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TORAS LEVI YITZCHOK · AN ELUCIDATED SERIES · № 3

לקוטי לוי יצחק

הערות למסכת סוטה — דף ל״ז ע״א

Forty-Eight Covenants

Why every mitzvah is sealed forty-eight times over —
and what it means to be a guarantor for someone else's guarantee

עֲרַבָא וְעַרְבָא דְעַרְבָא אִיכָּא בֵּינַיְיהוּ

SOTAH 37A

CONTINUING THE SERIES

From Two Dreams to Forty-Eight Seals

Installment № 2 closed with Netzach and Hod, love and fear, and a dense transitional passage mapping Leah and Rachel onto three points of Da'as. Rav Levik moves on, in the same breath, to an entirely different Gemara — the count of forty-eight covenants sealed over every single mitzvah at Sinai, at the Ohel Moed, and at Arvos Moav. It turns out to be the same four-mind structure again, worked out through a different set of verbs.

THIS INSTALLMENT

Source: *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak — He'oros to the Shas*, Maseches Sotah, pp. 51–54 (נא–נד), third he'ara: Sotah 37a. Begins partway down page נא, after installment № 2's Leah/Rachel transitional material; runs through pages נב and נג in full; ends partway down page נד, just before the next he'ara (Sotah 48a, on Rav Huna's ban on song) begins. This is the third of four he'aros that make up the sefer's complete "Heoros on Maseches Sotah" section — the fourth and last closes the section outright, immediately followed by a new header, מסכת גיטין. Two gematria claims in this he'ara could not be independently verified — see Passage 3 and the transcription note at the back.

Forty-Eight Covenants on Every Mitzvah

The Mishnah and Gemara on Sotah 37a work through the blessings and curses proclaimed at Har Grizim and Har Eival, and the parallel ceremonies at Sinai, the Ohel Moed, and Arvos Moav:

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: בָּרוּךְ בִּכְלָל, בָּרוּךְ בִּפְרָט; אָרוּר בִּכְלָל, אָרוּר בִּפְרָט; לִלְמוֹד וּלְלַמֵּד, לִשְׁמוֹר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת — הֲרֵי אַרְבַּע אַרְבַּע וְאַרְבַּע, הֲרֵי שְׁמוֹנָה; שְׁמוֹנָה וּשְׁמוֹנָה הֲרֵי שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה; וְכֵן בְּסִינַי וְכֵן בְּעַרְבוֹת מוֹאָב... נִמְצָא מ״ח בְּרִיתוֹת עַל כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה... רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה אִישׁ כְּפַר עַכּוֹ אָמַר מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן: אֵין לְךָ מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שֶׁכְּתוּבָה בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא נִכְרְתוּ עָלֶיהָ מ״ח בְּרִיתוֹת. אָמַר רַבִּי: לְדִבְרֵי רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה, נִמְצָא לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים. מַאי בֵּינַיְיהוּ? אָמַר רַב מְשַׁרְשִׁיָא: עֲרָבָא וַעֲרָבָא דַּעֲרָבָא אִיכָּא בֵּינַיְיהוּ.

The Rabbis taught: Baruch generally, baruch specifically; arur generally, arur specifically; to learn and to teach, to guard and to do — four, times four, times four is eight; eight and eight is sixteen; so too at Sinai, so too at Arvos Moav... it emerges that forty-eight covenants were sealed over every single mitzvah... **R. Shimon b. Yehuda of Kfar Akko** said in R. Shimon's name: every mitzvah has forty-eight covenants sealed over it. **Rebbi said:** per R. Shimon b. Yehuda's own view, that comes to 603,550 for every single Jew [multiplying by the number of Israelites counted in the desert]. **What is the practical difference between the two views?** Rav Mesharshia said: **mutual guarantee, and guarantee of the guarantee.**

Four threads run through the whole he'ara:

א **Why these four verbs — learn, teach, guard, do — and why in this order?** Each turns out to correspond to one of the four "mochin" that Rav Levik builds his whole structure on.

ב **Why forty-eight, specifically?** The number itself gets derived three independent ways in this he'ara — through the four mochin, through Leah's states, and through arvus.

ג **Why does R. Shimon b. Yehuda's name — specifically "of Kfar Akko" — carry the deeper reading?** Rav Levik reads the placename itself as a Binah-marker.

ד **What is the actual difference between simple arvus and "arvus of arvus"?** Two Sages, two structurally different kinds of mutual guarantee — mapped onto two letters, and ultimately onto two of the three heads of Keser.

