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וזאת הברכה V'Zot HaBerachah

Expanded Commentary

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12



# Deuteronomy 33:1

## Midrash

God face to face and my eyes did not dim.' From where is this derived? It is as it is stated: "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one person speaks to another person" (Exodus 33:11). Another matter, Jacob said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for with me it is written: "Jacob is just his ways" (Hosea 12:3).' Moses said to him: 'I am more exalted than you, for with me it is written: "The man Moses was very humble" (Numbers 12:3).' Another matter, Sarah said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for with me it is written: "And Sarah is life of yours" (Genesis 12:19).' Moses said to her: 'I am more exalted than you, for with me it is written: "The Lord called to him" (Exodus 19:3).' Another matter, Deborah said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for I would sit under the palm tree and judge the people.' Moses said to her: 'I am more exalted than you, for you would judge the people under the palm tree, but I would judge great [matters] among the twenty-four elders of Israel.' From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: "So Moses rose, and Joshua, his servant, and Moses ascended to the mountain of God" (Exodus 24:13). Each one presented their opinion, but his opinion preceded that of his master, as it is stated: "So Moses rose." Another matter, Michal said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for I did not have any children.' Moses said to her: 'I am more exalted than you, for I did not have a man.' From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: "A prophet like me" (Deuteronomy 18:18). Another matter, Hannah said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for it is with me that it is written: "My heart rejoices in the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:1).' Moses said to her: 'I am more exalted than you, for it is with me that it is written: "He kneeled and bowed on his knees" (Exodus 34:8).' Another matter, Abigail said to Moses: 'I am greater than you, for it is with me that it is written: "My heart goes out to the Lord" (1 Samuel 25:29).' Moses said to her: 'I am more exalted than you, for it is with me that it is written: "I stood between the Lord and you at the time" (Deuteronomy 5:5).'

## Chasidut

Chasidut teachings emphasize the importance of devekus, fervent worship, and Torah study done with love and reverence to become attached to G-d, as Moses did. The text explores the significance of the word "zot" in relation to the Jewish people, the humility and contemplation of the tzaddik to avoid physical urges, and the intrinsically different nature of prophecy in Moses compared to other prophets. It reflects on the essence of the prophet and the prophet's relationship with G-d, emphasizing the function of the term "prophet" in relation to the needs and perception of the people. The teachings underscore the spiritual height achieved by figures such as Moshe Rabeynu through devotion and connection to the divine.

## Quoting Commentary

The Bartenura commentary provides the Torah readings and corresponding Haftarah for each day of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret, as well as the significance of these readings towards the respective holidays. In contrast, the interpretations of Rabbeinu Bahya and Ramban focus on the titles given to Moses in the Torah, highlighting his role as a role model rather than a figure of worship, emphasizing humility and the importance of the Torah in Judaism. Other commentaries, such as Siftei Chakhamim and Derekh Chayim, explore the symbolic and mystical interpretations of various verses and phrases within the Torah related to Moses, the Torah, and the connection between physical and spiritual characteristics.

## Commentary

Moses transitioned from admonishing the people to blessing them with the word "תאזו" indicating continuity prior to his death, as he was instructed by God to do so prophetically to ensure his blessings would come to pass. Moses briefly detained the angel of death while blessing each tribe to emphasize the unreserved and timely nature of his blessings.

The conjunctive letter "ו" in the word "וְאֵלֶיךָ" signifies the blessings were superior to those of Jacob and were fulfilled due to Moses' status as a man of God. Interpreting "ו" from different commentaries provides various insights into the profound manner in which Moses bestowed his blessings, emphasizing his humility, nobility, and royal status as a leader over Israel.

## Tanakh

God tells Moses in Exodus 3:10 to go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt. In Numbers 12:6-8, God distinguishes Moses from other prophets by speaking to him directly, rather than through visions or dreams, highlighting the special relationship between God and Moses and admonishing those who speak against him.

## Responsa

The text refutes claims that certain verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed, explaining that these arguments are feeble and fallacious. It clarifies that the promise of blessing and revelation of the Torah was exclusively for the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, not Ishmael. The text emphasizes the importance of staying true to the laws of Moses and warns against corrupt heretics who may try to undermine faith, stating that it is permissible to slay them if needed. The commentary stresses the need to educate the young generation on these principles, which are considered pillars of faith.

## Talmud

The Talmud discusses the readings and rituals observed during Sukkot, including the special portions read on each day of the festival and the haftara readings. Additionally, Rabbi Hama discusses how even Moses did not know where he was buried, with the burial near Beth Peor serving as atonement for a specific incident.

## Mishnah

The Mishnah states that on specific holidays throughout the year, the congregation reads specific portions from the Torah, including those from Leviticus and Deuteronomy. For example, on the first day of Passover, they read from Leviticus 22:26-23:44, on Shavuot from Deuteronomy 16:9-12, on Rosh HaShana from Leviticus 23:23-25, on Yom Kippur from Leviticus 16, and on Sukkot from Leviticus 22:26-23:44 and Numbers 29:12-39 [Mishnah Megillah 3:5].

## Halakhah

During Sukkot, specific Torah portions and haftarot are read each day, including passages such as Shor o kesev o eyz from Leviticus, Hiney yom ba l'Ado-nai from Zechariah, and Vezot haberachah from Deuteronomy, as outlined in Mishneh Torah. On Shmini Atzeret, three Torah scrolls are read from, with specific sections from Genesis, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, as well as a haftarah from Joshua. The celebration of Simchat Torah includes taking out three Torah scrolls, readings from Deuteronomy, Genesis, and Joshua, a festive meal, circling the Bimah with the Torah scrolls, and inviting children to participate in the Torah reading, as detailed in Shulchan Arukh and Orach Chayim.

## Kabbalah

The blessings bestowed upon the children of Israel by Moses, the man of God, are seen as sources of enlightenment and purification of thoughts in Kabbalistic teachings. These blessings are associated with the inheritance of the land and the goodness and blessings received by the Jewish people. Through these blessings, Moses secured a special connection with Hashem, even after his death, and played a crucial role in carrying out divine will. His blessings were significant as they were orchestrated through a deep spiritual connection with the divine.

# Second Temple

The prophet Moses is known by different names depending on his role: when interpreting oracles he is Moses, when blessing the people he is the Man of God, and when Egypt is punished he is portrayed as the god of Pharaoh (Second Temple| On the Change of Names 22:1). Moses is described as having a glorious exchange with God, as he receives protection from God in return for giving himself to God (Second Temple| On the Change of Names 3:12).

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:1, it is indicated that before his death, Moses blessed the children of Israel with a Benediction or order of Benedictions, as stated in Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan.

## Musar

Our sages emphasize the importance of studying Torah for the right reasons, warning against seeking titles or authority through Torah study [Torah Shebikhtav, Korach, Torah Ohr 37]. The text also highlights the concept of judges being representatives of G-d's justice, with Moses being delegated as a judge by G-d himself and passing on this authority to future generations [Torah Shebikhtav, Mishpatim, Torah Ohr 148]. Furthermore, it discusses the evolving spiritual levels of figures like Noach and Moses, emphasizing Moses' growth from a human to a divine figure [Torah Shebikhtav, Shemot, Torah Ohr 27]. Additionally, it underscores the deep connection between Moses and G-d, with Moses acting as a conduit for G-d's miracles [Torah Shebikhtav, Vaera, Torah Ohr 8].

# Deuteronomy 33:2

## Midrash

shekels" represents the exclusive choice of Israel by God.

## Jewish Thought

In the commentary on Akeidat Yitzchak, Joseph is presented as a prototype of the Jewish people, drawing parallels between his life and the history of Israel, highlighting the special status and subsequent animosity faced by the Jewish people. In a similar vein, in Ner Mitzvah, it is discussed how the fierce nature of the Jewish people, as exemplified by the attribute of fierceness, is what sets them apart and allows them to receive and uphold the Torah, a fiery law that other nations cannot withstand. This fierceness is likened to a leopard, representing the strength and wisdom inherent in the Jewish people.

## Talmud

The nations question why they are judged for not fulfilling the Torah's mitzvot if they did not receive it, but the Gemara explains that the Torah was indeed offered to them in Seir and Paran [Avodah Zarah 2b:12, Bava Kamma 38a:4]. The Torah was given to the Jewish people because they are impudent, Torah study humbles them, and restrains their fiery nature [Beitzah 25b:7, Berakhot 6a:18]. One should not wipe with their right hand but with their left because the Torah was given with the right hand at Sinai [Berakhot 62a:4]. Vengeance for good and evil is necessary, demonstrated by the appearances of God at Mount Paran [Berakhot 33a:23, Sanhedrin 92a:9]. The Torah scroll should be handed with the right hand as it was given at Sinai by God [Jerusalem Talmud Bava Kamma 4:3:2, Soferim 3:10]. When finishing prayer, one should take three steps back and recite "Peace," bowing first to the right and then to the left, in accordance with the Torah [Yoma 53b:3].

## Quoting Commentary

The commentary discusses various verses from the Torah and provides insights into them. One point made is that God offered the Torah to different nations before giving it to the Israelites, but they rejected it, leading to the Israelites being chosen as a special treasure. The Torah is also compared to fire, with references to Deuteronomy 33:2 highlighting God's transmission of the Torah with fire. The significance of Torah and studying it is stressed, along with the idea that Torah scholars can influence nature through their knowledge. The Jerusalem Talmud's interpretation of commandments at Mount Sinai underscores the permanence and importance of the laws conveyed to Moses. The references to various Midrashim and verses illustrate in-depth analysis and discussions on these topics.

## Commentary

Moses began with praising Hashem before blessing the tribes to prepare the ground, interceding on their behalf that they were worthy of blessings from God. In the following blessings, these descriptions were to make his prayers effective. The merit of Israel was particularly emphasized in these blessings, showing that God's appearance at Sinai and subsequent manifestations to the Israelites were ultimately in their favor. The commentary attests to the special relationship between God and the Jewish people, highlighting their role in God's divine plans.

## Responsa

The text refutes claims that certain verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed, explaining that these arguments are feeble and fallacious. It clarifies that the promise of blessing and revelation of the Torah was exclusively for the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, not Ishmael. The text emphasizes the importance of staying true to the laws of Moses and warns against corrupt heretics who may try to undermine faith, stating that it is permissible to slay them if needed. The commentary stresses the need to educate the young generation on these principles, which are considered pillars of faith.

## Chasidut

In Chasidut commentary, it is discussed how G'd needed to conceal His essence while creating the physical universe to avoid overwhelming His creations with His radiance; this was depicted through the lessons taught to Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai by Elijah, explaining that G'd's essence had to be reduced in order for creatures to withstand His emanations.

Additionally, it is noted that the Torah was originally offered to other nations before being given to Bnei Yisrael, indicating its applicability to the entire world. Moreover, the Torah is portrayed as providing nourishment for the soul and was given through Divine assistance. Finally, it is emphasized that attachment to the Torah is crucial for elevating the soul and reaching higher spiritual levels, as described in various Chasidut writings.

## Mishnah

The Mishnah in Bava Kamma 4:3 establishes that if an ox of a Jew gores a consecrated ox or an ox owned by a Jew, the owner is exempt from compensation based on Exodus 21:35. However, if an ox of a gentile gores an ox of a Jew, the owner must pay for the damage, whether the goring ox was forewarned or not [Mishnah Bava Kamma 4:3].

## Halakhah

In the Mishneh Torah, it is explained that one should take leave from the left first during prayer to mirror the respect shown when leaving the presence of a king, as outlined by the Sages of the Great Assembly. In Sefer Chasidim, it is advised that when asking for a book, it should be accepted with the right hand as a sign of respect due to the Torah being given with the right hand according to Deuteronomy 33:2.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:2 according to Targum Onkelos, it is described how the Lord was revealed at Mount Sinai and gave the Torah law to the people. Targum Jerusalem and Targum Jonathan provide similar accounts, emphasizing the revelation of the Lord and the giving of the law to the people of Israel, as well as the rejection of the law by the sons of Esau and Ishmael. References to the glory and radiance of the Lord are made, along with the presence of holy angels during this revelation of the Law.

## Kabbalah

In Kabbalah teachings, humility is emphasized as a way to connect with the Creator, with examples given from Tehillim and the actions of Hashem himself towards others. The correlation between the names E"l and Elohi"m with HaShem is discussed by examining specific verses in the Tanakh. The relationship between various attributes and Torah teachings is explored in passages from Tikkunei Zohar, showing the importance of balance and understanding in spiritual practices.

## Musar

The Torah serves as a source of light and fire, with its "secrets" requiring caution in approach to avoid harm, as seen in the deaths of Nadav and Avihu when they went beyond their station in the Temple. The Ten Commandments correspond to the directives that created the universe, with their numerical value connecting to God's throne in the Torah. The mystical aspect of Deut. 33,2 involves the descent of holiness and sanctity in both sacred food and the distinction between Jewish and Gentile sanctity, highlighting the significance of the Jewish people. The Torah's hidden light and Talmudic debates are expressed through fiery debates aimed at understanding halachic points, emphasizing the importance of harmony and pure motives in scholarly discussions. G-d's revelation of hidden light at Sinai is connected to the rejection of the Torah by other nations, leading to its acceptance by Israel. Finally, the Arizal's explanation of the command to exterminate the Canaanite nations due to their lack of sanctity, contrasting with the remaining vestiges of holiness in the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, ties back to G-d's offering of the Torah to other nations before Israel.

## Tosefta

The text explains that Divine punishment is measured according to a person's sins, while Divine beneficence is five hundred times greater than punishment, shown through examples such as Abraham's actions and God's treatment of his descendants, displaying the concept of one to five hundred in terms of measurement. This is illustrated through instances such as Abraham running to meet the angels, God providing water in the desert, and giving manna to the Israelites.



# Deuteronomy 33:3

## Jewish Thought

Shemot Rabbah 25 interprets Isaiah 33:16, as describing a scene where G-d is seated at the head of a table in a garden, with the righteous sitting around Him at His feet. It is suggested that G-d will present fruit from the garden of Eden and feed them from the tree of life, following which they will bless their host. The honor of reciting grace is passed down from G-d to Michael, then to Gabriel, and eventually to David, who proclaims the blessing for the King of Kings by lifting a cup of salvation and proclaiming the name of the Lord.

## Talmud

In Talmud Bava Batra 8a:3, it is explained that Torah scholars should be exempt from paying taxes, as they are considered holy ones exclusively in God's hand. This is based on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 33:3, where Moses requests that Torah scholars be free from the authority of other nations and dedicated to studying and discussing God's words.

## Commentary

Moses acknowledges G-d's love for all peoples, including the tribes of Israel, referring to each tribe separately as a nation. He acknowledges that all of G-d's holy beings are under His direct supervision, with the Levites being especially close to Him, as seen by their proximity to the Holy Ark. G-d's love for the Jewish people and other nations is highlighted, even when challenges arise and the people remain under His supervision. The Levites are specifically noted for their role in transmitting the Torah and teaching the people. This reflects a deep connection between G-d, the people, and the holy teachings they uphold.

## Quoting Commentary

Various commentators discuss different aspects related to biblical passages. One commentary reflects on the love of nations in the Torah and the structure of Mosaic books without a definitive ending. Another commentary discusses a warning about Israel's behaviour leading to exile, while another relates the impoverishment of Israel to copying the ways of Edom. One commentary focuses on the leadership transitions within the Jewish people and the redemption from Egyptian exile, while another discusses the distinction between different nations in biblical prophecies. Other commentaries explore the themes of submission through monetary persuasion and the scattering of tribes as seen in Psalms. A debate arises between interpretations regarding the promise of nations in relation to the Jewish people and Edom.

## Midrash

In a Midrash commentary, Resh Lakish argued that the righteous do not need guarding because their deeds, if counted, are like numerous sands that guard the sea. R. Huna b. Rambam's complaint was rebuked by R. Nachman b. Isaac who cited biblical verses affirming that God's love protects the saints of Israel. Another commentary focused on Moses's words to the Holy One about bearing two yokes, the yoke of Torah and enslavement to empires, the former being a source of protection against the latter. Additionally, the text from Sifrei Devarim emphasizes the special love that God has for the people of Israel.

## Chasidut

True Torah scholars and tzaddikim play a crucial role in embodying and spreading Jewish faith to the generation. They are compared to Moshe, the Faithful Shepherd, who is among the Seven Shepherds and represents the essence of Jewish leadership. These individuals have the ability to enclothe the light of the Torah in various garments, connecting with individuals of all backgrounds and ultimately raising up the Torah and the people of Israel as one unified entity.

## Second Temple

Abraham followed all of God's laws faithfully, as demonstrated in Genesis 26:5. God's laws are considered as the Divine word that dictates what we should and should not do, according to Moses. Therefore, by following God's laws, one is essentially following His word, indicating that the actions of a wise man are aligned with the will of God (On the Migration of Abraham 23:4).

## Targum

The Targums of Onkelos, Jerusalem, and Jonathan on Deuteronomy 33:3 emphasize God's love for His people of Israel, who are considered holy and kept under His guidance. Despite facing challenges and corrections, they remain faithful to the law and are led by God's word under His protective cloud.

## Musar

The mystical commentary on Exodus 15,17 and Deuteronomy 33,2 discusses the sacred nature of the Jewish people and their connection to G-d's emanations. Through the symbolism of hands and feet, the text explores the sanctity of Israel and the distinction between Jewish people and other nations. Yitro's understanding of this concept, as well as the celestial realms, is clarified by Moses, emphasizing the importance of attachment to the Jewish people. This mystical interpretation highlights the unique relationship between G-d, Israel, and other nations.

# Deuteronomy 33:4

## Halakhah

The text discusses the importance of teaching Torah to children from a young age as an inheritance of the Jewish people, as stated in Deuteronomy 33:4. The inheritance of Torah is emphasized as exclusive to the community of Jacob, with explanations from the Gemara and Shemot Rabbah. Teaching Torah to non-Jews is prohibited as it appropriates something not intended for them, likened to theft or adultery, due to the exclusivity of the relationship between Jews and the Torah. Ultimately, Torah is seen as a crown waiting for every Jew, surpassing the crowns of priesthood and royalty, and inviting all who desire to partake. (Halakhah | Abudarham, Halakhah | Contemporary Halakhic Problems, Halakhah | Mishneh Torah)

## Jewish Thought

The Torah instructs that remembrances should be tied to observances, such as Sabbath and Passover, to prevent forgetting the commandments. While most commandments trigger memory through acts, the command to remember Amalek stands out. Failing to remember commandments is seen as culpable, as demonstrated by the cupbearer's forgetfulness of Joseph. Swearing oaths can help jog memory to not overlook commandments. Simchat Torah symbolizes the Jewish people's joy as the groom and the Torah as the bride. There are three categories of importance among commandments: the first two, directly from God at Sinai, the other eight of the Ten Commandments, and the rest communicated via Moses. Furthermore, it is crucial to strive to be closer to God, help others, and preserve Torah teachings.

