

ALSHICH

INSIGHTS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

ספר דברים

פרשת כי תצא

14 SEPTEMBER 2024

HONEST WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Chapter 25

13) You must not have [lit., There should not be for you] in your pouch (לְךָ בְּבִיטָה) a weight and a weight (lit., a rock and a rock) – a large one and a small one.

14) You must not have [lit., There should not be for you] in your house (לְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ) a measure [of volume] and a measure – a large one and a small one.

15) A perfect [lit., complete] and honest weight you must have, a complete and honest measure you must have, so that your days will be lengthened on the Land that Hashem your God gives you.

16) For all who do these [things], all who act corruptly, are an abomination to Hashem your God.

(ג) לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ בְּכִיסֶּךָ אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וְקִטְנָה.

(ד) לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה גְּדוֹלָה וְקִטְנָה.

(טו) אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה וְצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֵיפָה שְׁלֵמָה וְצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה לְךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרִיכוּ יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ.

(טז) כִּי תוֹעֲבַת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהֵי כָּל עֲשֵׂה עָוֹל.

Consider the following questions:

1. The words לְךָ בְּכִיסֶּךָ, *for you in your pouch* (verse 13), seem unnecessary, since if the Torah had just said לֹא יִהְיֶה אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וְקִטְנָה we would still understand the law that the Torah is commanding here.
2. We would also seemingly understand the law in verse 14 without the words לְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, *for you in your house*, so what is their purpose here?
3. The word וְצֶדֶק, *and honest*, appears twice in verse 15, and in both cases it seems extraneous.
4. Why does the verse say that one who has an honest weight will merit a long life? Given that verse 16 states that one who has dishonest weights is guilty of committing an abomination, it would seem that all that should be said about a person who has honest weights is that he is not committing an abomination!

The Torah had no need to tell us not to have false weights with the intent to use them to defraud others, because even *for you yourself, in your own pouch* it is forbidden to own a weight that weighs less than its stated mass (the amount it is purported to be) and another weight that weighs more than its stated mass. This is because you may come to use the former when you are the seller (so that the customer will get less than he paid for) and the latter when you are the buyer (so that you will receive more than

you paid for). Similarly, it is forbidden to have both a larger measure (of volume) and a smaller one *for you yourself in your own house*, even if you have no intention of actually using them to measure anything, lest you come to use the smaller one when selling and the larger one when buying. **[This answers Questions 1 and 2.]**

Hashem then tells us: I am now going a step further and command you to go beyond the letter of the law and act in such a way as to avoid even the suspicion of wrongdoing, *so that you will be rewarded in that your days will be lengthened*. Not only must your weights be *honest* (i.e., weighing exactly what they should), they must also be *complete*. This means that if you are using a rock as the weight (in your business), it should be a complete rock and not one that has been cut to create the proper weight. Otherwise, people may suspect that originally you had a whole rock that was the correct measure, and that you have been cutting off pieces to make it lighter so you can use it to defraud your customers in such a way that it will not be noticeable. Similarly in regard to your measures: Not only must your measures be *honest* (i.e., being exactly the volume they should), they must also be *complete*. This means that they must not have one side that has been cut to create the proper volume, lest it lead to the same kind of suspicion. **[This answers Question 3.]** If you fulfill these acts of piety and avoid suspicion, *your days shall be lengthened on the Land*, etc. (i.e., you will be deserving of an extra-special reward). **[This answers Question 4.]**

THE ALSHICH AND HIS COMMENTARY

The Alshich (1508–1600), was one of only five famous rabbis in Jewish history universally known by the title “HaKadosh” (the holy one). He served on the same Beis Din as Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the Shulchan Aruch. The Alshich is most noted for his monumental Tanach commentary.

The Alshich uses his creative insight and encyclopaedic knowledge of Tanach, Talmud, and Midrash to weave together his profound interpretations. He simultaneously focuses on the text as well as the context of a series of verses by listing a range of questions and then answering them all with one or two concepts.

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