PASSAGE 1

The Four Mochin Behind the Four Verbs

Torah is from Chochmah, as it is said, *"Torah issues forth from Chochmah"* — that is, from Yesod Abba; it is the aspect of *mochin*, the four minds Chochmah-Binah-Chessed/Gevurah-of-Daas that emerge from Yesod Abba. (This is why Torah was given over forty days, corresponding to the four mochin, each containing ten — the aspect of the *mem* of tzelem, and the *mem* of tzelem is in Chochmah.) This is the meaning of the four things: to learn, to teach, to guard, and to do. To learn is the mind of Chochmah; to teach is the mind of Binah, as it says *"and teaches man understanding"* — for Binah is the teacher.

הנה תורה היא מחכ', כמא' אורייתא מחכ' נפקת, והיינו מיסוד אבא, והיא בחי' מוחין, והוא הד' מוחין חו"ב חו"ג דדעת היוצאים מיסוד אבא. (ולכן ניתנה התורה למ' יום, לנגד הד' מוחין שכ"א כלול מי', בחי' מ' דצלם, ומ' דצלם הוא בחכ' כמ"ש בע"ח שער דרושי הצלם דרוש א' ע"ש) וזהו הד' דברים ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות. ללמוד בחי' מוח דחכ', ללמד מוח דבינה, כמא' ומלמד לאנוש בינה שבינה היא המלמד.

Why teaching specifically needs Binah and not raw Chochmah: one can only teach what one understands — a flash of insight held as a single point (Chochmah's mode) can be learned privately, but not transmitted, until it is worked through into understanding (Binah's mode).

For only when one understands the matter can one teach it to others — whereas when it is in one's mind of Chochmah in the mode of a single point, emerging from the power of the intellect, then one can learn it oneself, but not teach it to others. Learning and teaching are the aspect of mochin, and the essential mochin are Chochmah-Binah. **To guard and to do are Chessed-Gevurah of Daas:** to guard is a prohibition — the crown of Gevurah of Daas; to do is a positive command — the crown of Chessed of Daas. Guard precedes do, since from the mochin of Abba's side, the crown of Gevurah emerges before the crown of Chessed — as with the tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam, where the mochin-of-Abba placement (the parsha of "v'haya im shamo'a," crown of Gevurah) precedes the parsha of Shema (crown of Chessed).

כי אימתי יכול ללמד לאחרים הוא כשמבין את הדבר, משא"כ כשהוא במוח חכ' שלו בבחי' נקודה אחת הנובע מכח המשכיל, אז יכול ללמוד בעצמו, ולא ללמד לאחרים. וללמוד וללמד הוא בחי' מוחין, ועיקרי המוחין הם חו"ב. לשמור ולעשות חו"ג דדעת. לשמור שהוא מל"ת הוא עטרא דגבורה דדעת. לעשות שהוא מ"ע הוא עטרא דחסד דדעת, דהקדים לשמור ולעשות, כי מצד מוחין דאבא קדים לצאת העטרא דגבורה לעטרא דחסד. וכמו בתפילין דר"ת שהם בחי' מוחין דאבא קדים בהנחה בבתים פ' והי' אם שמע עטרא דגבורה לפ' שמע עטרא דחסד.

PASSAGE 2

Baruch and Arur on the Same Map

Baruch (blessing) and arur (curse), generally and specifically, are also mapped to the four mochin — Chochmah-Binah-Chessed/Gevurah-of-Daas — since blessing draws from the right line and curse from the left. So: baruch is from the right-side mochin, arur from the left-side. Baruch generally is from the mind of Chochmah; baruch specifically is from the crown of Chessed of Daas. Arur generally is from the mind of Binah; arur specifically is from the crown of Gevurah of Daas.

בכלל ארור בפרט הם ג"כ לנגד הד' מוחין חו"ב חו"ג. כי מוח שברכה הוא מקו הימין, וארור קללה, הוא מקו השמאל. א"כ ברוך הוא ממוחין הימנים וארור הוא ממוחין השמאלים. ברוך בכלל ממוח דחכ', ברוך בפרט מעטרא דחסד דדעת, ארור בכלל ממוח דבינה, ארור בפרט מעטרא דגבורה דדעת.

KLAL AND PRAT, VERIFIED

כְּלָל 80 = 30 ל 30 ל 20 כ = יְסוֹד 80 = 4 ד 6 ו 60 ס 10 י

"Klal" sits in Zeir Anpin, ending in Yesod — the gematria confirms it exactly. "Prat" sits in Malchus, as with kol and dibur (speech), themselves a classic klal-and-prat pair (Zohar, Shemos 3b).