## Talmud

Rabbis debate whether Rabbi Ami actually wrote 400 Torah scrolls or simply wrote the same verse 400 times, and similarly discuss the symbolic interpretations of having relations in dreams, the number of mitzvot in the Torah, Torah study in the presence of ignoramuses, gentiles studying Torah, withholding halakha, and teaching Torah to children. All passages reference Deuteronomy 33:4 as a key text in their discussions [Talmud | Bava Batra 14a:7; Talmud | Berakhot 57a:4; Talmud | Makkot 23b:18; Talmud | Pesachim 49b:10; Talmud | Sanhedrin 59a:2; Talmud | Sanhedrin 91b:18; Talmud | Sukkah 42a:11].

## Commentary

Moses commanded the remaining 611 commandments of the Torah to the Israelites after G-d had given them the first two commandments, leading the people to a high spiritual level where they could "see" thunder. The inheritance of the Torah, enjoyed by the congregation of Yaakov, is seen as a gift from G-d exclusively to the Jewish people. This Torah was received from Moses, viewed as an inheritance passed through generations, available to all who wish to acquire it, and is linked to the possession of the land of Israel. Torah scholars laboring in study also provide a heritage for the larger Jewish community. Conversion and those who desire to join the Jewish nation also find the Torah as their heritage when they become part of the congregation of Yaakov.

## Quoting Commentary

Jewish tradition honors Moses as a teacher above all else, referring to him as Moshe Rabbenu, emphasizing his role in transmitting the Torah as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob. The Torah is said to be the heritage of Israel, with legal knowledge meant for all, not just an elite group, and Torah study engraved on the souls of the Jewish people from

a young age. The distributed and democratized nature of Jewish spirituality ensures that the Torah is accessible to all, with Moses having filled the "bucket" of Torah insights for future generations to draw from. Torah study and observance are seen as essential components of Jewish identity and connection to God, emphasizing the unique relationship between the Jewish people and the Torah.

## Midrash

" the name of Jacob, and will possess the trait of shame, not sinning. 'This one will write with his hand to the Lord, and will do acts of loving-kindness.' 'This one will adopt the name of Israel, doing the will of the Holy One, blessed be He."

## Musar

In Musar, Kav HaYashar advises using a chart to teach the Hebrew alphabet, reading verses and feeding the child honey for Torah learning success, with fasting and charity to follow. Orchot Tzadikim emphasizes the value of the crown of Torah over Priesthood and Kingdom, highlighting the importance of Torah study. In Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Korach, Torah Ohr, it is warned against seeking position for personal gain through Torah study, as haughtiness can lead to sin and Torah is meant to humble, not boast. Torah is likened to a wife, and boasting of Torah knowledge is compared to a betrayal of this sacred relationship.

## Chasidut

Avram's unwavering faith in God from his youth is supported by Nachmanides, who believed Avram always saw events as God's will, leading him to live fully satisfied. Avram questioned his participation in inheriting the land of Israel, knowing he would not inherit based on his father's merit and due to being the first Jewish convert. Avraham's question raised whether land allocation would be based on lottery or lineage, and the Talmud discusses the connection between Avraham's faith and God's unique relationship with him as the first Jewish convert. Finally, the Torah is considered the heritage of all of Israel, with each person capable of understanding and embodying its teachings.

## Liturgy

The text describes the morning prayers on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, highlighting the praise for God as King and the importance of the Torah as a source of life, peace, and prosperity, as well as the desire to glorify it for the sake of God's righteousness. (See Devarim 33:4.)

## Kabbalah

The 613 commandments given by Moses are connected to the secret of the Torah, represented by the numerical value of 611, with the first two extreme commandments being at the pinnacle of elevation. These two extreme commandments were spoken directly by HaShem without intermediaries, signifying their importance as the foundation of all Torah, while the other commandments were conveyed through Moses (Kabbalah | Ohr HaSekhel 2:3). This distinction highlights that of the 613 commandments, two were heard directly from HaShem, and the remaining 611 were transmitted through Moses, emphasizing the significance of the first two commandments in the Torah (Kabbalah | Sha'arei Orach, Sixth Gate, Fifth Sefirah 77).

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:4, various Targums emphasize that the Torah was given as a heritage to the congregation of Yaakov by Moshe, highlighting the importance of this inheritance in the context of the Israelites.

# Deuteronomy 33:5

## Jewish Thought

In Jewish Thought from Akeidat Yitzchak, it is discussed how judges must judge fairly as G-d's representatives, and the four potential causes for faulty judgments. Yitro advises Moses on selecting judges who are G-d-fearing, hate unjust gain, and have professional knowledge, ultimately aiming to minimize crime by ensuring swift justice. The appointment of many judges ultimately points towards the need for only one judge, the Lord Himself. From Derashot HaRan, it is explained that in the times of a Sanhedrin and a king in Israel, the Sanhedrin would judge based on Torah alone, but in the absence of a king, the judge took on the role of both judge and king, as illustrated by Joshua's authority despite not being a king.

## Midrash

The text discusses the significance of silver trumpets in summoning the congregation, relating it to gates opening for the Ark of the Covenant and the reverence shown to the messianic king. It also explores the importance of elders in a group, connecting it to the concept of one's intellectual capacity and the consequences of cursing a king. Additionally, it reflects on the fear of the Lord and the honor shown to elders, correlating it with the Torah's teachings and the role of blessings and honoring the presence of the Holy One.

## Halakhah

The text highlights the necessity of correcting the sin of lashon hara, specifically referencing the sin of the spies, before redemption can occur. The consequences of lashon hara are linked to the scattering of the Jewish people, exiling them and having a negative impact on their unity. Furthermore, during Rosh Hashanah, careful consideration is given to the verses recited during prayers to avoid mentioning retribution and negative repercussions, focusing instead on the welfare of the Jewish people as a whole. Additionally, the text emphasizes the importance of obtaining permission from specific authorities, including the king, prophet, Urim VTumim, and Sanhedrin, for any expansion of the city of Jerusalem or the Temple Courtyard.

## Commentary

Various commentaries offer different interpretations of the phrase "He became King in Yeshurun," with some suggesting it refers to G-d as the King over Israel when the leaders of the people gathered, others interpreting it as a reference to Moses being accepted as king, and another view suggesting it denotes the Torah as the ruling authority over Israel. These interpretations highlight themes such as G-d's sovereignty among the united people, Moses' leadership, and the significance of Torah as a source of guidance and blessing for the nation.

## Quoting Commentary

Moses is referred to as a king, having equivalent status to the crowned kings of other nations, with reference to Moses' position and conduct throughout the Torah. The use of the name Yeshurun signifies a highest spiritual moment achieved by the Jewish people, whereas criticism and rebukes are directed at their future conduct, demonstrating the rise and decline in their spiritual standing. The shekel and the Tabernacle represent sacred objects and actions, exemplifying the significance of language, coins, and religious artifacts in Jewish tradition. Moses' role in erecting the Tabernacle showcases divine intervention and his unique relationship with G'd, embodying his position as a revered leader and prophet.

# Chasidut

The commentaries explain that the concept of Malkhut, or kingdom, is established through the wisdom of the people's leaders and their love for the wise man. The presence of a king in Yeshurun is necessary for a state to ensure its inhabitants adhere to its laws, with a distinction made between an earthly king and God as a king. True unity and oneness can awaken the strength of Yaakov and holiness among Bnei Yisrael, as exemplified by the role of Moshe and the Kohen Gadol in achieving true unity for the sake of Heaven.

# Liturgy

The texts from the Machzor Rosh Hashanah emphasize the importance of unity among the tribes of Yisrael, noting that when they are united, the kingdom of Hashem is revealed and enhanced (Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz). The Morning Prayers highlight the covenant between God and the people of Yisrael, emphasizing the names Yisrael and Yeshurun as symbols of God's love and the fulfillment of His will (Machzor Yom Kippur Ashkenaz, Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit). Additionally, the Siddur Sefard and Weekday Siddur Sefard Linear also mention the names Yisrael and Yeshurun in connection to the people of Yisrael and their covenant with God (Siddur Sefard, Weekday Shacharit).

# Targum

In these Targums on Deuteronomy 33:5, it is mentioned that a king from the house of Jacob will arise, ruling over Israel when the tribes are gathered together and obedient to him. This demonstrates the sense of unity and leadership within the tribes of Israel during this time [Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, Targum Jonathan].

# Talmud

In Talmud Rosh Hashanah 32b:15, the Gemara discusses the need for ten verses in the context of reciting Remembrances, Shofarot, and Kingship during Rosh Hashanah. While there are plenty of verses for the first two categories, there are only three verses for Kingship, leading to a debate over whether it is enough to fulfill the requirement of ten verses. Rabbi Yosei suggests adding a fourth verse to meet the requirement.

# Musar

The punishment for those who separate from the ways of the community is severe, as they are seen as opposing the service of God and rejecting the sanctification of God that occurs when the community gathers. The power and importance of peace is emphasized, as it is seen as a key element in the world's endurance and the key to drawing near to God. Torah scholars are seen as important figures who must encourage the observance of Torah statutes and the performance of duties, similar to the role of prophets in the past.

# Kabbalah

The text from Tikkunei Zohar 31a:2 explains that the People of Israel have merited the kingdom by guarding the covenant, as shown by their lineage as "children of kings". Moses is also praised for guarding the covenant. In Zohar, Shemot 34:282, Rabbi Yitzchak discusses the symbolism of the king reclining at his board, relating it to the Holy One, blessed be He, and the fragrant offering of My nard, representing the departure of the Holy One due to their actions.

# Deuteronomy 33:6

## Midrash

The Midrash commentaries on Genesis 49:3 explore the significance of Reuben being Jacob's firstborn son, highlighting Reuben's sins, both his fall from grace and eventual redemption through Moses' blessing. Reuben's transgressions are linked to the loss of the priesthood, kingship, and birthright privileges that should have belonged to him, but were instead given to his brothers due to his impetuous and sinful actions, notably involving Bilha. However, through sincere repentance, symbolized by Moses' blessing, Reuben finds redemption, paralleling Joseph's experiences and implying a lesson on the concept of resurrection from the dead.

## Talmud

The text discusses the connection between the blessings of Reuben and Judah in Moses' blessing of the tribes at the end of his life. Reuben and Judah are linked with the conjunction "and" and prayers of Moses and Hannah are mentioned, highlighting the importance of their actions and prayers in the stories of Datan and Abiram and Korah's band. Additionally, the concept of resurrection is derived from verses in Deuteronomy and Daniel, pointing towards the belief in an afterlife.

## Commentary

Moses prays that the tribe of Reuben will live and not die as they cross into the Holy Land, not suffer casualties, and continue to grow in numbers. The blessing may also be related to the incident involving Reuben's sin with Bilhah, a prayer for their righteousness and survival. It is suggested that this blessing may replenish their ranks after losses from rebellions or war, ensuring they are not diminished or cut off.

## Quoting Commentary

The significance of Yehudah and Reuven as two of Yaakov's sons is emphasized throughout various commentaries. Yehudah's public acknowledgment for his actions and his willingness to bring back Binyamin in Genesis 38 and 43 is seen as a manifestation of admittance, repentance, and future mercy according to the Proverbs. Meanwhile, Reuven's blessing in Deuteronomy 33 as per Moses and Jacob's words in Genesis 49 highlight a contrast between the brothers, with a focus on redemption and atonement for past sins. The connection between the tribes of Yehudah and Reuven, as well as the interpretation of their actions, is intricately linked to the concepts of reincarnation, repentance, and divine mercy.

## Tanakh

In Genesis 49:3, Jacob refers to Reuben as his first-born son, acknowledging his strength and position of honor.

## Chasidut

Moshe Rabeynu blessed Reuven with vivacity, joy, and tekifut in his heart in response to Yaakov Avinu's withholding blessings from him, corresponding to the excess strength and dignity Yaakov mentioned. This blessing allowed Reuven to draw life-force constantly and become an essential member of the community. To mitigate harsh judgments, reciting Torah sections related to curtains of goat-skin, the incense-offering, blessings from Moses, and the Vision of the Chariot

in Ezekiel is recommended.

## Jewish Thought

Rava supports the idea of resurrection by citing Moshe's blessing to Reuben that he will live and not die, as evidence of the resurrection of the dead (Jewish Thought | On Resurrection of the Dead 1:4:3).

## Second Temple

While Abraham prays for the grace of hearkening to holy words and learning holy truths, Jacob, known as the Man of Practice, prays for the life of natural goodness by asking for Reuben to live and not die, not for immortality but for a life free of corruption, which is deemed impossible for a man.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:6, the various Targums emphasize the idea of Reuvein living and not experiencing a second death, with his descendants receiving their inheritance according to their numbers and being counted among the men or young men of Israel.

## Musar

Rashi explains that the presence of peace and harmony among all parts of Israel is necessary for God to be perceived as Israel's king, highlighting the importance of unity for recognizing divine sovereignty [Musar | Shenei Luchot HaBerit].



# Deuteronomy 33:7

## Midrash

In Midrash | Aggadat Bereshit 51:1, it is discussed how David prayed to God for assistance when he saw the Philistines approaching, pointing to the favor shown to Judah and Abimelech and the help from the ministering angels in contrast to the Devil aiding the Philistines. The Midrash | Aggadat Bereshit 83:1 further explores the blessings bestowed on the tribes of Judah, Reuben, and Levi, with specific details about each tribe and important figures such as Moses, Abraham, and the Messiah as seen in the text. Additionally, Midrash | Bamidbar Rabbah 13:4 discusses how Nashon's cry for help displays the power of Judah's prayers, stating that the Holy One will hear Judah's voice in prayer. The need for divine intervention is further showcased in the Midrash | Bereshit Rabbah 95:4 with examples of how prayer received blessings for Judah, Levi, and Joseph. Lastly, Midrash | Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Midrash | Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Midrash Tanchuma, and Midrash Tehillim all express how prayer and wisdom were linked to Judah and the importance of prayers as seen through Moses's blessing and the challenges faced by various tribes.

## Jewish Thought

The passage discusses Jacob's wishes for his burial and blessings for his sons, Joseph's concern over the blessings, and the significance of Jacob's actions in blessing Ephrayim and Menashe. Additionally, the text addresses David's encounter with Goliath, his eagerness to build a temple for God, and the importance of following divine guidance. Finally, the text explains the structure and significance of the eighteen benedictions in Jewish prayer, drawing parallels to the Priest's blessings and emphasizing the importance of sincere prayer.

## Talmud

Rabbi Elazar interprets the book of Yashar as Deuteronomy, linking the verse "You shall do that which is right and good" to Judah being taught to use the bow. Moses prayed for Judah so he could contend in study, with references made to his confession regarding Tamar and the resolution of his ostracism. The connection between the blessings of Reuben and Judah is explored, highlighting Moses' intercessions on Judah's behalf and his ability to engage in Torah discussions.

## Kabbalah

In Kabbalistic texts, there is an emphasis on the importance of constantly seeking and maintaining a connection with the divine through unceasing listening and observance of Torah and commandments. True Torah scholars are seen as builders who perpetuate this connection, never resting or ceasing from their study and work to uphold the Unification. Furthermore, the quality of Kingship-Malchut, represented by Judah, is highlighted as something to be guarded and conducted with purity to avoid turning away from the divine presence [Kabbalah | Avodat HaKodesh (Ibn Gabai) 3:37:9, Kabbalah | Sha'arei Orah, First Gate, Tenth Sefirah 156, Kabbalah | Tikkunei Zohar 40a:21].

## Commentary

Moses blesses Yehudah for being brave in battle, praying for his protection and success, mirroring a blessing given to Reuben for their public confessions of sin. Yehudah is singled out as a leader in warfare, while Reuben and Simeon share certain blessings due to their complex history. Moses invokes divine aid for Yehudah's military pursuits, praying for strength, success, and safety as they fight their enemies. The Torah emphasizes the importance of confession and repentance, highlighting the tribes' shared history and offering blessings for protection and success in battle.

# Tanakh

In Genesis 38:26, Judah acknowledges his fault in not giving his daughter-in-law Tamar to his son Shelah. Following this incident, he did not have further intimate relations with her. In Genesis 49:8-12, Judah is described as a lion who will rule with authority, with his descendants bringing tribute and receiving homage from people. In Judges 9:29, someone expresses a desire to challenge Abimelech and remove him from power if given the opportunity.

## Quoting Commentary

The text delves into the reconciliation of apparent contradictions between Talmudic discussions regarding Judah's status in the heavenly court. It suggests that Judah initially could not decide according to the accepted halachah, but was strengthened through Moshe's prayer. This affected Judah's descendants in the earthly courts. The blessing for Judah was linked to a specific system of reward and punishment by God, differentiating Judah's military strength from other tribes. The text also highlights Judah's confession regarding the incident with Tamar and Reuven's repentance as examples of individuals engaging in private repentance processes. Furthermore, it explores various commentaries emphasizing the importance of praise and expert praise, the contrast between the earthly and the divine realm, and the significance of having a harmonious partnership within the family unit.

## Chasidut

The blessing of Shimon was included in Yehudah's blessing by Moses, as Shimon's role in the sale of Joseph meant he was not blessed separately, while Levi was blessed independently due to their loyalty to God during the golden calf incident. The tribe of Shimon is compared to the ears of the Shechina, needing constant refinement, and Moses ensured that they did not feel embarrassed by including their blessing with Yehudah's. The blessing of Yehudah to be brought to his people signifies his constant dispute with Ephraim, with Yehudah representing looking to God in all things, even against the law when necessary. Yehudah's ability to find strength on his own against adversaries is emphasized, with God's help being crucial in places where he lacks power. Yehudah and Yosef represent different approaches to holiness, with Yosef focused on individual holiness and Yehuda on spreading holiness to the world.

