearly on Tisha B’Av, but in some ways the destruction of *Mishkan* Shiloh is an equally sad catastrophe.

Towards the end of his life Moshe tells the assembled Jews, “For you have not yet come to the resting place or to the inheritance that the L-rd, your G-d, gives you” (Deut. 12:9). The Talmud (*Zevachim* 119a) expounds this verse as a reference to the two stages of Temple-building: “the resting place” refers to the *Mishkan* at Shiloh, while “the inheritance” refers to the Temple in Jerusalem. Rabbi Avraham Wittenstein (of Yeshivat Mir in Jerusalem) explains that the *Mishkan*-paradigm had an advantage because it reflected the continuous manifestation of G-d’s presence from the time of His revelation at Mount Sinai. When the Phillistines destroyed the *Mishkan* at Shiloh they caused a type of disconnection from Sinai, so that when the *Mishkan* would later be reconstructed (at Nov and Givon) and the *Mikdash* would eventually be built, the Holy Presence there would not be the direct continuation of the Divine revelation at Sinai. Instead, it would represent a new sort of revelation which could only be achieved through the hard work of the Prophet Samuel and King David.

Author’s note:

Le’Zechut Refuah Shleimah for Bracha bat Chaya Rachel

YOSEF SEBAG

**Age 44 - Born: Issy-Let-Moulineaux, France - Raised: Worcester, Massachusetts
U. of Massachusetts, BS in Physics and BS in Electrical Engineering, 1996**

Yosef was born into a Moroccan Jewish family in France and moved to Worcester, Massachusetts when he was eight years old. It was a traditional family, and while they weren't particularly observant, his parents wanted him and his siblings to get a Jewish education and sent them to a local Chabad Day School. After bar mitzvah Yosef attended the local public school.

He was a diligent student, and after high school attended the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, graduating with a double degree in Physics and Electrical Engineering. After graduation Yosef continued his study of medium-energy nuclear physics while working in research for Professor Rory Miskimen, the head at the Physics Department at UMass-Amherst. But his investigations into the mysteries of the world were not confined to physical matter. What lay beyond the physical world was of at least as great importance to Yosef.

That search eventually led Yosef to Jerusalem and a three week summer JLE Program at Ohr Somayach in 1996. He stayed here for three years. Postponing a full scholarship to graduate school in Physics in Boston, he entered Ohr Somayach's Introductory Program and learned with *hasmada*



(diligence) under the tutelage Rabbi Rockmill and the other Rabbis here, until he reached the *shiur* of HaRav Dov Schwartzman, *atzal*, the highest level in the Yeshiva. After those three years in Ohr Somayach, Yosef married a young woman from Switzerland and started learning in *kollel* at the Mir Yeshiva.

He is still living in Jerusalem with his wife and six children, and is now learning full-time in a *kollel* in Neve Yaakov. He and has published the following English translations and commentaries:

Duties of the Heart with commentaries: <http://dafyomireview.com/384>

The Path of the Just with commentaries: <http://dafyomireview.com/447>

Marks of Divine Wisdom: <http://dafyomireview.com/427>

Shaarei Kedusha (partial translation): <http://dafyomireview.com/442>

Torah Authenticity: <http://dafyomireview.com/430>

Yosef says that he is eternally grateful to Ohr Somayach for having helped him rediscover Judaism, and Ohr Somayach is eternally grateful for "discovering" Yosef — a successful alumnus of the Yeshiva who continues to represent the lofty values of Torah Judaism.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

TIMNAT SERACH — TOMB OF YEHOSHUA BIN NUN

As next Shabbat (March 4, 2017) is "*Shabbat Zachor*", when we read in the synagogues about the first clash between our nation and its Amalekite enemy, it is fitting to take note of the general who led our ancestors to victory.

Yehoshua bin Nun, the devoted disciple and succes-



sor of Moshe, is buried in Timnat Serach, which is on the Trans-Samaria Highway next to Ariel. The other name for this site — Cherness — is a reference to the image of the sun etched on the tombstone of this great leader who succeeded in having G-d stop the sun at Gibeon so that he could complete his military triumph over his Emorite enemies.

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