Deriving Forty-Eight, First Way: the Four Mochin

Each of the four mochin contains all four within it (4 × 4 = 16), and this happens three times — Sinai, Ohel Moed, Arvos Moav — giving 16 × 3 = 48. Rav Levik ties the same 48 to Leah's four chambers (ד' בתים) and the four knots of the tefillin-shel-rosh (ד' קשרי דתש"ר), both counted by the word מד"ת.

Deriving Forty-Eight, Second Way: Leah's Three States

R. Shimon b. Yehuda's multiplication (48 × 603,550) is explained through three states of Leah — drawn purely from katnus (smallness); drawn from a mixture of katnus and gadlus together; drawn purely from gadlus — each contributing sixteen, for 3 × 16 = 48 again, independently.

Deriving Forty-Eight, Third Way: Arvus Itself

And the aspect of arvus (mutual guarantee) is from the side of Binah — for all 603,550 of Israel are included and interwoven together in Binah, since Binah is a general encompassing (makif), and from its side each person becomes a guarantor for the other, for within the makif everyone is intermingled and included together, so each one becomes a guarantor for the other, and so it is understood. And the sky (רקיע) is called ערבות ["Aravos," but also "guarantees"] — from the language of intermingling — and in Binah it is the aspect of the closed ם.

ובחי' הערבות מצד בינה, כי שם כלולים ומעורבים כל הת"ר אלף וג' אלפים ותק"ן ישראל, שהם בכלל בבינה כלולים הכל יחד. כי בינה היא בחי' מקיף בכלל, ומצדה היא שכ"א נעשה ערב בעד חבירו, מאחר שמעורבים וכלולים יחד. ורקיע נק' ערבות, מלשון ערם, ובבינה הוא בחי' ס"ם סתומה.

PASSAGE 3

Why "Kfar Akko"

This is the view of R. Shimon b. Yehuda, a man of Kfar Akko: **"Kfar"** hints at Binah, since Binah is what clothes itself in Beriah, called "kfar" — and also "kfar" from the language of "kapparah" (atonement), and kapparah is from the side of Binah, as is known regarding Yom Kippur, which is rooted in Binah.

והיינו דעת ר"ש בן יהודה איש כפר עכו. כפר הוא מלשון בינה מתלבשת בבריאה הנקראת כפר... גם כפר הוא מלשון כפרה. וכפרה הוא מצד בינה, וכידוע בענין יום הכפורים שהוא בבינה.

KFAR AKKO, THREE WAYS IN

כפ 20 פ 80 ר 200 = 300 כְּפַר = מִצְפַּ"ץ = 300 atbash of יהוה

Verified: swapping every letter of the Name יהוה for its atbash partner (י↔מ, ה↔צ, ו↔פ, ה↔צ) gives מצפ"ץ, and 40+90+80+90 = 300 — exactly כפר.

מ"ח = 48 מַדַּ"ת = 444 − 48 = 396

Verified: 444 − 48 = 396 = כפר עכו (כפר=300, עכו=96, together 396) — exactly.

כְּפַר 300 ≠ תּוֹרָה 611

UNVERIFIED

The he'ara states כפ"ר ג' תור"ה במכוון ("kfar equals torah, precisely") — but by simple letter-gematria, 300 and 611 do not match. This may be a transcription or extraction error rather than a real mismatch in the source; flagged rather than forced to a resolution.

A second claim in the same passage — כפ"ר ג' אלקים במילוי יודי"ן ג' ברחמים ("kfar equals Elokim in milui yudin, which equals Rachamim") — also could not be independently verified here: מילוי יודין is a specific technical spelling-convention normally applied to the four classical spellings of the Name Havayah, and reconstructing how it applies to the Name Elokim from first principles risks inventing a procedure rather than reporting one. Flagged UNVERIFIED alongside the kfar/torah identity above.

זהו ההפרש בין דעת רשב"י איש כפר עכו לדעת רבי. שרשב"י ס"ל ערבא, ורבי ס"ל גם ערבא דערבא. ערבא הוא מצד מ' סתומה, בחי' תבונה, שהוא רק בחי' מקיף בלבד, וערבא דערבא, גם ערבות בעד הערבות, הוא מצד ס' שהוא עגול מכל צד, שהוא בחי' מקיף למקיף.

This is the distinction between the view of Reshbi (as transmitted by the man of Kfar Akko) and the view of Rebbi: Reshbi holds simple arva; Rebbi holds also arva d'arva. Arva is from the side of the closed ם, the aspect of Tevunah, which is only a single-level encompassing; arva d'arva — guarantee also for the guarantee — is from the side of the round ס, round on every side, which is an encompassing of the encompassing.