## Targum

The different Targums on Deuteronomy 33:7 all provide blessings for the tribe of Yehudah, asking for divine assistance in battles and protection against enemies. Essentially, the prayers ask for success in war, vengeance upon enemies, and support against adversaries for the tribe of Yehudah.

## Musar

Yehudah's bones rolled in his coffin during the Israelites' time in the desert until Moses prayed for his restoration, as he had not made progress in his studies or reconciled them with halachic decisions. This parallels the importance of Torah study and dedication exemplified by Yissachar and financial support for Torah scholars as shown by Zevulun. Judah's acceptance of excommunication was due to a curse fulfilled despite fulfilling the condition, highlighting the significance of divine providence and the consequences of one's words.

# Deuteronomy 33:8

## Chasidut

The commentary discusses the concept of being attached to God, as symbolized by the tribe of Levi in Deuteronomy 33:8. It emphasizes that one who is attached to God does not need to overly exert themselves in Torah study. Another commentary connects the oil of the Chanukah lights to the idea of revealing the light of truth through acts of kindness, as expressed in Deuteronomy 33:8 and Psalms 43:3.

## Midrash

In the Midrash from Bamidbar Rabbah 12:1, Moses constructs the Tabernacle and the Golden Calf incident is discussed, with Israel's reconciliation with God being achieved through acts of mercy and reconciliation. When the Tabernacle is completed, Moses seeks confirmation of reconciliation with a message of peace. In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 15:12, the selection of the Levites highlights their devotion and righteousness, contrasting with Israel's previous failures. The tribe of Levi is praised for maintaining their devotion to God and upholding the covenant. In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 19:9, God's concern for Israel's property is emphasized in the context of Moses striking the rock for water. In the Tanchuma commentaries, the righteousness and faithfulness of the Levites are emphasized, with the tribe's loyalty during the Golden Calf incident highlighted. Moses and Aaron's actions and their consequences, as well as the exemplary actions of the tribe of Levi, underscore themes of trust, righteousness, and faithfulness in the texts.

## Commentary

Moses blesses the tribe of Levi, praising their piousness and highlighting their loyalty and faithfulness to God. The Levites were tested, but remained steadfast and faithful, showcased by their actions during events like the golden calf and the waters of Meribah. The High Priest from the tribe was given the Urim and Thummim, ensuring constant communication with God. The Levites were commended for their actions, including defending the honor of God and fulfilling their duties as priests and teachers of the Torah throughout history. Through their faithfulness, they remained God's devoted ones.

## Quoting Commentary

The Levites received a blessing from Moses due to their volunteering as vanguard in conquering Canaan, while Simeon missed out due to their negative actions at Shechem and Zimri, according to Deuteronomy 33:8. This reflects the different paths taken by Levi, who repaid his "debt" by Acts at Shechem and Shittim, compared to Simeon, who incurred more by his actions at Zimri. Ultimately, the Levites received blessing and distinction from Moses. (Sifrei, Deuteronomy 349; Or HaChaim on Genesis 49:4:2)

## Liturgy

The text from the Machzor Yom Kippur Ashkenaz's Musaf for Yom Kippur highlights God's creation of the world, the story of Adam and Eve, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, the generation of the flood, and the lineage of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, culminating with the selection and consecration of the tribe of Levi and Aaron as the High Priest. The High Priest's seven-day period of seclusion before Yom Kippur is described, detailing the purification rituals he underwent to prepare for the atonement of the people.

## Tanakh

The verse in Malachi 2:6 praises a priest who delivered proper rulings, spoke only truth, served God faithfully, and guided others away from sin. This description reflects the ideal qualities of religious leaders as depicted in other parts of the Bible.

## Second Temple

In Second Temple commentary, it is stated that Simeon and Levi are two champions who are ready to repel impure ways of thinking. Despite being separate individuals, they are united in will, with their minds, purposes, and actions working in harmony. This unity is symbolized by Moses compressing Simeon into Levi, blending their natures to create a single form that combines hearing with action.

## Targum

Moses blessed the tribe of Levi, praising Aaron for his piety and faithfulness when tested at the Waters of Merivah, as described in Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 33:8.

## Musar

The connection between Israel and the Ineffable Name is demonstrated through the emanations of creation from תראפת to תוכלם and their connection to Jacob, Aaron symbolizes man's rehabilitation after Adam's sin, and the prohibition on making anointing oil or incense is to prevent giving power to forces counter to holiness by providing them with tools of holiness. The Tabernacle serves as a microcosm and parallel in the celestial regions, with Aaron representing the attribute of דסח, loving-kindness. An anomaly in the sequence of the מירוא מירות is noted in the consultation process with G-d.

## Kabbalah

The text from Kabbalistic commentary on Deuteronomy 33:8 states that Aaron deserved to use the Urim and Thummim and perform Temple service because he was found to be fit and on the proper spiritual levels. This allowed him to offer incense to calm divine anger and bring peace, as well as bring blessings to all the worlds. (Zohar, Vayikra 44:314)

# Deuteronomy 33:9

## Midrash

The Midrashim discussed various topics related to the tribe of Levi, highlighting their loyalty and dedication to God's covenant and the Tabernacle, as well as their righteous behavior compared to other tribes like Benjamin and Ephraim. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were also tested and blessed by God for their faithfulness, with Levi standing out for their observance of the Torah. The Midrash emphasizes that those who follow God's ways will not be cut off and will experience eternal blessings. The text also includes interpretations of verses related to righteousness, testing, and faith in God.

## Second Temple

The texts discuss the figure of Levi from Deuteronomy 33:9, who forsakes earthly ties to prioritize a relationship with God. Levi renounces his family, including his parents, sons, and brothers, in order to fully devote himself to serving God and seeking wisdom. Moses praises Levi for guarding God's oracles and covenant, emphasizing the importance of choosing God above all else.

## Commentary

The Levites were commended for keeping God's commandments and covenant (Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 33:9:1). The tribe of Levi, exemplified by the prophet Samuel, was known for its dedication to God's service from an early age (Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 33:9:1). The Levites were also praised for their obedience to God's word and for preserving the covenant of circumcision (Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:9:2). They were noted for their impartial judgment, even over members of other tribes if needed (Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:9:1). Additionally, the Levites acted zealously for the sake of God, without favoritism towards family members, demonstrating their commitment to God's commandments even over personal ties (Steinsaltz, Deuteronomy 33:9).

## Quoting Commentary

Moses called on all Israelites who did not worship the golden calf to join him, the tribe of Levi was the only tribe that completely rejected the golden calf, they were consecrated to serve in place of the first-born who failed to rally to Moses. The Levites were known for observing G-d's covenant meticulously and transmitting the Torah. They demonstrated their loyalty by carrying out difficult tasks for G-d. Studying Torah is credited to both scholars and their supporters.

## Chasidut

In Exodus, Mishpatim 8, the elders and nobles had visions equaled to those of Ezekiel and Amos, symbolizing the closeness to the essence of God before color was part of creation. The tribe of Levi's spiritual superiority emerged at this time, as they reached a level of awe necessary for such visions. In Genesis, Vayechi 27, Moses includes Shimon's blessing under Yehudah's due to their role in the sale of Joseph, showing their well-intentioned actions. The tribe of Levi is blessed independently for their loyalty to God during the golden calf incident, while Moses explains the blessing of the tribes in Deuteronomy 33, emphasizing Levi's loyalty through their actions.

## Halakhah

The text discusses the significance of circumcision in Egypt before the Paschal sacrifice, highlighting how Moses circumcised the people due to the neglect of the covenant by all except the tribe of Levi. The Levites, praised for upholding the covenant, were chosen for their service in the House of God and for providing shelter for unintentional killers on their sanctified land. This select tribe was known for their virtues and wisdom, ensuring justice and proper path adherence in all their actions. (Halakhah | Mishneh Torah, Forbidden Intercourse 13:2 and Halakhah | Sefer HaChinukh 408:2)

## Targum

The three Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:9 highlight the loyalty and commitment of the tribe of Levi to God and His covenant. Despite not showing mercy to their family members in certain situations, the Levites are praised for their dedication to upholding God's word and obeying His law in their service at the tabernacle.

## Talmud

Ravina discusses a halakha regarding the tribe of Levi, but the sons of Rav Pappa bar Abba point out a verse suggesting some Levites were involved in idol worship and killed by their own family members (Deuteronomy 33:9) [Talmud | Yoma 66b:16].

## Kabbalah

The text from Kabbalistic commentary on Deuteronomy 33:8 states that Aaron deserved to use the Urim and Thummim and perform Temple service because he was found to be fit and on the proper spiritual levels. This allowed him to offer incense to calm divine anger and bring peace, as well as bring blessings to all the worlds. (Zohar, Vayikra 44:314)

# Deuteronomy 33:10

## Midrash

Elkanah was a blessed righteous man, whereas Micah atoned for the sins of the Jewish people. Incense offerings enrich and the tribe of Levi plays a crucial role in sacrificial practices, unlike other tribes. Aaron used incense to overcome an angel, and incense offerings were crucial in invoking the presence of the Shekhinah. The tribe of Levi stood apart from the sinful act of the Golden Calf, emphasizing their dedication to Torah study. The Levites sacrificed the Pesach and upheld the commandments during the Israelites' time in the desert. Their teachings and judgments were highly valued among the people.

## Jewish Thought

The concept of "the reward of a good deed is another good deed" suggests that deeds become causes for other deeds, which is exemplified by the Aggadah in Shabbat 119. The people's acceptance of the Torah is reflected in different ways, indicating the importance of both performance and study for refining one's personality. In another commentary, it is discussed that kings required no special provisions while judges, often from the tribe of Levi, needed support to properly fulfill their roles. The assurance that authority will never depart from Judah's seed and that they will always occupy themselves with Torah study is emphasized. Precepts in the fourth class include laws that teach empathy and support for the poor and vulnerable. The priestly blessing, related to establishing Torah in the Jewish people, is connected to the blessing over the Torah in order to enhance the holiness of the Jewish people and make them a kingdom of priests.

## Quoting Commentary

Quoting Commentary by Bartenura on various Mishnah texts, incense offerings and its importance are discussed, highlighting that incense offerings, specifically through incense, elevate one to wealth as it appeases God's anger. The Mishnah mentions those who abstain from repeating it to spread wealth among all. Additionally, the text discusses the significance of various tribes in legislation and adjudication, with Leviites being the teachers of the Torah. There is emphasis on the multicolored gemstones representing the tribes, such as rubies symbolizing Reuven's honesty or Sapphires representing the wisdom in the tribe of Issachar. Moreover, the Torah's regulations around incense offerings and its association with the attribute of justice are expounded upon. In the tragic incident involving Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, failure to offer incense correctly led to their demise, underscoring the importance of mindfulness in worship.

## Commentary

The members of the tribe of Levi, particularly the kohanim, are qualified to teach and enforce God's laws, as they are impartial (Chizkuni). They offer incense and burnt-offerings as part of their responsibilities (Ibn Ezra). They spread throughout the Jewish people to learn and teach Torah (Kitzur Ba'al HaTurim). The tribe of Levi is worthy of blessing to teach Torah due to their importance (Sifte Chakhamim, Siforno). This teaching role was a reward for their righteousness (Steinsaltz).

## Halakhah

In biblical times, the Levites were dedicated to the service of God and teaching Torah to the people, as highlighted in Moses' blessing to the tribe of Levi in Deuteronomy 33:10. They were set apart from the rest of the tribes to focus on

spiritual matters, leading to their exclusion from inheritance, spoil of war, and material involvement. Despite this, God promised to provide for their needs. Their cities were dedicated for the needs of all other tribes, and their wisdom and service to God made them central to the Jewish community, as portrayed in the commandments and the beauty of their cities (Halakhah from various sources).

## Chasidut

The incense binds the burning heart with the ruach, bringing joy and nullifying the curse of toil, as mentioned in Proverbs 27:9 and Deuteronomy 33:10.

## Mishnah

In Mishnah Yoma 2:4, it is described how before the third lottery, only priests new to offering incense were allowed to participate in the lottery. In the fourth lottery, both new and experienced priests were included to determine who would take the limbs up to the altar for sacrifice [Mishnah].

## Targum

These Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:10 assert that those who teach God's law to the people of Israel are worthy of offering incense and sacrifices on the altar, to appease God's anger and ensure acceptance of their offerings. The priests are seen as instrumental in restraining God's wrath and bringing about reconciliation through their actions.

[1] [2] [3]

## Talmud

The Talmud discusses the practices of sounding the shofar on Yom Kippur and offering fats from Shabbat on the holiday, with different opinions based on Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yishmael's views (Talmud | Shabbat 114b:1). Additionally, the text explores the idea that those who burn incense become wealthy and the connection between Torah scholars giving halakhic instruction and the tribes of Levi and Issachar (Talmud | Yoma 26a:4, 26a:6).

## Musar

The text highlights the importance of supporting those who dedicate themselves to serving God, similar to the tribe of Levi, showing that those who separate themselves from worldly affairs to serve God merit support and are blessed by Him. It also discusses the specific roles and distinctions of the Levites and the Priests, emphasizing the importance of Torah study, teaching, and service to God in the spiritual realm over material possessions, illustrating the deeper meanings and relationships of various aspects of religious duties and offerings in Judaism.

## Kabbalah

The text from Kabbalistic commentary on Deuteronomy 33:8 states that Aaron deserved to use the Urim and Thummim and perform Temple service because he was found to be fit and on the proper spiritual levels. This allowed him to offer incense to calm divine anger and bring peace, as well as bring blessings to all the worlds. (Zohar, Vayikra 44:314)



# Deuteronomy 33:11

## Quoting Commentary

The commentators discuss various aspects of offerings in the Temple, particularly the importance of incense-burning and the blessings associated with it. Aaron's successful intervention to stop a plague by burning incense is highlighted, along with the emphasis on treating the poor, widows, orphans, and strangers with compassion. The significance of Moses' intimate communication with God is also noted as a unique aspect of their relationship. Burning incense was considered a task that brought wealth and blessings, leading to restrictions on who could perform it multiple times, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:10-11. The blessings associated with incense-burning also led to the practice of choosing new priests to partake in this task to seek favor and blessings from God.

## Midrash

The Midrash discusses the pairing of the tribes with specific kingdoms, such as Judah with Babylon and Benjamin with Media, based on similarities in symbolism. It also connects the tribes to the respective kingdoms they will conquer, like Levi and Greece. Additionally, the text delves into the blessings and lineage of various biblical figures, like Joseph and Esau, predicting their futures based on these connections. Overall, the Midrash explores the significance of lineage, blessings, and symbolism in predicting the outcomes of kingdoms and individuals.

## Commentary

In Deuteronomy 33:11, Moses blesses the tribe of Levi wishing that their sacrifices be well-received by God, that their enemies not rise up against them, and requests protection against those who challenge their status; the focus is on the priestly duties and the sacrifices they offer [Chizkuni, Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Ramban, Rashi, Sforno, Sifte Chakhamim, Steinsaltz, Tur HaArokh].

## Talmud

The Talmudic texts discuss the validity of the work of Cohanim who are later found to be disqualified due to lineage, citing Deuteronomy 33:11 as justification for accepting their work after the fact. The texts also mention the belief that those who perform specific rituals, such as burning incense, may become wealthy, based on interpretations of biblical verses. The parallel is drawn between different opinions on the validity of priesthood and Temple service based on Rabbi Yehoshua's opinion and interpretations of Deuteronomy 33:11.

## Halakhah

The Mishneh Torah explains that if a priest is discovered to be a challal after performing service, his past service is valid but he cannot serve in the future, though his continuation would not desecrate the service. This exception is derived from Deuteronomy 33:11, showing that even the desecrated are acceptable. The text also points out that Levites did not receive inheritance like their brethren because they were dedicated to serving God, teaching His laws, and were provided for by Him, as stated in Deuteronomy 33:10 and Numbers 18:20. Their exclusion from material gains allows them to focus on serving spiritually.

## Targum

The three different Targums on Deuteronomy 33:11 all ask for blessings and protection for the tribe of Levi, specifically asking for their enemies to be defeated so they may not rise again. The Targum Jonathan adds a specific request for the destruction of the enemies of the high priest Johanan.

## Liturgy

In the Siddur Edot HaMizrach, there is a post-meal blessing (57) that can be followed by a personal prayer.

## Chasidut

May the Lord bless and accept the substance and work of their hands, giving encouragement and strength to the valiant. Those who persist in noble actions will be great in influencing others to do the same, and this righteousness will be accounted to them (Tanya, Part IV; Iggeret HaKodesh 32:1).

## Kabbalah

The text from Kabbalistic commentary on Deuteronomy 33:8 states that Aaron deserved to use the Urim and Thummim and perform Temple service because he was found to be fit and on the proper spiritual levels. This allowed him to offer incense to calm divine anger and bring peace, as well as bring blessings to all the worlds. (Zohar, Vayikra 44:314)

# Deuteronomy 33:12

## Jewish Thought

The commentary discusses how the Temple was to be erected in Benjamin's territory, the only brother who did not bow down to Esau. The defeats inflicted on Esau's descendants were by Benjamin's descendants, Saul and Mordechai. Esau's mistaken belief that Jacob had given all his wealth as a gift shows his error in understanding their differences in outlook on life. Jacob clarifies the Jewish attitude towards material values and the importance of balance. Divine help is only received after exhausting natural means.

## Commentary

Binyamin was a beloved tribe of the Lord, as Moses mentioned in his blessing, and had the unique blessing of being secure because God dwelt in the Temple on his land. The lovely presence of God guarded Benjamin all the days and dwelt between his shoulders, symbolizing the location of the Temple. The absence of "and" in Benjamin's blessing indicates his special place among the tribes, with the allusion of the three Temples and the significance of each. Consequently, Benjamin was among the seven who were not eaten by worms in the grave, reflecting his exceptional merit.

## Halakhah

The concept of "upah" in Jewish law is understood as a symbol of honor and separation for the couple, with the wedding ceremony being considered complete with the recitation of the seven blessings and the act of bringing the bride into the groom's house for marriage. Intercourse immediately following the ceremony is deemed necessary for the validity of the marriage, with the focus being on the couple being alone together rather than a literal interpretation of being in the same room. The opinion of the Rambam regarding the necessity of complete "yiud" and no other witnesses present during the ceremony is subject to disagreement among Halakhic authorities, but ultimately aligns with the understanding of the purpose and significance of the "upah" in marriage.

