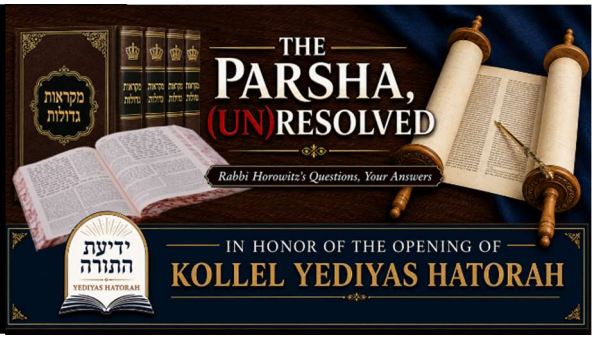
פרשת
כי תבא
שנת תשפ"ו



Our Parsha contains the blessings and curses that were to be pronounced at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eval when Klal Yisroel would enter Eretz Yisroel.

We begin with the first curse:

כז:טז אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶּסֶל וּמַסֵּכָה תּוֹעֲבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי חָרָשׁ וְשָׂם בַּסָּתֶר וְעָנוּ כָל-הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן׃

Accursed is the man who will make a graven or molten image, and abomination of HASHEM. A craftsman handiwork, and emplaces it in secret. And the entire people should say Amen.

In a Sefer Torah we see this possuk as its own paragraph, there is a blank space both before and after it. They are both Parshos Stumos, represented in a Chumash with the letter Samech.

As we progress through the remainder of the curses we see this pattern; each curse is its own paragraph with a Parash Stuma both before and after.

The exception is the fourth and fifth curses:

כז:יט אָרוּר מַטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר-יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן׃

Accursed is one who mperverts a judgment of a proselyte, orphan, or widow. And the entire people shall say, Amen.

כז:כ אָרוּר שֹׁכֵב עִם-אֵשֶׁת אָבִיו כִּי גִלָּה כְּנַף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן׃

Accursed is the one who lies with the wife of his father, for he will have uncovered the robe of his father. And the entire people shall say, Amen.

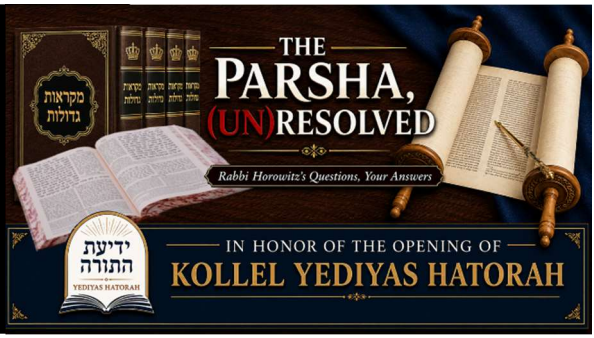
Between these two curses there is no delineating space, effectively grouping them together into one paragraph.

This seems to imply to us that these two curses are somehow connected to one another. As of yet though, I have not been able to see any special connection between these two curses more than any of the others on the list.

תשובות לפרשת

כי תבא

שנת תשפ"ו



Review of the Question:

Our *Parsha* contains the blessings and curses that were to be pronounced at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eval when Klal Yisroel would enter *Eretz Yisro*el.

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As we progress through the remainder of the curses we see this pattern; each curse is its own paragraph with a *Parash Stuma* both before and after.

The exception is the fourth and fifth curses:

כז:יט אָרוּר מַטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר-יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן:

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The Answers:

Unbeleivable! I would not have believed that so many answers could be found for this question, yet this very special group indeed succeeded in finding solutions for our *Parsha*!

Before presenting the answers, it is important to note that the assertion that there is no *parashah setumah* between these curses is not universally agreed upon. According to several *sefarim*, there is indeed a parashah setumah between them, and such is also the text in certain variants of the Rambam (Hilkhos Sefer Torah 8:4). See the Kesef Mishneh there, as well as the Minchas Shai, who conclude that the proper text follows the version in our *Sifrei Torah*—namely, not to place a break between them.