ELUCIDATION — The passage closes (on page נג/נד, past the point transcribed in full here) by mapping this same distinction onto the three daily blessings before Torah study: the first blessing ("al divrei Torah") corresponds to Daas itself; the second ("v'ha'arev na") to Reshbi's level of simple arvus;

the third ("ha'melamed Torah" / "nosein haTorah") to Rebbi's arva d'arva — and further back, onto the three heads of Keser (Chasan Pnimi, Avira as small makif, Galgalta as large makif or makif-l'makif), following the general pattern that a deeper mochin-source requires a deeper form of guarantee.

Glossary

חו״ב חו״ג דדעת	Chochmah, Binah, and the Chessed/Gevurah "crowns" of Daas — the four mochin this entire he'ara is organized around.
ערבא / ערבא דערבא	Simple mutual guarantee, versus guarantee-of-the-guarantee — the Gemara's own answer to "what's the practical difference" between the two views on the 48-covenant count.
מקיף / מקיף למקיף	An "encompassing" light that surrounds rather than fills a vessel from within, versus an encompassing of that encompassing — the structural basis Rav Levik gives for why arvus has two distinct levels rather than one.
ם סתומה / ס	The closed final mem (associated with Tevunah, a single-level makif) versus the letter samech, "round on every side" (associated with Binah proper, a makif of the makif) — the letter-pair Rav Levik uses to grade the two levels of guarantee.
אתב״ש	Atbash — the classical cipher pairing the first Hebrew letter with the last, the second with the second-to-last, and so on; used here to connect כפר with the Name Havayah.

Citation Index

REFERENCE	STATUS
סוטה לז, א	VERIFIED — the Gemara under discussion
כלל = יסוד (80)	VERIFIED — checked by script
מדת − מ״ח = כפר עכו	VERIFIED — checked by script (444−48=396=300+96)
כפר = מצפ״ץ (יהוה atbash)	VERIFIED — checked by script, full four-letter atbash
כפר = תורה "במכוון"	UNVERIFIED — 300 ≠ 611 by simple gematria; see Passage 3
כפר = אלקים במילוי יודין = ברחמים	UNVERIFIED — milui yudin is a Havayah-specific technique; applying it to Elokim from first principles would be invention, not verification
בע״ח שער דרושי הצלם, דרוש א׳	AS CITED — the mem of tzelem in Chochmah
זהר שמות ג, ב	AS CITED — kol v'dibur as klal u'prat
טעמי מצות (רח״ו), שופטים	AS CITED — the three states of Leah
מסכת אבות, פ׳ שנו חכמים	AS CITED — Torah acquired through 48 things

לעילוי נשמת

ר׳ לוי יצחק בן ר׳ ברוך שניאור, ז״ל

נלב״ע י״ג ניסן ה׳תש״ד

Transcription note

The Hebrew text was transcribed from the reader's photographs and screenshots of the printed page (*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak — He'oros LeShas*, Sotah, pp. נא–נד) and cross-checked against the HebrewBooks 31637 scan. This he'ara is denser and more compressed than installments № 1–2, particularly the wordplay in Passage 3 around כפר עכו; two gematria claims there — תורה = כפר and אלקים במילוי יודין = כפר — are transcribed as read but flagged UNVERIFIED rather than silently resolved, since neither closes by simple letter-arithmetic and one depends on a specialized milui convention this booklet cannot independently confirm. Two other identities in the same passage — יסוד = כלל and כפר = מצפ״ץ (the atbash of יהוה) — were independently checked by script and are exact. Passages beyond the midpoint of page נד describing the three-blessings and three-heads-of-Keser mapping are summarized as elucidation rather than transcribed in full parallel Hebrew/English, and should be checked against the physical page before being treated as verbatim. All gematria identifications, sefirah-mappings, and cross-references within the he'ara are Rav Levik's own; passages marked ELUCIDATION or ELUCIDATOR'S INFERENCE are the editor's scaffolding and should be judged accordingly.

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METHOD

What this edition is

An elucidated edition sets the original beside a translation and an editorial elucidation, and marks at every point which is which. Bold is translation of the words themselves. Lighter italic is elucidation — explanation, context, and the connective tissue the text assumes its reader already carries. Nothing in bold has been supplied by the editor; nothing in italic is in the original.

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What is not here

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PREPARED BY

Shimon Rosenberg · shimon@reshimu.ai

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