## Talmud

Benjamin was privileged to host the Divine Presence because the Temple was built in his territory, located specifically on the strip of land that intersected between Judah and Benjamin [Talmud | Avot DeRabbi Natan 35:3]. This is emphasized in multiple texts that mention how Benjamin was focused on the sacred site and longed to absorb it into his portion [Talmud | Bava Batra 17a:5, Talmud | Jerusalem Talmud Megillah 1:12:4, Talmud | Megillah 26a:14, Talmud | Menachot 53b:2, Talmud | Sotah 37a:2, Talmud | Yoma 12a:4, Talmud | Yoma 12a:5, Talmud | Zevachim 118b:6, Talmud | Zevachim 54a:1, Talmud | Zevachim 54b:6, Talmud | Zevachim 54b:7].

## Midrash

The Midrash in Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10 discusses the arrangement of the tribal banners in Israel's camp, with Judah being placed in the east. This reflects Judah's role as the leader and first in various aspects like warfare, offerings, and traveling. The text also connects each direction of the camp with a specific tribe based on their attributes and roles. The commentary in Bereshit Rabbah 93:6 discusses different interpretations of the term "approach" in relation to Judah's actions, whether for war, conciliation, or prayer. Another Midrash, Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, explains that Judah sanctified the Holy Name through his actions during the crossing of the Red Sea. Midrash Tanchuma, on various sections like Vayehi Beshalach 6:3 and Miketz 13:5, discusses other instances related to Judah and Benjamin,

highlighting the spiritual significance of their actions.

## Quoting Commentary

In the Chizkuni commentary on Exodus 32:11:1, Moses prays and pacifies after the incident with the golden calf, leading to the second set of tablets being carved. Haamek Sheilah discusses Saul's decisions and reasoning. Rabbeinu Bahya interprets Jacob's reference to three Temples and the blessing of the tribe of Binyamin. He also discusses the goblet found on Benjamin and the speech of Judah. Rabbeinu Bahya explains the spiritual significance of the 600,000 descendants of Yaakov in relation to the Shechinah. In Ramban's commentary on Numbers 2:2:1, the organization of the camps around the Tabernacle is explained based on the directions and attributes of each tribe. Lastly, Tribal Lands mentions the resting of the Shekhinah in Naalat Binyamin and Rachel's connection to Ramah in Naalat Binyamin.

## Chasidut

This text from Chasidut explains that Yaakov's focus on Rachel is connected to the symbolism of Rachel's sons, Yosef and Binyamin. The mention of Yosef being separate from his brothers and Binyamin having God dwell between his shoulders indicates that Leah, representing the first concept, is necessary to achieve the concept of Rachel. This is linked to the luz mentioned in the text.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:12, Moses blesses the tribe of Benjamin, declaring that the beloved of the Lord will live securely with Him, under His protective shield throughout the day, and with the Shekinah residing within his borders. This sentiment is echoed in various Targum commentaries, including Onkelos and Targum Jonathan, emphasizing the protection and presence of the divine with the tribe of Benjamin.

# Deuteronomy 33:13

## Commentary

Moses blesses Joseph's land as being especially blessed by the Lord, with part of the blessing being that it will have the heavenly bounty of dew and benefited by both the waters from above and below, highlighting the fertile nature of the land given to the tribe of Joseph [Chizkuni, Ibn Ezra, JPS 1985 Footnotes, Or HaChaim, Rabbeinu Bahya, Ramban, Rashi, Sforno, Steinsaltz, Tze'enah Ure'enah]. Moses' blessings for Joseph's land were unique, as it was especially blessed and fruitful, with mentions of the sweetness of the heavens and groundwater below contributing to bountiful crops [Sforno]. Additionally, the mention of deep waters and the blessing of rain from the heavens symbolize the unique blessings bestowed upon Joseph's land [Sforno, Tze'enah Ure'enah].

## Tanakh

In Genesis 49:25, it is said that the God of the father provides help and blessings from heaven, deep below, and from the breast and womb, demonstrating Divine protection and abundance [Tanakh | Genesis 49:25].

## Jewish Thought

The blessing of Yosef in Deuteronomy 33:13 indicates his land is blessed by the Lord, representing balance between qualities of Chesed and Din, with gematria equaling 985 (Kol HaTor 2:85).

## Targum

Moses blessed the tribe of Joseph, stating that his land is blessed by the Lord with abundant produce from heaven, dew, and deep waters flowing from below.

## Quoting Commentary

The Torah does not want to associate God with initiating disaster if avoidable, as seen in the ordering of events during the deluge in Genesis 7:11 (Rabbeinu Bahya). In Deuteronomy 33:13, Moses blesses Joseph's tribe emphasizing the abundant irrigation from underneath, even in times of drought (Radak). When Moses blesses Asher in Deuteronomy 33:24, the Rabbis interpret it as being blessed with many children, differentiating him from the other tribes (Ramban).

## Midrash

The Midrash Sifrei Devarim states that Joseph's land was the most blessed of all lands based on the blessing given by Moses in Deuteronomy 33:13.

# Deuteronomy 33:14

## Talmud

The Talmud discusses remedies for bulmos, a condition which can be alleviated with a sheep's tail, fine wheat flour, or barley flour combined with honey. Rabbi Yoanan found relief by eating ripe figs from the east side of a fig tree, as fruits ripen first where the sun rises, emphasizing the importance of wisdom in preserving one's health [Yoma 83b:10].

## Commentary

Different commentators discuss the relationship between the sun, moon, and the growth of crops in Deuteronomy 33:14. Chizkuni explains how different fruits grow in cycles starting with each new moon. Ibn Ezra describes the dependence of seed and vineyard fruits on the sun's rays. Rabbeinu Bahya highlights the sun's association with fire and the moon with water, influencing crop ripening. Rashi and Sifrei Devarim discuss the precious fruits brought by the sun and the moons. Steinsaltz mentions the sweetness of sun-ripened crops and monthly yields produced by the moon.

## Quoting Commentary

The commentaries explain how the luminaries of the sun and moon were created to illuminate the earth and sky, respectively, providing light necessary for life to exist and for the growth of plants. They also discuss the symbolism of wealth associated with the stone of Yosef and caution against prematurely forcing redemption, comparing it to picking fruit before it ripens. Additionally, the creation of vegetation on the third day is described as a precursor to the creation of land-based living creatures on the fifth and sixth days, with the luminaries increasing in power on the fourth day to influence the growth of more advanced plants. Furthermore, the separation of day and night, the division of time into hours, days, months, and years, and the significance of the east wind are all highlighted as part of the creation narrative.

## Chasidut

The first text discusses how stars can have an effect on a person's body and constitution, while the soul and free will are above their influence. It highlights the importance of utilizing one's inclinations for holiness rather than solely subjugating them. The story of R. Nahman b. Yitzhak is used as an example of how attempting to flee from inclinations may not be successful. The second text draws parallels between the influence of stars and Mazal, emphasizing that even inanimate objects have their own destiny tied to Mazal.

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:14 describe the earth producing abundant harvests with the help of the sun's warmth and the monthly ripening influenced by the moon's phases. The earth is said to provide age and produce nurtured by the sun, along with first fruits ripened each month.

## Halakhah

The commandment to offer a sacrifice on every Rosh Chodesh (first day of the month) is rooted in the belief that the spheres of the sun and moon have great effects on the earth and everything in it, as indicated in Deuteronomy 33:14. This belief influences various activities, such as cutting trees or casting off on waters, during different phases of the

moon. By offering an additional sacrifice on Rosh Chodesh, one acknowledges the novelty brought by the renewal of the moon and demonstrates reverence for God's power over the spheres. This practice is in line with the positive commandment to offer sacrifices on Rosh Chodesh as outlined in Numbers 28:11.

# Deuteronomy 33:15

## Commentary

Moses blesses the land allocated to the tribe of Joseph's descendant Ephrayim, especially mountainous, with the choicest fruit growing in ancient mountains and everlasting hills that were created during the first six days of creation, indicating the importance and praise of the land as part of Joseph's blessing. The eternal hills are particularly highlighted for their constant fruitfulness, even without rain, symbolizing a source of blessing from the patriarchs and matriarchs.

## Talmud

In Jerusalem Talmud Megillah, Rabbi iyya discusses the placement of covers in Benjamin's part, despite references to Judah. Rabbi Jonah and Rabbi Abbahu mention the consumption of sacrificial meat in Joseph's territory, emphasizing the importance of the Dweller in the senna in Joseph's greatness. Rabbi Eudaimon of Sepphoris mentions the altar being situated between Benjamin and Joseph due to the border turning to Taanat-Shilo, highlighting the Divine Presence dwelling in Joseph's greatness.

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:15 emphasize the abundance and fruitfulness of the land as a result of the righteousness of the patriarchs and matriarchs, comparing them to mountains and hills, respectively. This blessing is seen as a result of the spiritual legacy passed down from generations past.

## Quoting Commentary

In a commentary on Genesis 41:55:3, it is described how Pharaoh sent petitioners to Joseph for food, who refused until they were circumcised, leading to a revelation of their food shortage. This incident is connected to Joseph being the supplier of grain in Egypt, as referenced in Proverbs, Genesis, and Deuteronomy. In another commentary on Genesis 49:11:1, the abundance of produce in the land of Yehudah is praised, with imagery of ample grapes and wine. The exaggerations in the text indicate poetic language. Finally, in a commentary on Genesis 49:26:3, the blessing of Joseph is described expansively, reaching the furthest hills of the world, drawing connections to the Israelites' desires in the desert and other biblical descriptions of vastness.



# Deuteronomy 33:16

## Midrash

Joseph comforted his brothers, emphasizing that despite their intentions to harm him, God had a greater plan in place.

He reassured them by comparing their fate to elements of the natural world, implying that he would not harm them and questioning his ability to act against the will of God. He also defended himself against their suspicion, highlighting his loyalty to his family and God. The Midrash suggests that Joseph's comforting words foreshadow the comfort that God will provide to Jerusalem in the future (Bereshit Rabbah 100:9). Benjamin's son's names reflect his experiences, while

Naphtali's sons are depicted as expert weavers and devoted to their inclinations (Bereshit Rabbah 94:8). The significance of Joseph's actions and blessings from his father are analyzed, with various interpretations regarding his self-control and interactions with his family (Bereshit Rabbah 98:20).

## Tanakh

In Exodus 3:1, Moses, tending his father-in-law Jethro's flock, came to Horeb, the mountain of God. In Exodus 3:2, a messenger of יהוה appeared to him in a burning bush that was not consumed. In Genesis 49:26, Jacob blesses Joseph, saying his blessings surpass those of his ancestors and may they rest on Joseph and his brothers.

## Jewish Thought

In Jewish thought, the term "dwelling" is used to describe God's continual presence or providence in a particular place or object. This can be seen in references to God's glory abiding in a place or his goodwill towards an object. When applied to God, the term should be understood within the context as either referring to the presence of his light in a place or the continuance of his providence towards an object (Guide for the Perplexed, Part 1 25:3).

## Commentary

The passage discusses the unique blessings of Joseph's land, indicating that the earth is full of precious things, including gold and silver. Moses refers to the goodwill of God who dwells in the bush, symbolizing heaven. He prays that the blessing shall come upon Joseph, emphasizing Joseph's loyalty to his father's upbringing and his ability to do good for his brothers. Both Rashi and Sifte Chakhamim add the word blessing in the verse to clarify what is being bestowed upon Joseph.

## Talmud

In the Jerusalem Talmud, Rabbi iyya explains that all sacred covers were in Benjamin's part because he rested between his shoulders, despite scripture placing the Temple in Judah. The Dweller's pleasure is in the senna, and sacred meat for atonement is consumed in Joseph's portion. Rabbi Eudaimon of Sepphoris mentions the altar being situated where Joseph's part overlaps Benjamin's due to the border turning eastward to Taanat-Shilo. In the Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Yosei interprets the Dweller in the bush as allowing offerings of lesser sanctity to be consumed by tribes that opposed Joseph, as long as they overlook Shiloh.

## Chasidut

In Likutei Moharan, it is discussed how the concept of Leah enables one to attain the concept of Rachel, with references to Yosef and Binyamin. In Mei HaShiloach, the connection between the attributes of Hesed, Truth, Tsedek, and Peace is explored in relation to Moshe and Aharon's responses to the creation of the world. Additionally, the attribute of patience is linked to the story of Moshe and the burning bush. Lastly, in Shem MiShmuel, the rectifications for sins are discussed through Shilo, the First Temple, and the Second Temple, each symbolizing different aspects of the human body and soul in relation to the Divine Presence.

## Quoting Commentary

The Egyptians pressed the Israelites severely, forcing them into hard labor and depriving them of rest, trying to weaken them but failing as they continued to grow stronger. The Midrash suggests that God punished the Egyptians with plagues for their treatment of the Israelites, who were chosen to receive the Torah and bless them like the dust of the earth. Even after many hardships, God showed kindness towards them. The blessing of the land to Joseph is explained in connection to his refusal to follow his master's wife, contrasting with Adam's fall; Joseph's righteousness brought blessings to the earth instead.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:16, the Targums emphasize the abundance and blessings brought forth by the earth, as well as the favor of God dwelling in the thornbush. These blessings are to be bestowed upon Joseph and the man who was distinguished among his brothers and ruled in the land of Egypt, symbolizing their importance and honor.

# Deuteronomy 33:17

## Midrash

Dan will be a snake way in the path" (Genesis 49:17). Naphtali, [its stone was] an agate, the color of its banner, like clarified wine, and of articulated gazelles were depicted on it, based on: "Naphtali is a slender deer that emanates profound speech" (Genesis 49:21). Gad, [its stone was] a crystal, the color of its banner, black, and a camp was depicted on it, based on: "Gad, a legion shall raid him, but he shall raid at its heels" (Genesis 49:19). Asher, [its stone was] a beryl, the color of its banner, like crystal white, the image of an olive tree. Joseph, [its stone was] an onyx, the color of its banner, like the eye around which the various colors are bound, and a bull was depicted on it, based on: "Bull of the Firstborn" (Deuteronomy 33:17). Benjamin, [its stone was] a jasper, the color of its banner, like red dye, and a wolf was depicted on it, based on: "Benjamin is a wolf that ravens" (Genesis 49:27). The prince's banner was like the color of his stone, a sign for each tribe. Each prince's stone corresponded to the color of the gems that were on the high priest's breastplate.

## Jewish Thought

Jacob's sons are individually addressed, each with their unique virtues and flaws, and prophetic glimpses are given into their future roles and destinies. Reuben is criticized for his hasty and irreparable actions, losing his birthright to Joseph.

Shimon and Levi are rebuked for impulsive violence and planning, respectively. Judah is praised for his leadership qualities, with descendants prophesied to hold royal roles despite moments of weakness. Joseph's rise to greatness and reconciliation with his brothers is highlighted. In messianic times, unity will prevail among the tribes, symbolized by a single flag. The prophecies also touch upon the roles of Ephraim, Joseph, and the importance of ensuring truth and righteousness in the era of Mashiach ben Yosef, heralding peace and redemption.

## Quoting Commentary

Rabbeinu Bahya's interpretation of various verses in Genesis and Exodus highlights the symbolic significance of different animals and objects. He explains the symbolism behind the images on the flags of the tribes of Israel, such as the flag of Ephraim depicting an ox and the flag of Dan depicting an eagle, which reflect the characteristics and blessings associated with each tribe. Additionally, he discusses the connections between biblical figures, such as Yehudah representing a lion and Joseph representing an ox, as well as the reincorporation of elements from past sins into future rituals, like the use of an ox as a sin-offering. Through these interpretations, Rabbeinu Bahya emphasizes the spiritual and metaphorical depth of biblical narratives and their relevance to Jewish ritual and tradition.

## Talmud

In Talmud Bava Kamma, it is discussed how merits and rewards can be derived from various biblical verses, comparing individuals to different animals or characters, such as Joseph being compared to an ox and Issachar to a donkey. Furthermore, in Talmud Rosh Hashanah, it is debated whether the shofar of a cow should be referred to as a shofar or keren, based on a verse from Deuteronomy 33:17. Additionally, in Talmud Sotah, it is explained how different biblical characters are compared to animals, symbolizing different traits or qualities.

## Commentary

Moses references Joshua as the first king chosen by G-d from the descendants of Joseph, comparing him to an ox, and Ephrayim as a key warrior group. The tribe of Menashe also had a great leader. The ox represents the strength of the

tribe of Joseph, emphasizing the superior numbers within the tribe. Joshua, recognized for his power and beauty, led Ephrayim in battle, while Menashe also contributed to triumphant victories. The blessings of Moses were particularly noted through the tribes of Ephrayim and Menashe, indicating a clear hierarchy among Joseph's descendants.

## Tanakh

In Judges 8:10, Zebah and Zalmunna were left with an army of 15,000 after losing 120,000 fighters in battle. In Numbers 27:20, Moses is instructed to delegate some of his authority to ensure the Israelite community's obedience.

## Musar

Amalek is descended from Eisav and symbolizes the concept of an "other god," with a value of 240, while the holiness side is represented by the spirit of Hashem also valued at 240. The Moshiachs correspond to the husks of the ox and donkey, with Moshiach son of David overcoming the donkey's husk and Moshiach son of Yosef represented by the ox. The Midrash discusses how various figures in Jewish history, such as Abraham and Moses, are symbolized by horns, which were later forfeited due to sins. Different camps in the Jewish army in the desert were represented by different animals on their flags to symbolize their attributes. The blessing to Esau about owning a bull and a donkey alludes to the priest accompanying troops into battle and the Messiah riding on a donkey, respectively. Meanwhile, other Rabbis in the Midrash interpret the "ox" as Joseph and the "donkey" as Issachar, with the sons of Issachar being knowledgeable in Torah and understanding G-d's rule, as evidenced by their emissaries sent to attend King David's crowning.

## Chasidut

The text discusses the concept of bowing down to God, comparing it to the upper unification of Shabbat. Yosef is seen as embodying the grandeur of holiness, with a focus on inner intelligence and the shining of this intelligence in every situation. Charity is emphasized as a way to enhance the holy speech of the tzaddik, with a double connotation that can be misinterpreted by charlatans.