1. R' Baruch Clein (Beitar Illit) noted that one's father's wife remains forbidden to him even after the father's death. In such a scenario, the son who committed the *aveira* was an orphan, and his father's wife was a widow. It is possible that the Torah comes to emphasize that just as we do not pervert their judgment to harm them when they are innocent, so too we do not show them misplaced mercy in judgment if they transgressed—even though the *Beis Din* ends up executing both an orphan and a widow.

2. For two consecutive weeks now, my question has been directly addressed in the writings of the great Rabbanim of Germany; it appears that my community has had an influence upon me. **R' Yitzchak Neckameyer** (a member of the shul) and **R' Chesky Feld** (Beitar Illit) directed me to the words of **HaRav Samson Raphael Hirsch ztz"l**, who highlighted the balance in these curses between *aveiros bein adam le-chaveiro* and the transgressions of *arayos*, to demonstrate to us the severity of these prohibitions. For one might argue that *arayos* performed in secret, which no one knows or feels, are not as severe as transgressions that directly destroy peaceful human society. On the other hand, some appreciate the gravity of *arayos* but consider interpersonal transgressions less significant. To both, the text emphasizes that they are equal in their severity. And specifically here, where the first five curses concerning *aveiros bein adam le-chaveiro* transition to address the *arayos*, no break is made, to show that they are all equal.

3. All the other answers are based on the Gemara in Shabbos 56a, which states that whoever says Reuven sinned is mistaken... Is it possible that his descendants were

destined to stand on Har Eival and proclaim 'Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife,' and this sin should come to his hand? Rather, the correct explanation of the *possuk* is that he said: If my mother's sister was a rival to my mother, shall the handmaid of my mother's sister also be a rival to my mother? He arose and rearranged her bed.

The intent of the *Gemara* is not merely that Reuven's descendants were present alongside the other tribes on Har Gerizim and Har Eival, but as Rashi already explained to us that there eleven curses corresponding to eleven of the tribes, and regarding Shimon he did not write a curse, since he had no intention to bless him before his death along wiht the other tribes, therefore he did not wish to curse him. If we calculate each curse as corresponding to one tribe, it turns out that the curse of one who lies with his father's wife—the sixth curse—is the curse stated regarding the tribe of Reuben. This works out whether counting from the end, starting with Naphtali as explained by the Maharil Diskin zt"l, or counting from the beginning while skipping Shimon as mentioned above.

Accordingly, **R' Shimon Verbov** (Beitar Illit) cited in the name of the **Maharil Diskin zt"l** that in order to conceal the matter, the Torah combined it with the preceding curse, so that it should not explicitly appear as the sixth curse, rather merely part of the fifth curse and not stated against Reuven at all.

4. A similar idea is found in **HaKsav VeHaKabbalah**. The Torah combined this curse with the curse of "perverting the judgment of the *ger*, etc.," to show that what is written regarding Reuven was not the actual transgression of *arayos*, but merely a rearrangement of her bed which is more similar to the idea of perverting the judgment of the *ger*," which speaks of the treatment of the vulnerable among us. Bilhah too, being a handmaid, was among the vulnerable and suffered distress due to Reuven's act. This same concept is also found in the **Chasam Sofer** on the Torah, albeit with a slightly different calculation (see there).

5. Along these lines, an **anonymous** reader answered that there are two curses here that one might attribute to the *Shevatim* themselves as having transgressed: "perverting the judgment of the orphan" in the sale of Yosef, and "lying with his father's wife" in the incident of Reuven. They are written together to show that in truth these curses were not stated against them. For just as Reuven did not actually lie with his father's wife, and was not present with them at the sale of Yosef, we learn that the *Shevatim* likewise did not violate the prohibition of perverting the judgment of an orphan, but rather judged him properly according to their understanding of the situation.

To send your answers, to join the distribution list, or for more information on sponsorship opportunities,
email shaisavraham@gmail.com