

MATAN AL HAPEREK

The Six-Year Online Weekly Tanach Learning Program



Perek 26

In perakim 26-28 we find a series of three long prophecies about Tyre. The first prophecy begins with the sin of Tyre (2), and gives the details of the punishment in four sections. The first and second sections (3-6 and 7-14) describe the conquering and destruction of Tyre. The third section (15-18) deals with the reaction of the islands to the destruction of Tyre. The fourth section (19-21) describes the city's descent into the depths and its becoming an eternal wasteland.

- ❶ Like the nations mentioned in the previous perek, Tyre, too, rejoices at the destruction of Jerusalem - "... because Tyre said about Jerusalem, 'Aha! The doors of the peoples have been broken; it has turned to me; I shall become full from her that is laid waste.'"(2) What additional undertone do we hear in the happiness of Tyre? See **Rashi**:

The doors of the peoples have been broken: A city through which all the nations entered for commerce will now be broken, for the siege will not leave it until it is taken.

It has turned to me: From now on, the merchandise of the nations has turned on me.

I shall become full from her that is laid waste: I shall become full from the destroyed city of Jerusalem.





2 The first two sections, which deal with the destruction of Tyre, are constructed in the format of a generalization followed by specifics, and contain many parallel uses of language. Compare the two sections and try to establish the relationship between them. Use the following points as a guide:

a) What is the central image of the destruction in the first section, as compared with the way that the destruction is described in the second section? How is this image interpreted?

b) In which part of each section is the destruction of the daughters in the field (the suburbs of Tyre on the mainland) mentioned? Try to understand the reason for the differences between the positions in each section.

c) What does the phrase "*She will become a place to spread out nets (charamim)*" (5 and 14) mean in each section? To understand the first section pay attention to the words of the **Radak**:

She will become a place to spread out nets: that the fishermen will spread out their nets on that same rock and it will be dry because it will not be rebuilt.

To understand the second section, see Devarim 13:16-18. Examine the meaning of the word ch.r.m. in both settings.

3 The last section (19-21) describes the sea covering Tyre.

a) The description of the sea rising (19) is based on the description of the flood in Bereshit (7: 11, 19). What do you think is the meaning of making the connection between the two?

b) In pesukim 20-21 the descent into the depths is described. What is the focus of the description?



Perek 27

Perek 27 is a lament about Tyre, which was the center of international trade, and is called here *"a merchant of the peoples"*. Tyre is described in great detail as a magnificent, stately ship, which is built of the finest materials. The majority of the lament is dedicated to describing the ship and its contents: at first the parts of the ship are described, each part taken from another country (4-7). Afterward the description turns to the crew and the fighters on the deck of the ship who come from different countries (8-11). Finally, the diverse and expensive goods are described (12-25). The second part of the lament is shorter and describes the sinking of the ship at sea in a dramatic fashion, and the lament that will be said about it after the ship sinks (26-36).

- 4 The lament begins with praise of Tyre, as an introduction to the detailed description of its riches and beauty, *"You said, 'I am the perfection of beauty.'"*(3).

a) According to the Midrash, what is the source of the sin in the words of Tyre?

Eicha Rabbah 2:19: The cities of the nations praise themselves, as it is written *"You said, 'I am the perfection of beauty.'"* But Jerusalem is praised by others, as it is written, *"Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty?"*



b) This Midrash is the basis for Rashi's commentary here. See the commentary and note what **Rashi** adds to the Midrash. Pay attention to how his commentary takes into account the context of the prophecy.

Until now, all [were] saying about Jerusalem (Eicha 2: 15): “*the perfection of beauty*”; “*the joy of all the earth.*” Now you boast, saying, “*I am the perfection of beauty,*” the ultimate extreme of beauty is incorporated in me.

- 5 The detailed description of the Tyrian ship ends in pasuk 25, while in pasuk 26 the description of the ship's sailing and sinking begins. Note the literary connection between the ending of the two pesukim (see also pesukim 4 and 27). How does this connection contribute to our understanding of the reason for the punishment? Use **Rashi**:

and you were filled and you became very heavy: They brought a great burden into your midst and made your load too heavy.

In the abundant waters, your oarsmen brought you: After the manner of the large ships, which they send into the midst of the sea. And since you are filled and are too heavy, the east wind will come and shatter you in the heart of the seas. As regards the comparison of the city: since you were filled with wealth, your heart became haughty, and retribution will befall you.



Appendix

"Situated on the seaport, merchant of the peoples to many isles"

Tyre is one of the most well-known cities in Phoenicia. We can see how ancient it is from Greek and Phoenician literature. Tyre was founded on a small island about 700 meters away from the coast; therefore, it was very difficult to conquer. On the coastline opposite the island were settlements – mainland Tyre. In 332 BCE, the city was conquered by Alexander the Great, after a siege of seven months in which he built a causeway from the mainland to the island. The presence of the causeway affected local sea currents causing sediment accumulation, which made the land connection permanent to this day and transformed Tyre Island into a peninsula.

The geographic qualities of Phoenicia compelled the inhabitants to take up certain occupations: seafaring and fishing. High quality wood was available in the forests of Lebanon for building ships. Tyre was the central port city, and controlled the seaways. It had many trade connections with the nations around it, and its riches came from its key position in international trade both on land and on the sea. Tyre's unique position is reflected in Yechezkel's prophecy – *"situated on the seaport, merchant of the peoples to many isles"*

The relationship between Tyre and Israel in the days of David and Shlomo and Hiram king of Tyre was a relationship of equal partners. The text emphasizes the brotherly relationship and peace between the two nations, and describes how Hiram helped Shlomo to build the Temple. However,



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Tyre was also a negative influence on Israel. Toward the end of Shlomo's days it is told that he worshipped the gods of Sidon. About fifty years after Hiram's death, Ethbaal priest of Astarte ruled Sidon, and he started a new dynasty which ruled Tyre for over one hundred years. While Hiram is called "king of Tyre" by the text, Ethbaal is "King of the Sidonians". This difference symbolizes the political upheaval which had occurred in the interim. Tyre became stronger and took control over all of the southern Phoenician cities. This domination is emphasized in Yechezkel's lament about Tyre which is described as a magnificent ship. The connection between Israel and Tyre in the days of Ethbaal was not only political but economic and religious as well. It was reflected in the marriage between Achav and Izevel the daughter of Ethbaal. In Yechezkel's time, Tyre joined the kingdom of Judah and other local nations in an anti-Babylonian pact, but they did not come to Tzidkiyahu's aid when Nevuchadrezzar attacked Jerusalem.

(Free translation of the Encyclopedia Mikra'it, entries on Phoenicia and Tyre)

(Wikipedia / Karl GRÖBER)



The port of Tyre

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