## Mishnah

In Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 3:2, the mishna discusses the primary mitzvah of Rosh HaShana, which is sounding the shofar. It states that all shofarot are fit for blowing except for the horn of a cow, which is not considered a shofar. Rabbi Yosei questions this distinction, referring to a verse that mentions sounding a blast with the horn of a ram, which he argues is a shofar fit for Rosh HaShana (Joshua 6:5) [Mishnah].

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:17 depict Joseph's descendants, Ephraim and Menasheh, as powerful and victorious, with the ability to prevail over nations and enemies alike. They are described as slaughtering kings and princes, with Gideon of the tribe of Menasheh and Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim leading them to victory over numerous foes. The birthright and glory that once belonged to Reuben now belong to Joseph, and his descendants are destined for greatness and dominance throughout the earth.

## Halakhah

The minimum size of a shofar for Rosh Hashanah is that it should be able to be held in one hand with both sides sticking out, and the shofar must have a cavity inside. Shofars of cows are not fit for use, as are the horns of oryx and other animals which lack cavities. Only the horns of rams, ewes, male goats, and female goats are considered suitable for blowing on Rosh Hashanah, as they are hollow. The explanation of the Mishnah on this topic is relatively new, as

previous interpretations differed. (Sefer HaChinukh 405:3)

## Liturgy

In the Liturgy of Selichot for the Second Day of the Ten Days of Penitence, the prayer is for God to teach us to improve ourselves and correct our ways, bless and enrich the downtrodden, and restore the glory of Joseph in Jerusalem. The reference to a bullock engraved on the left and the title B'chor Shor comes from Deuteronomy 33:17.

## Kabbalah

The text describes the symbolism of the horns of a cow, representing Netza and Hod, and the horns of the ox, representing esed and Gevurah, in relation to the Shekhinah and the messiahs. It also discusses the fourth exile as a pit of evil filled with snakes and scorpions, linked to the descendants of Joseph. This generation of evil individuals will ultimately lead to the time of redemption and the descent into the abyss, with references to the Faithful Shepherd and the Tannaim and Amoraim descending to help in the deep exile.

# Deuteronomy 33:18

## Midrash

to the sin of the golden calf, as it is necessary to atone for that sin. "And for the peace offering, two cattle, five rams, five goats, five sheep in their first year" (Numbers 7:47) - these offerings represent the peace and prosperity that will come to Israel through the leadership of Elyasaf son of Deuel, the prince of the children of Gad, who presented this generous offering as a symbol of his partnership with his brethren and his role in the Exodus from Egypt, ensuring the Torah study and well-being of the tribe of Gad.

## Commentary

Moses blesses Zebulun near the beaches of the ocean, encouraging him to be joyful in his seafaring trade, which supports Issachar's Torah study (Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 33:18:1, Daat Zkenim, Deuteronomy 33:18:1). Zebulun benefits from Moses's blessing to keep his ships safe in his sea trade engagements (Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 33:18:2). Issachar, on the other hand, is blessed with success in guarding his fertile land from thieves as he engages in agriculture (Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 33:18:3, Daat Zkenim, Deuteronomy 33:18:2). This partnership between Zebulun and Issachar allows Zebulun to support Issachar's Torah study through his trade activities while receiving blessings from Moses for his endeavors (Or HaChaim, Deuteronomy 33:18:1, Rashbam, Deuteronomy 33:18:1).

## Tanakh

Joseph chose five of his brothers to present them to Pharaoh, as described in Genesis 47:2.

## Musar

Supporting Torah scholars discreetly is equivalent to delighting in Shabbos, as scholars, like Shabbos, dedicate themselves exclusively to Torah study and should be provided income by the rest of the community with dignity. This support is compared to nurturing a growing tree in the commitment to Torah study, exemplified by the partnership between Yissachar and Zevulun who shared in the rewards of Torah study and financial support. The significance of financially supporting Torah scholars is emphasized in multiple sources, noting that the supporters receive equal reward to those studying, showcasing the importance of this act in upholding and sustaining Torah wisdom.

## Halakhah

The texts emphasize the importance of dedicating oneself to the study of Torah, even to the point of discomfort and sacrifice. It is recommended to study in a house of study or with others, as this facilitates retention of knowledge. Those who support Torah study financially are considered equal to those who study themselves. It is important to prioritize Torah study over material pleasure, and to exert oneself fully in this pursuit in order to acquire wisdom permanently.

## Chasidut

The text discusses the significance of business activity in relation to the blessing of Zevulun and Yissachar. It highlights that while both business activity and Torah study are important, business activity is specifically linked to Zevulun's role and is seen as a necessary component that should not be overlooked, as indicated by the command to "Rejoice, Zevulun, in your journeys" (Deuteronomy 33:18) (Likutei Moharan 23:3:4, 280:3:2, 35:11:4, 60:4:6).

# Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:18, the prophet Moses blesses the tribe of Zebulun and Issachar, encouraging Zebulun to rejoice when going out to war or commerce and advising Issachar to rejoice when calculating festival times or in houses of learning. Each Targum provides a slightly different interpretation of the same verse, highlighting the importance of these activities for each tribe.

## Quoting Commentary

The tribe of Issachar was honored to offer sacrifices second because of their reputation for Torah study, supported financially by the tribe of Zevulun. Even though Issachar was born first, Zevulun was mentioned first to acknowledge the financial support for Torah study (Or HaChaim on Numbers 7:18:1; Rashbam on Genesis 49:13:1). Moses also blesses Zevulun before Issachar to show appreciation for their economic contributions to Issachar's Torah study (Rabbeinu Bahya, Bereshit 49:13:1). The connections between Zevulun's trade and wealth were highlighted in various commentaries, illustrating the intertwined support between Zevulun and Issachar (Rashbam on Genesis 49:13:3; Tribal Lands, Chapter 7; Zevulun 2).

# Deuteronomy 33:19

## Halakhah

The first text discusses the eternal love of God for humanity, emphasizing God's acts of lovingkindness, redeeming nature, and protective role as emphasized in the Amidah prayer. The second text explores the hidden nature of the Hillazon, the creature from which the Techelet dye is made, and questions the practicality of finding and using it in the present time. The third text questions the value of pursuing the Hillazon due to the inability to use its blood for dyeing, as indicated by the words of the Sages in Megillah (6a). The fourth text highlights the signs of the Hillazon according to Chazal, indicating its emergence from the sea to the mountains and its burying nature.

## Midrash

A Midrash from Bamidbar Rabbah 13:17 explains the special significance of Zebulun and Issachar presenting their offerings together, highlighting their close partnership in Torah study and livelihood. In Bereshit Rabbah 82:5, the text discusses how Jacob's descendants will sacrifice like other nations at specific times. Another Midrash from Midrash Tanchuma Buber, V'Zot HaBerachah 2:4, tells the story of Moses overcoming the Angel of Death to bless Israel. Midrash Tehillim 119:8 explores the idea of rewards from God for the wicked and righteous, focusing on receiving life for keeping God's word.

## Commentary

The commentary on Deuteronomy 33:19 describes how Zebulun and Issachar would be blessed with wealth from seafaring and hidden treasures in the sand, leading them to financial success. Additionally, the tribes would make offerings of righteousness on Mount Moriah, potentially influencing other nations to admire the God of Israel and convert to Judaism. Ibn Ezra focuses on the wealth that Zebulun would accumulate from seafaring, while Rabbeinu Bahya delves into the concept of sharing merits between Zebulun and Issachar due to an agreement regarding Torah study. The blessings of wealth, prosperity, and influence are central themes in these commentaries, which highlight the unique characteristics and blessings bestowed upon these tribes.

## Jewish Thought

The text discusses the concept of influence or emanation attributed to incorporeal beings, such as God and angels, in their actions. It explains that these actions do not depend on physical proximity or impact, but rather on a continuous and immeasurable influence that affects objects when they are prepared to receive it. The term "influence" is used as an analogy to describe these actions, as it is challenging to comprehend the nature of incorporeal beings and their actions.

The text also addresses misconceptions regarding how God's actions are carried out, highlighting the role of imagination in creating such beliefs. Additionally, it mentions the influence of the spheres in astrology, despite their corporeal nature.

## Quoting Commentary

During the Geonic Period, the Babylonian scholars who directed the academies Sura and Pumbedisa produced an expansive and awe-inspiring palace of the Torah. By diligently studying the Talmud, one acquires tools to make inferences and define laws clearly, drawing from the treasures of the sands and the exact wording of scholars. Those who grasp these methods can achieve understanding limited only by their ability to debate and defend their knowledge. (Haamek Sheilah on Sheiltot d'Rav Achai Gaon, Kidmat HaEmek)



# Tanakh

The men of the tribe of Issachar were known for their ability to understand the signs of the times and advise Israel on how to act. They had 200 chiefs and were followed by all their kinsmen (I Chronicles 12:33).

# Liturgy

In these excerpts from the Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz, the psalm of the sons of Korach calls for all nations to recognize the sovereignty of God and proclaim Him as their King through the sounding of the shofar. The text emphasizes the symbolism of the shofar blast on Rosh Hashanah, representing the harsh punishment for transgressions and inspiring repentance towards forgiveness, as well as praising God as the King of all the earth. The mention of the nobles of the nations refers to the heads of the twelve tribes of Yisrael, symbolizing unity and the power of God to shield those who trust in Him. (Rabbeinu Yonah, Rashi, Malbim, Midrash, Rav Saadiah Gaon)

# Talmud

Zebulun questioned why he was given mountains and seas instead of fields and vineyards like his brothers, but God assured him that his territory's wealth in ilazon and tarit sea creatures, as well as sand for glassmaking, would be valuable. God promised that anyone who took these resources without permission would not prosper, as indicated in Moses' blessing to Zebulun in Deuteronomy 33:19 [Talmud | Megillah 6a:7-8].

# Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:19 mention how the tribes of Israel will assemble at the mountain of the sanctuary to offer righteous offerings and true oblations, consuming the wealth of nations and revealing hidden treasures in the sand. They will be nourished by the sea's riches, using shell-fish to dye their garments and making mirrors and glass vessels from the sands. The treasures of their coasts will be discovered to them.

# Musar

The text discusses the punishment for those who separate from the community and do not participate in the service of God, highlighting their exclusion from sanctifying God along with the groups that scorn the word of God and do not have a share in the world to come. Additionally, it explores the concept of completion and repair work in the future, where the world will return to an ideal state as at the time of creation, with unity among the people of Israel leading to everlasting life as intended by the Creator.

# Kabbalah

In Tikkunei Zohar 43b:7, Rabbi El'azar discusses the existence of seven seas, with the highest sea being above all of them. This higher sea is related to the verse in Deuteronomy 33:19 about the bounty of the seas, prompting the question of to whom do they give suckle.

# Deuteronomy 33:20

## Midrash

In Bereshit Rabbah 95:4, Joseph chooses five men, Reuben, Levi, Benjamin, Simeon, and Issachar, who were not considered mighty among his brothers, to present before Pharaoh. The repetition of names in Moses's blessing indicates those who were mighty, with Judah, Naphtali, Asher, Dan, Zebulun, and Gad being considered mighty and not presented before Pharaoh. In Sifrei Bamidbar 106:1, it is discussed how Miriam was sequestered for seven days by both her father and God, and how Moses was carried by the holy one from Reuben to Gad for burial. In Sifrei Devarim 355:1, it is mentioned that Gad was specified as one of the five men chosen by Joseph from those whose names were doubled because Moses brought him to burial.

## Commentary

The commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:20 discuss the blessings given to the tribe of Gad. Moses praises Gad for being blessed with a large territory suitable for raising sheep and cattle, comparing them to a lion that expands its territory eastward and is powerful enough to repel any enemies. Gad's large inheritance and prowess in battle are highlighted, showing that they deserve the expansive land they were given.

## Quoting Commentary

The Netziv highlights how pilpul allowed Gad to inhabit the land across from Beis-pe'or, as evidenced by Moshe's blessing in Deuteronomy 33:20. Rabbeinu Bahya underscores the valor and bravery of the Gadites, pointing out their lack of fear in the face of surrounding nations and their reliance on physical strength and past merits in battle. Ramban and Rashi discuss Gad's military prowess and courage, leading them to take on a vanguard role. Additionally, the Talmud notes a high level of manslaughter attributed to Gad, revealing the dangerous combination of prowess and materialism. Sforno and Tur HaArokh further emphasize Gad's lion-like strength and expansion of borders, as reflected in Moshe's blessings and Yaakov's prophecies.

## Tanakh

In Numbers 32:17, the Reubenites and Gadites propose to lead as shock-troops for the Israelites to establish them in their home, while their children remained in fortified towns because of the inhabitants of the land [Tanakh].

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:20, Moses blesses the tribe of Gad, praising God for increasing their territory and describing them as powerful as lions in battle, capable of killing rulers and kings with strength and prowess as noted in Targum Onkelos and Targum Jerusalem. Targum Jonathan similarly emphasizes Gad's strength in battle, emphasizing their ability to defeat kings and rulers by cutting off their heads.

# Deuteronomy 33:21

## Jewish Thought

G-d's presence on earth depends on the actions of individuals, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, who repair damage done by previous generations and bring G-d closer to earth. The Talmud emphasizes the importance of bringing merit to the masses, as Moses did. Keeping the chukim of the Torah is essential for humanity's future, as it sows seeds of righteousness and leads to a lofty ultimate purpose that can only be achieved through practical adherence to the Torah. Only by participating in the collective good for humanity can one fulfill their share in this enlightened future.

## Midrash

a different mother, as it is stated: "Moses called to Hoshea, son of Nun..." (Deuteronomy 32:44); Hoshea is his brother.

Why is Hoshea called his brother? It is because they had the same mother. "Of one hundred and thirty [shekels] in weight..." – the prince of Gad presented his offering corresponding to the hundred and thirty years that Jacob lived, for when he reached one hundred and thirty years, he blessed Pharaoh, just as it says: "All the days of my sojourning were one hundred and thirty years" (Genesis 47:9). That is why the prince of Gad presented his offering corresponding to his departure from Egypt. One silver [kehila], silver pitcher, of seventy shekels" – "What is a silver pitcher?" a vessel that serves as a partition [makhlufet] for one pouring wine for the Holy One blessed be He, as Moses placed a partition before the Holy One blessed be He while he was interceding on behalf of Israel, as it is stated: "Let Me alone and I will destroy them..." (Exodus 32:10). In that regard it is stated: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and crushed heart – these, God will not despise" (Psalms 51:19). Just as the pitcher is filled with wine, so was Moses filled with words of Torah, as it is stated: "And Moses spoke all the words of this song until their end" (Deuteronomy 31:30), just as it says: "A word spoken in the appropriate time [kehalifot]..." (Source: sefaria.org)

## Talmud

The Talmud explores the location and burial of Moses, with various commentaries discussing the distance between different tribes, Moses being carried by God to his burial in Gad, and the duty to honor the dead. It is emphasized that Moses' righteousness led to the righteousness of many, contrasting with others who caused sin. Ultimately, the text highlights the importance of studying Torah and honoring those who have passed.

## Commentary

The tribe of Gad chose the first portion of the land formerly owned by Sichon and Og near the Jordan River, motivated by the presence of Moses' burial place in that region [Chizkuni, Daat Zkenim]. Moses selected this site, knowing it would be his eventual resting place, hidden away in Gad's territory [Or HaChaim, Ibn Ezra]. Gad's actions in taking this territory were recognized by Moses as fulfilling G-d's righteous will and his own promise to aid in the conquest of the land [Ibn Ezra, Siforno]. Reuven, in conjunction with Gad, was at the head of the people in conquering the land, displaying their strong fighting abilities [Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim].

## Quoting Commentary

Chizkuni Commentary from Deuteronomy 34:1-3 explains that the name Nebo comes from a summit of mountains near the territory of Reuven, indicating that the grave of the lawgiver is at the boundary between Reuven and Gad's territories. The commentary on Deuteronomy 3:26-1 states that Moses accepted being buried in Moab as a sign of his

identification with his people, allowing them to rise together in the resurrection. On Genesis 1:1-2, the discussion focuses on the creation sequence and land ownership, suggesting that the Torah's beginning emphasizes divine ownership and rights to land in relation to Canaanite claims. These insights highlight the spiritual and territorial significance of biblical events and locations.

## Tanakh

Joshua instructs the children of Israel to leave their wives, children, and livestock on the land across the Jordan, while the fighting men go ahead armed to assist them, as assigned by Moses (Joshua 1:14).

## Chasidut

Giving charity allows one to embrace the attribute of mishpat, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:21 and Psalms 99:4. The 248 mitzvot correspond to the 248 limbs, with Moshe reminding about them as the M'ChoKeK (lawgiver) in Deuteronomy 33:21, but drunkenness may cause one to forget them, as mentioned in Proverbs 31:5. The significance of traveling by sefinta alludes to the root of Divine Will and the burial place of Moshe, as discussed in Deuteronomy 33:21.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:21, the Targums focus on the idea that Moses received his portion of land first, where his burial spot is concealed, adorned with precious stones and pearls. It emphasizes that Moses acted righteously before the Lord and taught the laws to the people of Israel, indicating his righteous legacy that will continue into the world to come.

## Mishnah

The text from Pirkei Avot 5:18 discusses the influence of individuals on the righteousness or sin of the multitudes. It highlights that those who lead others towards righteousness will not be held accountable for sin, while those who lead others towards sin will not be granted the ability to repent. The examples of Moses, who was righteous, and Jeroboam, who sinned, are used to illustrate this idea (Mishnah | Pirkei Avot 5:18).

## Musar

The commentary discusses the negative traits of jealousy, greed, and craving for honor that lead to man's downfall, contrasting them with the virtues of righteousness and justice exemplified by different figures in the Torah. It emphasizes the importance of voluntary acts of righteousness and honoring commitments beyond the minimum requirement, linking these behaviors to spiritual and moral growth. Additionally, it highlights the interconnectedness of celestial and earthly realms, suggesting that the defeat of enemies in the spiritual realm precedes their defeat on Earth, and emphasizing the significance of Israel and the Torah in the world's stability and creation.

## Kabbalah

This text from the Tikkunei Zohar discusses the descent of the Father through the Righteous-One, who is described as the connector of two thighs of truth and contains the portion of the lawgiver hidden within. It also mentions the depth composed of the 24 letters of the second Unity, emphasizing the importance of not returning lowly and ashamed.

