

WHAT WAS IN THE HOLY ARK?

Parshat Teruma

וְנָתַתְּ אֶל־הָאָרֶן אֶת הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ:

And deposit in the Ark [the tablets of] the Testimony which I will give you.

וְנָתַתְּ אֶת־הַכִּפֹּרֶת עַל־הָאָרֶן מִלְּמַעַלָּה וְאֶל־הָאָרֶן תִּתֵּן אֶת־הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן אֵלֶיךָ:

Place the cover on top of the Ark, after depositing inside the Ark the Testimony that I will give you.

The testimony?

Rashi

העדות. התורה, שהיא לעדות ביני וביניכם שצויתי אתכם מצוות הפתובות בה:

THE TESTIMONY — the Torah (the Tablets; cf. **Rashi on Exodus 40:20**) which is a testimony between Me and you that I have ordained the commandments written in it (**Midrash Tanchuma, Pekudei 4**).

Rashi 40, 20:

את העדות THE TESTIMONY — the Tablets.

את העדות. הלוחות:

Deut. 10

וְאָכַתְבֹּת עַל־הַלְחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלְחֹת הָרִאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וְשָׁמַתָּם בָּאָרוֹן:

I will inscribe on the tablets the commandments that were on the first tablets that you smashed, and you shall deposit them in the ark.”

וְאָעַשׂ אָרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְאָפְסַל שְׁנֵי־לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרִאשֹׁנִים וְאָעַל הָהָרָה וְשָׁנִי הַלְחֹת בְּיָדַי:

I made an ark of acacia wood and carved out two tablets of stone like the first; I took the two tablets with me and went up the mountain.

וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחָת כַּמִּכְתָּב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֵת עֲשֵׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקֹּהֵל וַיִּתֵּןם יי אֵלֵי:

The LORD inscribed on the tablets the same text as on the first, the Ten Commandments that He addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly; and the LORD gave them to me.

וְאִפֹּן וְאַרְדֹּ מִן־הַהָר וְאָשֵׁם אֶת־הַלְחָת בְּאָרוֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי שָׁם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּי "

Then I left and went down from the mountain, and I deposited the tablets in the ark that I had made, where they still are, as the LORD had commanded me.

Deut. 31

לְקַח אֶת סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה וְשַׂמְתָּם אִתּוֹ מִצַּד אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהָיָה־שָׁם בְּךָ לְעֵד:

Take this book of Teaching and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and let it remain there as a witness against you.

Rashi

מצד ארון ברית ה'. נחלקו בו חכמי ישראל בבבא בתרא (דף י"ד), יש מהם אומרים דף היה בולט מן הארון מבחוץ ושם היה מנח, ויש אומרים מצד הלוחות היה מנח בתוך הארון:

[TAKE THIS BOOK OF THE LAW AND PUT IT] AT THE SIDE OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD — The sages of Israel differ about it (the meaning of the phrase “at the side of the Ark”) in Treatise **Bava Batra 14a**. Some of them say: A board projected from the Ark outside it and there it (the scroll) lay, whilst others say that it lay at the side of the Tablets within the Ark.

Bava Batra 14a

(**מלכים א ח, ט**) אין בארון רק שני לוחות האבנים אשר הניח שם משה [וגו'] מאי אין בארון רק מיעוט אחר מיעוט ואין מיעוט אחר מיעוט אלא לרבות ס"ת שמונח בארון

What biblical source indicates that a Torah scroll was placed there? **As it is stated:** “**There was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there**” (I Kings 8:9). **What does “there was nothing in the Ark except” mean?** This is an example of a **restriction following a restriction**, as both terms, “nothing” and

“except,” indicate that the Ark was empty. **And** there is a hermeneutical principle that a **restriction following a restriction serves only to amplify** and include other matters. In this case, it serves **to include a Torah scroll that lies in the Ark.**

וארגז ששיגרו בו פלשתים דורון לאלהי ישראל מונח מצדו שנאמר (שמואל א.ו.ח) ואת כלי הזהב אשר השבותם לו אשם תשימו בארגז מצדו ושלחתם אותו והלך ועליו ס"ת מונח שנאמר (דברים לא, כו) לקוח את ספר התורה הזה ושמעתם אותו מצד ארון ברית ה' מצד הוא מונח ולא בתוכו

And the chest in which the Philistines sent the gift to the God of Israel was placed alongside the Ark, as it is stated: “And put the golden devices which you are restoring to Him for a guilt-offering in a chest by the side of it, and send it away that it may go” (I Samuel 6:8). And upon this chest lay the Torah scroll, as it is stated: “Take this Torah scroll and put it at the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 31:26). This means that it was placed at the side of the Ark, and not inside it.

ומה אני מקיים אין בארון רק לרבות

And accordingly, how do I realize the meaning of that which is stated: “There was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there,” which, according to the opinion of Rabbi Meir, teaches that something else was in the Ark besides the tablets themselves? It serves to include (14b)

שברי לוחות שמונחים בארון

.the broken pieces of the first set of tablets, which were placed in the Ark

ור"מ עמודין היכא הוו קיימי מבראי ור"מ שברי לוחות דמונחין בארון מנא ליה נפקא ליה מדרב הונא דאמר רב הונא מאי דכתיב (שמואל ב.ו.ב) אשר נקרא שם שם ה' צבאות יושב הכרובים עליו מלמד שלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחים בארון

The Gemara asks: And according to Rabbi Meir, where were the silver columns placed? The Gemara answers: Outside the Ark. The Gemara further asks: And from where does Rabbi Meir derive that the broken pieces of the first set of tablets were placed in the Ark, as the verse from which Rabbi Yehuda learns this: “There was nothing in the Ark except” (I Kings 8:9), is needed by Rabbi Meir to teach that the Torah scroll was placed there? The Gemara answers: He derives this point from what Rav Huna expounded, as Rav Huna says: What is the meaning of that which is written: “The Ark of God, whereupon is called the Name, the name of the Lord of hosts that sits upon the cherubs” (II Samuel 6:2)? The phrase “the name, the name of the Lord” teaches that both the second tablets and the broken pieces of the first set of tablets were placed in the Ark.