## Tosefta

Moses was informed by Serakh daughter of Asher that Joseph's coffin lied in the Nile River with metal skewers. Moses called on Joseph's spirit to reveal himself, and the coffin surfaced. Moses retrieved the coffin, demonstrating his power by comparing it to Elisha's ability to make iron float. Moses was buried in the valley, carried by the Shekhinah, signifying his merit to receive the same treatment as Joseph. The text also emphasizes the initiation of transgressions by individuals or groups, and the subsequent punishment that affects all involved, as seen in various biblical examples.

# Deuteronomy 33:22

## Midrash

In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 13:20, Elyasaf, prince of the children of Gad, presented his offering corresponding to the exodus from Egypt, following the lead of Simeon waging war to help his sister. His offering symbolized the narrative of crossing the Jordan to aid in taking possession of the land. Yokheved's age at Moses' birth was also related to the offering. In Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 93:7, the text discusses Judah coming to Joseph initially in anger, respecting Joseph's restraint and ability. Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Miketz 13:1 delves into the significance of Benjamin being compared to his mother, fueling Joseph's happiness and generosity.

## Commentary

Dan's power is compared to that of a lion's whelp, leaping forth from the region of Bashan, known for its dangerous wildlife and tempting territory for enemies to enter (Chizkuni, Daat Zkenim, Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, Rabbeinu Bahya, Rashi, Sifte Chakhamim, Sforno, Steinsaltz, Tur HaArokh). Dan is compared to a lion because he lived close to the border and acted as a protector, with his Jordan territory providing opportunities for adversaries to enter the Israelites' lands (Daat Zkenim, Rashi). The tribe of Dan's tactics are likened to those of lions, waiting in their lair to attack unsuspecting foes (Sforno, Tur HaArokh).

## Quoting Commentary

The first text refers to the subject of blood gushing out and mentions the term "Zink" which relates to the expulsion of breath causing blood to spurt out in connection to Deuteronomy 33:22. The second text discusses the order in which the tribes were listed in various contexts and the atonement needed for sins committed by the founding fathers of Reuven and Shimon. The third text connects the Temple and the Tabernacle to the lion as symbolized by the figures of Betzael and Oholiav, while also hinting at the punishment of the Jewish people with the same imagery. The fourth text discusses the weaker brothers who were not included in military service in Exodus 47:2:1, emphasizing the names repeated in Moses' blessings. The last texts compare Dan to Judah as a lion cub in connection to blessings in Genesis 49:9 and Deuteronomy 33:22, highlighting Dan's territory extending to the Bashan region.

## Talmud

In the Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin 10:2:17, it is explained that Moses was instructed to appoint judges to execute those who sinned with the Baal Peor, resulting in 157,200 individuals being killed. Phineas took matters into his own hands and killed a man and a Midianite woman, with God performing six miracles to support his actions. This event resulted in the plague being stopped, as described in Psalms 106:30.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:22, different Targums describe the tribe of Dan as powerful like a lion cub, with land watered by streams flowing from various locations including Bashan, Masnon, and Batanea.

## Musar

In the first commentary, it is noted that when spelling the Ineffable Name as words, the numerical value is the same as the word **סדא** and **האמ**, emphasizing a connection between them. In the second commentary, a question is posed regarding the description of Dan as a serpent despite Jacob's description of Yehudah as a lion, prompting an examination of Dan's characteristics in relation to these animals.

# Deuteronomy 33:23

## Midrash

The Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10 discusses the arrangement of the Israelite tribes in the four directions around the Tabernacle, with Judah aligning to the east, Reuben to the south, Ephraim to the west, and Dan to the north. The Midrash uses this configuration to illustrate a deeper meaning regarding the attributes and strengths of each tribe, such as Judah's leadership, Issachar's Torah knowledge, and Dan's association with darkness due to idol worship. Additionally, the Midrash emphasizes Judah's importance in various aspects, including encampment, travel, offerings, and war.

## Talmud

The Sea of Tiberias was located in the portion of the tribe of Naphtali, who also received a stretch of land to the south to spread their fishing nets, fulfilling a biblical prophecy. Reciting a blessing over a full cup grants a boundless inheritance and blessings from God, leading to rewards in both the current world and the World-to-Come. The Jerusalem Talmud discusses various conditions set by Joshua, including collecting grasses without uprooting them and stepping aside on the road. Additionally, the cup of Grace should be full, decorated, and washed, symbolizing blessings and inheritance in both worlds.

## Commentary

Naftali has a region with high-quality early ripening fruits, causing gratitude and satisfaction for his favor and blessings from God[Nachmanides, Chizkuni, Daat Zkenim, Ramban, Sforno]. Visiting this land elicits blessings for its produce[Nachmanides, Chizkuni, Daat Zkenim]. The tribe will inherit territory in the southwest[Rashi, Tur HaArokh, Ibn Ezra]. The kabbalistic view focuses on blessings allowing careful observance of God's ways[Rabbeinu Bahya]. As part of this inheritance, Naftali will possess both this world and the world to come[Rabbeinu Bahya]. Possessing this land brings blessings[Footnote 7. See original book]. The land provides all desires of its inhabitants[Rashi]. The territory borders the Sea of Galilee and Beit She'an Valley[Steinsaltz].

## Jewish Thought

The term "male" in Jewish thought is a homonym that signifies filling one substance with another, the completion of a fixed period of time, and the attainment of the highest degree of excellency, as exemplified in various biblical verses (Guide for the Perplexed, Part 1 19:1).

## Quoting Commentary

Dan, Asher, and Naftali's banner was in the north, symbolizing blessings due to proximity to sanctity. The name Asher may connote generous blessings surpassing others due to proximity to a holy site, while Naphtali's name indicates contentment with his portion. Naphtali symbolizes a content personality sending forth good tidings akin to a hind messenger with swift messages. Additionally, the land of Naphtali was said to inherit the sea and the south. Ultimately, Naphtali's agreeable and content character served to bind society together, balancing the coldness of his older brother Dan.

## Targum



In Deuteronomy 33:23, the blessings of the tribe of Naphtali are outlined in three different Targums. Each Targum emphasizes how Naphtali will be satisfied with favor, filled with blessings from the Lord, and will have possession of certain lands to the west and south of the Sea of Galilee. These blessings include abundance of fish, fruits, and water from the Lord.

## Kabbalah

The Torah is considered a blessing, symbolized by the letter ב, which represents blessings, and wisdom, seen in the beginning of the Torah. The verse from Deuteronomy 33:23 emphasizes that the Torah provides nourishment and guidance. Following the Torah's teachings leads to inheriting blessings in both this world and the World to Come, represented by the Sea and the South. The concept of inheriting God is highlighted as essential for receiving all that is hidden and sacred. This spiritual journey is compared to a king sharing his treasures with his son, emphasizing the importance of following divine ways to attain all blessings in both worlds.

## Musar

The commentary on the tribes of Asher and Naftali in the Torah suggests that Asher may have been blessed with many sons as a reward for his virtues, particularly his generosity, while Naftali was blessed with favor and the Lord's blessings. This is connected to the idea that the Torah begins and ends with significant words - לארשי and תישארב - symbolizing blessing and the purpose of creation being Israel. The Torah itself is seen as a blessing that brings abundance and eternal blessings from God. This connection is also highlighted in Psalms and through interpretations of Biblical verses in various commentaries.

## Halakhah

In Halakhah, it is important to follow the traditions and interpretations of the old-timers when performing the ten requirements for the cup of blessing. These requirements include rinsing, washing, using undiluted wine, having a full cup, crowning it, wrapping oneself, holding the cup with two hands, grasping it with the right hand, raising it a hand's breadth, setting one's eyes upon it, and passing it on to household members. It is essential that the wine be pure until the blessing "ha-aretz," symbolizing thankfulness for something that is not harmful. The cup should not have the blessing said over it until water is added, symbolizing Compassion and fulfilling the Torah's requirement. Additionally, the fullness of the cup is seen as providing boundless inheritance and earning two worlds. The symbolism behind each of these actions is linked to mystical interpretations and Kabbalistic teachings.

# Deuteronomy 33:24

## Midrash

In the Midrash on Bamidbar Rabbah, it discusses the arrangement of the Israelite camp based on the four directions, with Judah positioned in the east, Reuben in the south, Ephraim in the west, and Dan in the north. It explores the significance of each tribe's placement in relation to attributes such as wealth, Torah, penitence, and repentance. Furthermore, the Midrash on Bereshit Rabbah delves into Joseph's selection of five brothers to present to Pharaoh as not being mighty. Additionally, the Midrash on Bereshit Rabbah and Tanna DeBei Eliyahu Rabbah highlight the beauty and favor of Asher and his daughters. Lastly, in the Midrash on Ein Yaakov, it recounts a story illustrating the prosperity brought by the oil production in the land of Asher.

## Chasidut

The month of Shevat is associated with the Tribe of Asher, known for their abundance of olive oil. This is reflected in the verse from Genesis and Deuteronomy that describe Asher's richness in bread and oil, symbolizing the connection between oil and wisdom [Chasidut | Bnei Yissaschar, Shevat 1:8:1].

## Commentary

Asher is singled out for special blessings from the other tribes due to his abundance of olive oil, to the point that all his brothers offer blessings on him because of this. This is shown by the immense amount of oil his territory provides, benefiting not only his own tribe but also all others. The tribe of Asher was so favored that even Moses reversed previous ostracism towards them, highlighting their unique blessing and prosperity. The overall theme is that Asher is blessed by his brethren and considered favored by them, leading to an extensive lineage and prominence compared to other tribes.

## Quoting Commentary

The Commentary of Chizkuni on Genesis 49:20:2 explains that the land of Asher would produce royal delicacies, specifically high-quality cooking oil from its olive trees. The one of Daat Zkenim on the same verse indicates that Gad, a tribe of soldiers, would be supported by the fertile fields of Asher providing them with abundant oil. The Kli Yakar commentary on Genesis 49:20:1 interprets Asher as providing rich food through the Temple services, indirectly benefiting the entire world. Lastly, Rashi's interpretation on the same verse highlights the abundance of olive trees in Asher's territory that would lead to fat bread. Yahakov also addresses the tribe of Asher, mentioning them as a supplier of rich offerings fit for the king.

## Talmud

Rebbi Tanhum says one can collect grass without uprooting, relieve oneself behind a wall, graze in forests, and step to the side while Rebbi Aqiba identifies certain lakes. The sages discuss the number of nails on shoes and the rules related to scraping on the Sabbath. In a different text, Moses blesses Asher with oil abundance and a story of a messenger who doubts a poor man's ability to supply oil, only to be amazed by the man's wealth.

## Targum

In three different Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:24, Moses blesses the tribe of Asher, predicting that they will have many sons, be favored by their brothers, and have abundant oil production from their land, symbolizing prosperity and abundance.

## Musar

The tribe of Asher, part of the camp of Dan, is described as blessed with many sons in the Torah. Rashi suggests this blessing may be due to Asher's virtuous acts, specifically in giving charity generously. The connection between tithing and blessings is highlighted through the interpretation of Maleachi 3:10 by the Sages, emphasizing the abundant blessings promised by God for fulfilling tithes diligently. Additionally, the tribe of Naftali in the same camp is described as being full of favor and blessing from the Lord (Musar | Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Bamidbar, Nasso, Beha'alotcha, Torah Ohr, Bamidbar 88).

# Deuteronomy 33:25

## Midrash

In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 14:4, Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroka and Rabbi Elazar Hisma discuss a novel Torah idea taught by Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya regarding the assembly of men, women, and children for Torah study. Rabbi Yehoshua emphasizes the importance of Torah scholars and the need to study both differing opinions of scholars. The text also explores the idea that the words of the wise are like goads and implanted nails, directing individuals towards life through Torah study. In Midrash Sifra and Sifrei Devarim, it is discussed how the abundance in the Land of Israel will attract people from all lands to bring riches to Israel. Midrash Vayikra Rabbah also emphasizes that Israel will prosper while other lands experience famine, leading them to purchase goods from Israel and enrich it.

## Commentary

Moses blesses Asher with vigor in old age, full of strength and ready to enjoy the golden years. Iron and copper are symbolic of the sinews and bones, acting as the lock to safeguard the body. The blessing includes continued physical strength in old age. The text also explores linguistic interpretations, using Aramaic words, interchangeability of certain letters, and mysticism. Other commentaries mention that blessings of protection and prosperity are extended to all Israel or specifically to the tribe of Asher.

## Jewish Thought

The term "male" in Jewish thought is a homonym that signifies filling one substance with another, the completion of a fixed period of time, and the attainment of the highest degree of excellency, as exemplified in various biblical verses (Guide for the Perplexed, Part 1 19:1).

## Talmud

The Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 6:2:3 discusses the rules regarding wearing shoes on the Sabbath, stating that it is forbidden to wear nail-studded work-boots, but permitted to wear shoes decorated with nails. Various traditions are presented on the number of nails that should be used, with Rebbi Joanan suggesting five, Rebbi anina saying seven, and Rebbi Aa proposing nine. Rebbi, on the other hand, puts thirteen nails on one shoe and eleven on the other, corresponding to the number of watches. It is also mentioned that one must be careful not to scrape old boots or sandals on the Sabbath, but oiling or dipping them in water is allowed. The text also touches on the use of olive oil produced in the Sabbatical year and how it can be used on the Sabbath.

## Targum

The text in Deuteronomy 33:25 from the Targums Onkelos, Jerusalem, and Jonathan all comment on the strength and durability of the tribe of Asher, comparing them to iron and copper. They all mention that the tribe's strength in their youth will continue into old age.

## Quoting Commentary

Rabbeinu Bahya explains that the expression "you will not eat bread in poverty in that land" refers to the spiritual benefits of residing in the land of Israel, where scholars can study Torah successfully due to ideal climate conditions.

The blessing of the land is highlighted by the abundance of resources such as ores needed for everyday life, emphasizing the advantages of studying Torah in Israel. Rashi, on the other hand, discusses the significance of Moses repeating the names of certain brethren in his blessings, indicating that weaker brethren were not brought before Pharaoh, again emphasizing the importance of strength. In another commentary by Rashi, the use of the Hebrew word "mem" is explained to show the role of leadership and princes.

## Chasidut

The text discusses the importance of maintaining one's strength and traits from youth into old age, as symbolized by the blessings mentioned in Devarim 33:25. By remembering Hashem in youth, one can avoid "bad days" in old age and continue to produce fruit, as seen in Tehillim 92:14. This concept extends to a national level, with Moshe Rabbeinu passing down wisdom to future generations, symbolized by "iron and copper locks." This inheritance of wisdom is a testament to Moshe's enduring legacy (Chasidut | Sefat Emet, Deuteronomy, V'Zot HaBerachah 1:2).

# Deuteronomy 33:26

## Jewish Thought

Rabbi Eleazar highlights the importance of children witnessing the Torah directly from the king for later reverence for G'd; the ritual of sanctifying the moon helps combat idol-worship tendencies and demonstrates the impotence of heavenly bodies as deities. The significance of numbers in the Torah, particularly the number ten, and God's dominion over the heavens as depicted in various scriptures are emphasized. The unique motions of the spheres, fixed positions of stars, and different forms of substances point towards design in the universe by a divine being. Parallels are drawn between God riding the highest heavens and human actions leading His interactions with the world.

## Midrash

In Bamidbar Rabbah 12:4, it is discussed how the world is constructed like a palanquin, with references to the firmament, earth, sun, and creatures. In Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10, the different banners of the camp of Judah are correlated with the four directions of the world, while in Bereshit Rabbah 77:1, the text discusses the divine attributes of Yeshurun and the righteous. Ein Yaakov adds to this by describing the pillars on which the world stands, the composition of the heavens, and the treasures within them.

## Talmud

The Talmud discusses the celestial beings and the dwelling place of God above them in the firmaments, known as Aravot, with references to Psalms 68:5 and Deuteronomy 33:26, establishing Aravot as synonymous with heaven. The Jerusalem Talmud recounts discrepancies found in three scrolls in the Temple courtyard, such as different wordings for God's preexistence and the people of Israel, ultimately confirming the majority texts in each case and annulling the minority.

## Commentary

Moses emphasizes to the people of Israel that there is no power comparable to their Lord, urging them to serve Him with all their heart. G'd, referred to as the Rider of the Heaven and ruling over all creatures in heaven and earth, is their unique source of help [Daat Zkenim on Deuteronomy 33:26:1, Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 33:26:2, Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:26:1]. He goes back to bless all of Israel after addressing them as Yeshurun, emphasizing the uniqueness of God compared to other deities [Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 33:26:1, Rashi on Deuteronomy 33:26:1]. Israel is reminded of their distinct connection to G'd, as opposed to other nations being placed under intermediaries, with G'd directly ruling the heavens to assist them [Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 33:26:1-4, Siftei Chakhamim, Deuteronomy 33:26:1].

## Chasidut

Moses in Deuteronomy emphasizes how God applies His attributes based on how His people practice those attributes on earth, such as loving-kindness and justice. This is illustrated by the connection between Pharaoh as Imma in the Zohar and tefilin as markevot, with tefilin shining from the supernal Imma, highlighting the importance of connecting to God through prayer and spiritual practices.

## Kabbalah

The text discusses the concept of God riding upon the heavens, emphasizing the importance of righteousness and the avoidance of wasting semen for spiritual benefits [Reshit Chokhmah; Sha'arei Orah]. It explains the relationship between the names E"l, Elohi"m, and HaShem in connecting to the heavens, highlighting the role of Israel in assisting God in His actions [Sha'arei Orah]. The text also mentions the positioning of these names and their significance in various verses, linking them to the idea of God dwelling in the heavens and coming to the aid of His people [Sha'arei Orah].

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:26 emphasize the incomparable nature of the God of Israel, whose Shekinah resides in the heavens and whose aid and majesty are displayed in the high expanse above.

## Quoting Commentary

In a kabbalistic approach, the power of Mercy is reinforced when the Jewish people observe commandments and do God's will, causing His powers to be "manifested in ever greater measure," but their sinfulness can cause manifestations of His powers to wane. Meanwhile, the camp of Reuven, situated at the South of the Tabernacle, represents repentance and is accompanied by Shimon and the tribe of Gad. The ladder in Jacob's dream symbolizes planetary systems, and prophets ascend and descend it to receive prophetic instructions. The Jewish people, once referred to as Yeshurun, were reminded by Moses of their past spiritual highs and potential spiritual decline. The fourth principle of the Preexistence of God is established in the holy scriptures and interpreted by commentators like Rambam and Ramban. In Pirkei Avot, disciplines such as arithmetic and astronomy are viewed as appetizers for wisdom and theology.

## Musar

The text from Musar | Shenei Luchot HaBerit discusses the concept that studying Torah המשל (for its own sake) is considered an act of kindness to God. This is supported by a Midrash that relates studying Torah to riding the heavens with God's help, leading to His pride being expressed in the skies (Derekh Chayim 7).

# Deuteronomy 33:27

## Midrash

These midrashim explore the concept of God being the dwelling place for the world and the world not being His place, emphasizing how righteous individuals sustain the world through their actions. Some use poetic language to depict God as a warrior riding on steeds, highlighting that the world depends on God rather than the reverse. Prayers and Torah study are stressed as key elements in seeking forgiveness and maintaining a relationship with God, with examples of historical figures achieving redemption through prayer and humility. The texts also hint at the idea of hidden worlds and mysteries beyond human understanding, emphasizing the importance of faith and connection to the divine.

## Jewish Thought

In Akeidat Yitzchak 59:1:5, refraining from contact with one's wife during the menstrual cycle can lead to spiritual purity symbolized by circumcision. Akeidat Yitzchak 97:1:10 explains how the Torah uses various steps to help individuals control their physical urges. In Guide for the Perplexed, Part 1 70:1, the term "rakab" is described as a term representing dominion and control, particularly in relation to God's rule over heaven and Earth. In HaEmunot veHaDeot, The Unity of the Creator 13:1, it discusses how one can sustain the thought of God's existence and attributes even without physical senses, emphasizing the importance of contemplating and praising God's greatness and eternal nature.

## Talmud

The Talmud discusses the concept that the world is upheld by various elements, such as pillars, water, mountains, wind, a storm, and ultimately the arms of God, referencing various verses from Job, Psalms, and Deuteronomy (Chagigah 12b:2). It also explores the idea that the world endures in the merit of those who restrain themselves during quarrels and consider themselves non-existent, as well as the theological significance of God's omnipresence and existence outside of space and time (Chullin 89a:9, Jerusalem Talmud Chagigah 2:1:3, Makkot 3:13:2). Additionally, texts from the Jerusalem Talmud and Tractate Soferim describe the discovery of discrepancies in Torah scrolls and how they were resolved through confirming the majority reading (Jerusalem Talmud Taanit 4:2:12, Tractate Soferim 6:4).

## Commentary

Various commentaries explain the verse in Deuteronomy 33:27 in different ways. Chizkuni describes how the everlasting arms support the universe, with G-d ruling both the upper and lower regions. Daat Zkenim emphasizes G-d's role as a source of refuge and the supporter of the universe. Ibn Ezra elaborates on the eternal nature of G-d and the support He provides. Rabbeinu Bahya connects the terms to attributes of G-d, and Rashi interprets them in relation to G-d's dwelling place and the strength of the world. Sforno discusses G-d's expulsion of enemies from the land, while Steinsaltz touches on the concept of G-d's abode and power. Tur HaArokh connects the verse to G-d's eternal nature.

## Kabbalah

The text highlights the concept that only God's existence is necessary, with all other existence being dependent on His will, as seen through references associating the existence of the world with God's word and support from above (Da'at Tevunot 58:2). It explains the deep understanding of various matters hinted at in the Torah, such as the relationship between the upper Sefirot and the arms of the world (Sha'arei Orah, Tenth Gate, First Sefirah 53). It emphasizes the uniqueness of God as the primary cause of all creation, above and below, to be worshipped above all else (The Wars of



God 3:17). Additionally, there are mentions that the Temple will be destroyed and rebuilt by the hand of the blessed Holy One, symbolized by references to God's abode and sanctuary (Tikkunei Zohar 27a:10, 36b:18).

## Quoting Commentary

The text discusses the concept of being a Merkavah de-shechinah, which would grant eternal life but prevent the world from being inhabited by all. It also explains how the daughter of a priest who marries a non-priest may impact her mother's ability to eat terumah, delves into the different worlds created by G'd, explores humility and righteousness, discusses the influence of the Jewish people's conduct on G'd's powers, explains the significance of righteous individuals as the pillars of the earth, and highlights the belief in G'd's absolute preexistence.

## Halakhah

After the Hakafof in the daytime, three Sifrei Torah are left out, with many people called up to read the portion Vezos haberachah up to Me'onah, repeating it multiple times. Young boys are then called up, with a bar mitzvah boy saying the berachah for them. The Chasan Torah reads from Me'onah to the end in the first Seifer Torah, while the Chasan Bereishis reads in the second. Maftir is read in the third Seifer Torah. An eminent person is typically called up as Chasan Torah, even if they were already called up for Vezos haberachah. If there are only two Sifrei Torah, Vezos haberachah should be read in one and Bereishis in the other, with the first Seifer used again for Maftir (Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 138:9).

## Chasidut

The texts discuss the themes of overcoming enemies and desire for money in the context of holiness, ascending to a higher spiritual level through the lights of Shabbat and the patriarchs, and the concept of receiving healing through following divine counsel and the merit of the Patriarchs. The relationship between these elements is highlighted through references to biblical verses and linguistic connections.

## Targum

The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:27 express the idea that the eternal God's dwelling is where His Shekinah dwells, with His power supporting the world. They mention how He drives out enemies and commands their destruction through His Word.

## Musar

The text discusses how the Jewish people's humility, as seen in figures like Abraham, Moses, and Aaron, contrasts with the arrogance of gentile rulers like Nimrod and Pharaoh. It emphasizes the importance of humility in preventing arrogance and states that maintaining a low profile and speaking out only in matters of Torah is what sustains the world. Additionally, it explores the concept of G-d being the "Place" of the world and not vice versa, comparing it to a knight riding a horse with the horse being incidental to the rider. This humility is seen as necessary for the Divine Presence in our world and for repairing the universe.

# Deuteronomy 33:28

## Midrash

In Midrash Aggadat Bereshit 44:2, it is explained that God makes Israel like dew when they merit it, emphasizing that even the righteous have no control over dew, symbolizing that no creation has control over them. In Midrash Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, it is mentioned that the dew symbolizes the resurrection of the dead, highlighting that God controls the dew and is with Israel. Other Midrash texts explore the importance of prayer for forgiveness and redemption, showing how prayer saved the Israelites in various challenging situations.

## Jewish Thought

Isaac's suspicions about Jacob's identity are highlighted as he uses his senses of touch, taste, and smell to verify it, leading to the blessing being given to Jacob. Despite Esau's anger at the manipulation, Rebecca's plan for Jacob to flee is successful, ensuring his safety and fulfilling his journey's purpose [Jewish Thought | Akeidat Yitzchak 24:1:13]. The concept of separateness and loneliness is explored as a positive aspect of destiny, emphasizing the strength and sanctity of individual spiritual personality in Jewish thought [Jewish Thought | Kol Dodi Dofek, The Vision of the Religious Zionist Movement; Loneliness and Separateness 7].

## Commentary

The metaphorical phrase "fountain of Jacob" refers to the descendants of Jacob and is akin to the metaphor "from the loins of" in a similar context. This blessing of living in safety and prosperity is tied to fulfilling divine instructions, parallel to Jacob's blessing to his children, emphasizing exclusivity for the Jewish people, including gifts like prophecy and the Land of Israel associated with their lineage. The statement on dew from the heavens symbolizes the future resurrection of the Jewish people, emphasizing their unique spiritual destiny through prophetic vision [Siforno on Deuteronomy 33:28:1; Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 33:28:1; Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 33:28:2-3; Steinsaltz on Deuteronomy 33:28].

## Quoting Commentary

The Chizkuni commentary explains that Joseph's hand on Jacob's eyes symbolizes the transfer of his remains, or could refer to Joseph's role as a suitable successor. The German commentary delves into the etymology of the term "טבש" while Rabbeinu Bahya likens his teachings to rain nurturing the earth. Ibn Ezra interprets "waters of Judah" as the seed of Judah, and Rashi connects the idea of being alone in safety with tranquility, as seen in various biblical verses. Ramban interprets Balaam's observation of a unique and unified Israel at a high point as they dwell alone.

## Tanakh

In Genesis 27:28, Isaac bestows blessings upon his son, wishing for God to provide abundant food and prosperity. In Genesis 48:21, Israel predicts that God will always be with Joseph, even after his own death, leading him back to their ancestral land. Psalm 4:9 expresses confidence in God's protection, finding peace and security in the divine presence.

## Chasidut

The main cause of foreign thoughts in Chasidism is the corruption of mishpat, which is linked to Aynin (eyes) and Ayn Yaakov from Deuteronomy 33:28 [Likutei Moharan 2:5:1].

## Liturgy

The text from the Machzor Yom Kippur Ashkenaz Morning Prayers praises God's greatness and emphasizes the recitation of the Krias Shema in synagogues as a way to proclaim His Oneness. The mention of God dwelling upon the cherubim on top of the Holy Ark symbolizes His exalted presence.

## Talmud

Rabbi Yosei bar anina states that Moses issued four decrees on the Jewish people, Amos later revoked one indicating the Jewish people must attain a high spiritual level. In Sanhedrin, Rava explains that Israel's solitude was meant to be wealthy and prominent, but due to turning to gentiles, it will be one of sorrow. Additionally, Rava mentions a practice of marrying young females to older males and older females to younger males to have many children. (Talmud | Makkot 24a:28; Talmud | Sanhedrin 104a:14)

## Mishnah

In Mishnah Pesachim 7:1, Rabbi Yosei HaGelili explains that the Paschal lamb should be roasted with a spit of pomegranate wood inserted into its mouth, reaching its anus, and with its legs and entrails inside it. However, Rabbi Akiva disagrees, stating that the legs and entrails should be suspended from the spit above the animal's head to prevent cooking and ensure proper roasting by the fire.

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:28 all convey the idea that Israel will live securely and blessed in a land rich with grain and wine, with the heavens showering them with dew and rain as a sign of blessing and prosperity.

## Kabbalah

In Tikkunei Zohar, it is explained that the seed of Jacob will dwell securely alone in exile, with no foreign god beside them, emphasizing the uniqueness and purity of Jacob's lineage. The text highlights the solitude and exclusivity of Jacob's descendants, implying a sense of protection and distinction from other nations.

# Deuteronomy 33:29

## Halakhah

On the night of the ninth day of Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret, prayers are the same as the eighth day, including kiddush and the blessing over time. Three Torah scrolls are taken out the next day, with the first one being read by five congregants until "in the eyes of all of Israel" to commemorate King Solomon's blessing of Israel on the eighth day. The second Torah scroll has Parashat Bereishit read, and the third has the maftir read from the previous day and concludes with the beginning of Joshua. This ritual is based on biblical texts and historical blessings [Abudarham, Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret, Shmini Atzeret 6]. God is described as loving, king, helper, and shield in the Amidah prayers, reflecting past and future acts of redemption and kindness [Abudarham, Weekday Prayers, Amidah 17]. In a midrash regarding the resurrection of the dead, each cup of blessing is passed to different biblical figures, including David, symbolizing aspects of their lives, blessings, and struggles [Shulchan Shel Arba 4:12]. The promise mentioned in Moses' words at the end of the Torah about the world to come is explained through an analysis of various biblical verses and rabbinical interpretations, emphasizing the reward of the soul in the world of souls and divine protection [Shulchan Shel Arba 4:17].

## Midrash

The commentary discusses the significance of sacrificing animals before and after the establishment of the Tabernacle, emphasizing the importance of bringing sacrifices to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. It also mentions that stealing and slaughtering someone else's bull is equivalent to slaying the owner. Isaiah is quoted as saying that one who slaughters a bull slays a human, highlighting the seriousness of such actions.

## Jewish Thought

The text discusses the concept of divine foreknowledge and power in relation to Jewish historical events, such as the exodus from Egypt and the destruction of the Temple. Various Jewish philosophers offer explanations regarding God's involvement in human decisions and events, with differences in opinion on the limits of God's foreknowledge. The text also touches on the importance of individual and collective rewards for good deeds and the idea that human life is governed by divine commandments in all aspects.

## Talmud

Rav Ashi cites verses emphasizing Israel's unique relationship with God, contrasting them with other nations (Talmud Berakhot 6a:24). Mordecai uses a verse to justify his actions against Haman from the book of Proverbs, while acknowledging that a different verse in Deuteronomy applies to his enemy (Talmud Megillah 16a:10). Rav Naman bar Yitzak connects delighting in Shabbat with being rescued from exile, using verses from Isaiah and Psalms to support the idea that God rewards those who find joy in observing the Sabbath (Talmud Shabbat 118b: 2).

## Quoting Commentary

In Deuteronomy 33:29, various commentaries discuss the use of the word "Happiness" in the Torah, highlighting the importance of joy over happiness in Judaism. This chapter also includes blessings from Moshe to the tribes of Israel, with differences in tribe significance compared to Genesis, possibly reflecting a background of Northern ascendancy during that time.

# Commentary

Enemies may deceive you by pretending to be friends, but this is because they fear the sword of your excellence, which is your maturity as God's people. You are fortunate because G'd Himself is your protective angel, providing deliverance in this world and the next, freeing you from fear and enabling you to enjoy rewards beyond this earthly realm, proof of which is reflected in Israel's military success. Your protection is in God, who both shields and fights for you, ensuring that no evil will befall you and triumphing over your enemies. Israel's unique standing allows them to look forward to a future in celestial realms as well. Israel, under God's shield and sword of excellency, will be honored, while enemies will have to acknowledge and humble themselves before God's people to honor them.

## Tanakh

In Joshua 9:9, when asked where they came from, the Gibeonites claimed to have traveled from a far-off land because of the reputation of the Israelites' God, the ETERNAL, based on the miracles performed in Egypt [Joshua 9:9].

## Chasidut

The text from Chasidut Likutei Moharan explores the theme of pride among leaders and the consequences of using undeserved authority to rule over others. It emphasizes the importance of humility and warns against using power to oppress instead of uplift.

## Kabbalah

In Kabbalah, it is explained that the Jewish people adhere to the middle line, which allows them to ascend to the Unlimited One, while the nations are limited by their adherence to qualities of greatness and might. This is symbolized by the letter Vav in the Name HaShem, which represents Splendor and is surrounded by the ministering angels of the nations, but beyond which only the Jewish people can ascend to reach the Unlimited One. This concept is linked to verses such as Deuteronomy 33:29 and Isaiah 58:14.

## Targum

The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:29 all express the idea that Israel is a fortunate and unique nation, saved and protected by the Lord. They highlight the strength and victory provided by God, as well as the idea that Israel will be triumphant over their enemies. The Targums emphasize the superiority and blessing of Israel compared to other nations.

## Liturgy

The verse from Deuteronomy 33:29, "but you will tread on their high places," is recited during the Maariv service for the conclusion of Shabbos in the Shabbat Siddur Sefard Linear. This verse emphasizes victory and triumph over one's enemies.

## Musar

The Torah uses different expressions when referring to Samael and Rahav because G-d took the "light" Samael gave up to use as a legal instrument for killing, while He used the blessing Rahav waived sparingly to ensure the Jewish people's continuity. The blessings taken from these nations were then given to Israel, as shown in the Torah's description of G-d

offering the Torah to other nations. This ultimately resulted in G-d bestowing gifts on Israel that were previously given to other nations.

# Deuteronomy 34:1

## Jewish Thought

Moses desired to lead the conquest of the West Bank to eliminate threats to the Jewish people, but his request was denied due to the people's unworthiness. Moses was instructed to prepare Joshua for this task, emphasizing the importance of observing mitzvot for the nation's survival (Akeidat Yitzchak). In contrast, the text Nineteen Letters emphasizes striving to be closer to God and creating a truly human society to fulfill one's sacred mission on earth, including establishing a home to raise ideal human beings and Israelites by marrying and caring for others.

## Talmud

In Talmud Bava Batra 56a:8, Rav Yehuda states that any area shown to Moses by God before his death is within the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael, with produce there being obligated in tithe. In Talmud Sotah 13b:17, Moses' physical strength is discussed in relation to his inability to "go out and come in," with evidence suggesting he was at full strength before his death. Talmud Sotah 13b:20 discusses the location of Moses' death in the portion of Reuben, as indicated by specific verses.

## Commentary

Moses ascended Mount Nebo after blessing his people and was shown the entire land of Israel by God with enhanced vision, from the region of Gilead to Dan, the northern boundary of the land. Various commentators discuss how Moses could have access to this vision, including divine assistance, prophecy by Joshua, and a miraculous view of the land. The purpose of this vision was to show Moses the goodness of the land and impress upon him the promises made to the patriarchs regarding the land of Israel.

## Midrash

Rabbinical commentaries explore the location of Moses' death and burial, with the Midrash suggesting that he was placed on the wings of the Shechina and carried four miles between the land of Reuben and Gad. Variants of the Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael discuss how Moses' requests were granted and how the tribes' portion of land was determined. Another Midrash emphasizes the power of prayer, citing Moses, Hezekiah, and Jacob as examples of prayers changing decrees. Additional Midrash texts delve into the reasons why Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, highlighting the importance of certain rebukes and the concept of rest for a tired leader like Moses.

## Tanakh

Jonathan, a descendant of Manasseh, served as a priest to the Danite tribe and they set up a sculptured image for themselves. This continued until the land went into exile [Judges 18:30].

## Halakhah

On the last day of the festival of Simchat Torah, it is customary for more than a quorum to read the Torah, with everyone in the congregation participating, even those not usual readers. This custom is meant to increase joy, but only one individual reads specific verses in Parashat Zot HaBerakhah, from "And Moshe ascended" to "And Yehoshua son of Nun", without dividing them in two [Halakhah | Kol Bo 52:12].

# Quoting Commentary

The texts above discuss various themes related to Biblical passages. Malbim suggests that Job's arguments were actually a search for truth, while Or HaChaim explains how Moses' vision of the land was miraculous. Rabbeinu Bahya discusses the concept of crossing boundaries with hostile intent, Rashi highlights instances where God's intervention is necessary for certain events to occur, and Sforino and Siftei Chakhamim focus on acts of blessing and cursing. The Redeeming Relevance commentary explores how humility can be maintained despite greatness, and the Tribal Lands commentary describes geographical locations mentioned in the Bible.