ואידך ההוא מבעי ליה לכדרכי יוחנן ד"ר יוחנן א"ר שמעון בן יוחאי מלמד שהשם וכל כינויו מונחין בארון

The Gemara asks: And what does the other Sage, i.e., Rabbi Yehuda, derive from this verse? The Gemara responds: He requires that text for that which Rabbi Yoḥanan says, as Rabbi Yoḥanan says that Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: This teaches that the ineffable name of God and all of His appellations were placed in the Ark.

ואיך נמי מיבעי ליה להכי אין הכי נמי אלא שברי לוחות דמונחין בארון מנא ליה נפקא ליה מדתני רב יוסף דתני רב יוסף (דברים י. ב) אשר שברת ושמתם מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון

The Gemara inquires: And doesn't the other Sage, Rabbi Meir, also require it for that? The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so. Rather, from where does he derive that the broken pieces of the first set of tablets were placed in the Ark? The Gemara expounds: He derives this from that which Rav Yosef taught, as Rav Yosef taught a *baraita*: The verses state: "At that time the Lord said to me: Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first...and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke, and you shall put them in the Ark" (Deuteronomy 10:1–2). This teaches that both the second set of tablets and the broken pieces of the first set of tablets were placed in the Ark.

So there may be things in there aside from the tablets. What about all this other stuff- is it in the ark or next to the ark?

Yalkut Teruma

והבאת שמה מבית לפרכת את ארון העדות, ושם היה נתון **צנצנת המן** וצלוחית של שמן המשחה ומקלו של אהרן שקדיה ופרחיה (ובגדי כהנים ובגדי כהן גדול) ושם היה נכנס אהרן ארבעה פעמים ביום הכפורים.

And you should bring there inside the curtain the Ark of Testimony. And there was placed the jug of maneh and the jug of anointing oil and the staff of Aharon with its blossoms and almonds and...

Keritut 5b

והתניא משנגז ארון נגז צנצנת המן וצלוחית שמן המשחה ומקלו של אהרן שקדים ופרחים וארגז ששגרו פלשתים דורון לאלהי ישראל שנאמר (שמואל א.ו. ח) ואת כלי הזהב אשר השיבותם לו אשם תשימו בארגז מצדו

Has it not been taught: 'When the holy ark was hidden there disappeared with it the jar of manna, the flask of the oil of anointing, the rod of Aaron together with its almonds and blossoms, and the coffer which the Philistines had sent as a present to the God of Israel, as it is written: And put the jewels of gold, which ye return Him for a guilt-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof. 'Who hid it? Josiah, king of Judah, hid it, as it is written:

And he said, put the holy ark [in the house which Solomon the son of David did build: there shall no more be a burden upon your shoulders].

In the end of days... coming soon: Yalkut Shimoni Yirmiah

זזה אחד משלשה דברים שעתיד אליהו להעמיד לישראל צנצנת המן, וצלוחית של מי נדה, צלוחית של שמן המשחה, ויש אומרים אף מקלו של אהרן ושקדיו ופרחיו:

This is one of three things that Eliyahu will afix for Israel, the jug on maneh, the jug of red heifer water, the jug of anointing oil, and some say, the staff of Aharon and its blossoms and almonds

What would be the basis of the debate as to whether the tablets alone or the torah itself is in the Holy Ark? How about all this other stuff? What is the point of the ark?

See Ramban, Teruma

וסוד המשכן הוא, שיהיה הכבוד אשר שכן על הר סיני שוכן עליו בנסתר וכמו שנאמר שם: וישכן כבוד יי' על הר סיני (שמות כ"ד:ט"ז), וכתוב: הן הראנו יי' אלהינו את כבודו ואת גדלו (דברים ה':כ"א), כן כתוב במשכן: וכבוד ה' מלא את המשכן (שמות מ':ל"ד). והזכיר במשכן שני פעמים: וכבוד יי' מלא את המשכן, כנגד: את כבודו ואת גדלו, והיה במשכן תמיד עם ישראל הכבוד שנראה להם בהר סיני.

And the secret of the tabernacle is that the glory of God that dwelt on Mount Sinai, [also] hiddenly dwells upon it. And it is like it is written there (**Exodus 24:16**), "And the glory of the Lord dwells upon Mount Sinai," and it is written (**Deuteronomy 5:21**), "Behold, the Lord, our God, has shown us His glory and His greatness." And so [too] was it written about the tabernacle, "and the glory of the Lord, filled the tabernacle" (**Exodus 40: 34**). And with the tabernacle, it twice mentioned, "and the glory of the Lord, filled the tabernacle" - corresponding to "His glory and His greatness." And the glory that was shown to them on Mount Sinai was always with Israel in the tabernacle.

See Vayhi Binsoah, Parashat Bhaalotecha

וְיִהְיֶה בְּנֹסַע הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה אֲדֹנָי וַיִּפְצְצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ וַיִּגְסוּ מְשֹׁנְאֶיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ:

When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say: Advance, O LORD! May Your enemies be scattered, And may Your foes flee before You!