## Targum

In the Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 34:1, Mosheh goes up to Mount Nevo from the plains of Moav and is shown the entire land by Adonoy, including Gil'od till Don in Targum Onkelos, Gilead unto Dan of Kesavan in Targum Jerusalem, and the strong ones of the land, the deeds of Jephtha of Gilead, and the victories of Shimeon bar Manoah of the tribe of Dan in Targum Jonathan.

## Musar

This text discusses Moses' request for a successor who would have the same mind as all the Jewish people and the postponement of this request until the coming of the Messiah. It also touches on Moses regaining the fiftieth level of understanding before his death and the fear of premature death from acquiring too much wisdom, leading Israel to ask Moses to serve as an intermediary. Finally, it mentions how Moses attained spiritual insights during his lifetime that others only achieve after death, demonstrating this through his death being described as an ascent to a higher level of understanding.

## Tosefta

Moses' bones were carried by the Shekhinah from Reuben to Gad, as indicated by various biblical verses. The commentary draws parallels between the initiation of transgressions and subsequent divine retribution in various biblical stories, such as the Flood, Sodom, Egypt, the spies, the Land of Israel, and the prophets of Jerusalem. In each case, the initiators suffer consequences first, but all involved face punishment.



# Deuteronomy 34:2

## Commentary

In Deuteronomy 34:2, God shows Moses the land of Israel, including Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah, in their prosperity and ruin, as well as future events until the last day. The western boundary mentioned refers to the Mediterranean Sea, symbolizing the ultimate fate of Israel until resurrection. Each region is connected to the tribe that settled there, showcasing the historical and spiritual significance of the land. (Chizkuni, JPS, Rashi, Steinsaltz)

## Midrash

In Midrash Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate Amalek, it is derived that God showed Moses Barak, Joshua, Gideon, David, and the western sea, based on various references in Deuteronomy 34:2 to specific individuals and regions. Additionally, in Sifrei Devarim, it is explained that Moses was shown the land of Naftali based on the same verse.

## Targum

The Targums on Deuteronomy 34:2 mention the lands of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasheh, and Judah, as well as the leaders and events related to those tribes until the destruction of the sanctuary.

## Quoting Commentary

Rabbeinu Bahya explains that the term “well of Yaakov” refers to descendants of Yaakov through Yehudah, emphasizing the Jewish people’s exclusive claim to prophecy, Torah, the land of Israel, and resurrection after death. The four directions are known by three names in Hebrew, with each name carrying symbolic significance based on the position of the sun. The Sea of Reeds is identified as the sea crossed by the Israelites based on references in the Torah, and Ramban elaborates on the significance of Hebrew terms for directions. Rashi also explains that the East and West are referred to as the front and back parts of the world, respectively.

# Deuteronomy 34:3

## Talmud

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi discusses the future rebuilding of the Temple between Judah and Benjamin, mentioning how the Kenites, descendants of Jethro, were supported during the absence of God's Presence with a promise for future reward. He highlights how the descendants of Jethro studied Torah in Jabez, becoming a people of God under the guidance of a righteous man, Jabez. (Avot DeRabbi Natan 35:4)

## Commentary

In Deuteronomy 34:3, various commentators describe the different locations shown to Moses by God before his passing. These locations include the city of date palms, the South Country, the cave of Machpelah, the Plain where Solomon cast temple vessels, the Valley of Jericho, and Tzo'ar on the bank of the Dead Sea, depicting a panoramic view of the land ranging from its most distant edge to the area closest to Moses.

## Quoting Commentary

The city of Zoar, mentioned in the Bible as a palm-rich city like Jericho, was known for its abundance of palm trees in ancient times and during the Middle Ages, as referenced in various historical accounts. Similarly, references to Baal Tamar in Judges 20:33 allude to Jericho as the city of dates, and Rashi notes that a portion of Jericho was left unparcelled during the division of the land, later being given to the children of Jethro as described in Numbers 10:32.

## Tanakh

In 1 Kings 7:46, it is mentioned that the king had items cast in earthen molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan.

## Chasidut

The text discusses the interpretation of the phrase "these things that I command you today shall be upon your heart" from the Gemara, focusing on the significance of Jericho as a city associated with scent and dates. The author explains that the men of Jericho had a unique understanding of Torah, expecting it to be deeply embedded in their hearts according to God's will in the future. The practice of the men of Jericho to hasten salvation through scent was not agreed upon by the sages, who believed that only God could bring about salvation. Jericho symbolizes the connection to the highest levels of Divinity and the perception of the Final End, influencing its inhabitants in a unique way.

## Midrash

The Midrash Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael in Tractate Amalek explains that God showed Moses the graves of the forefathers, the overturning of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gog and his hosts in the valley of Jericho, and other significant locations such as Devorah and the wife of Lot. Additionally, the Shemot Rabbah commentary addresses the plural term "Elohim" in reference to God, explaining that it signifies the collective might of all individuals and reaffirms the oneness of God to the Israelites.

## Mishnah

Rabbi Akiva recounts how he received permission from Rabban Gamliel to allow a woman to remarry based on the testimony of a single witness, leading to a change in protocol to include hearsay testimony, slave testimony, woman's testimony, and maidservant's testimony. However, Rabbi Akiva argues against allowing a woman to remarry based on a woman's testimony alone, citing a story where an innkeeper's testimony was supported by physical evidence, unlike a priestess or any Jewish woman. This led to a debate among the Rabbis about the credibility of a woman's testimony in such cases [Mishnah Yevamot 16:7].

## Targum

The three different Targums on Deuteronomy 34:3 mention the south, the plain of Jericho, and the city of date-palms (Tzo'ar or Zeir), with Targum Jonathan adding a prophecy about a future conflict between the kings of the south and north, the oppression of Israel, and the eventual deliverance by Michael during a time of great tribulation.

# Deuteronomy 34:4

## Jewish Thought

In Akeidat Yitzchak 105:1:7, it is explained that God showed Moses the land he would not enter as a form of consolation, although it caused Moses grief. Our sages interpreted this as Moses having a unique ability to ascend spiritually, and the vision of the land was not of physical space but of the future in time.

## Midrash

In Bamidbar Rabbah 23:5, it is explained that God showed Moses all generations and their leaders, judges, transgressors, and righteous men, as well as Gehenna. Moses requested to enter the land through a tunnel but was denied. Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Masei 3:2 emphasizes that God fulfilled His oath to the ancestors for their descendants. In Midrash Tanchuma, Masei 4:1, it is revealed that Moses saw Gehenna, leading him to fear, but was told he would not cross into it. Moses also saw future generations and their fate. The Sifrei Devarim 341:1 mentions that Moses asked to enter the land in any capacity, but was denied.

## Talmud

Rabbi Yonatan reconsidered his opinion regarding the dead conversing with each other, citing a verse in Deuteronomy. Rabbi Zeïra stated that relieving oneself in a cemetery is disrespectful towards the dead, as they can no longer have any Torah thoughts. Rabbi Simlai taught that there are 613 mitzvot in the Torah, with 365 prohibitions and 248 positive mitzvot, corresponding to the days in a year and the number of limbs in a person's body, respectively. This is alluded to in Deuteronomy 33:4.

## Halakhah

According to Mishneh Torah, Torah Study 1:6, a father is obligated to teach his son Torah from the time he begins to speak. Two fundamental verses are emphasized, Torah tzivah lanu Moshe and Shema Yisrael, which highlight the connection to Torah and the unity between God and creation. The child should be gradually taught selected verses until the age of six or seven when he can begin more formal education with a teacher. This interpretation aligns with the Mishnah in Avot which suggests teaching at a young age, potentially starting at five years old, with the child going to school at six or seven. The importance of health is also noted in determining the appropriate time for formal Torah education, with the Sages historically physically taking their children to their teachers at the appropriate age.

## Second Temple

Philo discusses the spiritual interpretation of the story of Abraham's migration, emphasizing the need to detach from worldly things and focus on higher realities. He connects this theme to biblical examples like Abraham leaving Lot and Israel leaving Egypt, using allegorical interpretations to illustrate the burial of lower qualities and the survival of higher qualities in the mind. Philo also reflects on the importance of faith and the understanding that possession of the perfect good goes beyond mere vision, highlighting the idea that seeing is higher than hearing in the context of God's words.

## Targum

In Deuteronomy 34:4, Adonoy informs Moses that the land promised to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov will be shown to him, but he will not be able to enter it, fulfilling the covenant made to their descendants. The Targum translations emphasize the fulfillment of God's promise to the forefathers, but also the fact that Moses will not be able to cross over into the promised land.

## Commentary

The Torah specifies that the information about giving the land to their descendants had not yet been given to the patriarchs, so Moses was instructed to inform them after his death. Moses was forbidden to enter the land as his soul ascended straight to heaven, bypassing the need to travel through Israel. The command was decreed to ensure the effectiveness of Moses' blessing and to maintain the opportunity for the generation to participate in the resurrection.

G'd told Moses to relay the fulfillment of His promise to the patriarchs to prove that the dead can communicate, perceive events in the living world, and feel pain incurred by others. G'd wanted Moses to receive credit for informing the patriarchs despite their knowledge.

## Quoting Commentary

The repeated use of the expression "עדת עדי" in Genesis 15:13 refers to both the present and eventual status of the land of Israel, symbolizing the relationship between God and mankind and the assurance of no further deluge, as explained in various commentaries. In Deuteronomy 34:1, Moses is shown the entire land of Israel, embodying all the goodness of the land. Additionally, in Genesis 26:3, God fulfills his oath to Abraham through Isaac, with the promise extended to include Jacob as well, ensuring the blessing to the nations.

# Deuteronomy 34:5

## Commentary

The text highlights Moses' death in the land of Moav, emphasizing the obedience of Moses as a servant of the Lord in fulfilling God's command to die there, in contrast to other righteous figures like Elijah and Chanoch who did not die due to their lack of sin. The text also discusses the intimate detailing of Moses' death, including God instructing Moses on how to lay on his bier and the transfer of his soul to the celestial realms. Moses' death is described as a unique event, symbolizing his elevated status and obedience to God's will, with some interpretations suggesting he wrote about his death in tears or with teardrops rather than ink. (Based on commentaries by various sources)

## Talmud

Moses asked to die like Aaron, with God eventually storing his soul under the Throne of Glory with a kiss. The generation of the desert will not have eternal life, with Rabbi Yehoshua believing they will be given a trial, while Rabbi Yosei HaGalili disagrees. Joshua is said to have written the last eight verses of the Torah according to Rabbi Yehuda. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were spared the Angel of Death at their demise by dying "by the mouth of the Lord." Miriam also died with a kiss. Moses died on the seventh of Adar and the Torah states he died "there" - it is debated that Moses or Joshua actually wrote this. Moses was said to have died by the divine kiss similarly to Miriam. Shmuel, Rabbi Yoanan, Rav Naman, and Semalyon each interpret the verse "And Moses, the servant of God, died there" (Deuteronomy 34:5) differently. Rabbi Eliezer the Great believed Moses did not actually die, but rather continued to serve before God.

## Kabbalah

The text discusses the virtue of viewing the Land of Israel from a distance, as exemplified by Moses who saw the land before his death. It suggests that there is merit in merely seeing the land without physically entering it, as indicated by the scriptural reference to Moses' vision of the land as he passed away. (Kabbalah | Chesed LeAvraham, Even Shetiya, Maayan 2 33:2)

## Quoting Commentary

Moses' blessing to the Israelites in Vezot Habarakha serves as a tribute to his leadership and humility, as he was known as "the man Moses" and "the servant of the Lord." His role as a servant leader is emphasized throughout Tanakh, highlighting the idea that leadership is about service and humility. Moses' death, like those of other righteous individuals such as Aaron and Miriam, is described as a kiss from God, symbolizing a peaceful passing and a close relationship with the divine. Torah figures like Moses and Rabbi Judah the Prince experienced a unique type of death, without the Angel of Death, reflecting their righteousness and devotion to serving God.

## Midrash

Rabbi Yoanan states that there are ten "deaths" written concerning Moses, indicating that he would not enter the Land of Israel. When Moses saw that his fate was sealed, he prayed fervently for a reprieve, but to no avail. The text recounts how Moses appealed to God and negotiated for his own life, drawing on past deeds to justify his request, but ultimately accepted his fate, resigning himself to death while blessing and seeking forgiveness from the people of Israel before passing away, leaving a legacy.

## Jewish Thought

Our Sages in Jewish thought interpreted the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as a kiss from God, signifying that they died in the midst of great love and knowledge of God. This type of death, seen as a deliverance from death, was only ascribed to these three individuals, as their intellect remained in a constant state of great delight. Other prophets and pious men also experience a strengthening of their knowledge of God as death approaches, but do not reach the same level as Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. This interpretation is supported by poetic diction and referenced in various works.

## Chasidut

The Talmudic commentary in Sanhedrin 110 suggests that the generation who left Egypt were deemed unworthy of the afterlife due to their humility and acceptance of their fate without protest, as indicated by their worship and refined speech. Despite their failure to live up to the expectations set by Moses, it is believed that they received a Divine "kiss" when their souls left their bodies, symbolizing their potential spiritual elevation. Moses had hoped that these individuals, chosen for a significant mission, could achieve spiritual perfection through their own efforts.

## Second Temple

The text discusses the elevation of Moses above species and genus to soar beside God, indicating his close relationship with the Divine. When Moses was about to die, he was not simply "added" or "left," but was translated through the Word of the Supreme Cause, highlighting God's value of the Wise Man as the world and the means by which the perfect man is drawn from earthly things to God [8].

## Targum

Moshe, the servant of the Lord, died in the land of Moav in accordance with the Word of Adonoy. According to Targum Jonathan, Moshe is noted for his accomplishments and crowns symbolizing the Law, Priesthood, Kingdom, and a good name, and he is honored by being gathered by the Word of the Lord in the land of Moav on the day of his birth.

## Musar

Moses did not want to publicize his escape from Pharaoh to avoid being informed against again, as had happened in Egypt. The commentary suggests that Moses' body and soul were well-matched, as evidenced by the fact that his body did not weaken and his grave could not be located because his body had not become a cadaver. This connection allowed Moses to stand next to God during the revelation.

# Deuteronomy 34:6

## Midrash

From the Midrash extracts on various topics, it is shown that throughout the Torah, acts of kindness and assistance are emphasized and exemplified. Kindness is at the core of Torah teachings, seen at the beginning, middle, and end of the text. God is depicted as a caring figure who adorns brides, blesses grooms, visits the sick, buries the dead, and comforts mourners. These acts of kindness are woven into the fabric of Jewish teachings and the Torah, showing the importance of compassion in the Jewish faith.

## Jewish Thought

The commentary on Deuteronomy 34:6 points out that the location of Moses' grave was intentionally kept unknown, with various attempts to find it being unsuccessful. Despite Moses' remarkable qualities, such as being buried by the Lord Himself, questions still arise as to why he did not ascend to heaven like other righteous individuals. The Sifri also describes an encounter between Moses and the Angel of Death, highlighting the difficulty in accepting Moses' mortality. Other commentaries explore the significance of Jacob's sons' actions in the story of Dinah and the city of Shechem, as well as the unique hashgachah (divine providence) for righteous individuals. In divine interactions, including in the Book of Psalms and the story of leadership mistakes in the wilderness, God's personal intervention is seen as being linked to the merit of individuals or the Jewish people.

## Commentary

Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor, either by himself or by God, with the intention of preventing anyone from being buried beside him. The exact burial site remains unknown, with no human ever having located it, supporting the belief that Moses was not buried by a human being.

## Quoting Commentary

Moses's final moments are detailed in excerpts from various commentaries. When he appointed Joshua as his successor, Moses saw the land across the Jordan before dying. His burial place remains unknown to avoid turning it into a place of worship, emphasizing that human beings should not be worshipped but admired as role models. The Torah ends with an act of kindness from God burying Moses, reflecting a sustained protest against worshipping humans and emphasizing that God and the holy are found in life, not death. The Torah closes with a tribute to Moses as a human made great by his task, not by worship. Ultimately, Moses serves as an eternal symbol of human achievement through striving rather than divine worship.

## Talmud

The commentary discusses the greatness of Joseph, Moses, and all the righteous individuals in burying the dead, particularly emphasizing the involvement of the Holy One in Moses's burial. The text also highlights the precise location of Moses's burial and the importance of following the attributes of kindness displayed by God in actions such as clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and consoling mourners. Additionally, it is noted that both the beginning and end of the Torah are acts of kindness, symbolized by the clothing of Adam and the burial of Moses, respectively.

## Chasidut



Sometimes, during intense prayer, a person may experience a sudden burst of enthusiasm and connection with the Infinite Light of God, leading to a state of self-nullification and intense devotion. This state is temporary and one must engage in a constant cycle of "running and returning" to maintain a connection with the Divine while alive. The death of Moshe is linked to the elimination of idolatry, as he countered it by receiving the Torah. Ultimately, Moshe's burial in a hidden place symbolizes his ascension to the Infinite Will of God, where his soul is merged completely according to his merits.

## Mishnah

The Mishnah in Sotah 1:9 highlights the concept of reward for good deeds being given measure for measure. Examples given include Miriam waiting for Moses leading to the Jewish people waiting for her, Joseph burying his father resulting in great honor, Moses transporting Joseph's bones, and God Himself burying Moses. The commentary emphasizes that this divine involvement in burial applies to all righteous individuals, not just Moses.

## Second Temple

These commentaries discuss the lack of knowledge regarding the graves of righteous individuals, suggesting that their souls pass to God without their awareness or consultation, and highlighting the translations and mysterious disappearances of virtuous men like Abel and Elijah as evidence of their special relationship with God and departure to a higher realm beyond physical perception.

## Targum

The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 34:6 discuss the burial of Moses in the land of Moav facing Beis Peor, emphasizing the importance of following the righteous ways of the Lord and caring for others in various ways. The text highlights the mysterious burial place of Moses, symbolizing a reminder of sin and the importance of humility.

## Kabbalah

The humble person connects with the Creator, Hashem, by surrendering and recognizing His greatness as demonstrated in verses from Tehillim and Midrash Tanchuma. This humility is exemplified through actions of selfless kindness, contrasting with those who refuse based on their own status, while Hashem Himself models humility by actively engaging in acts of kindness such as comforting mourners and burying the dead, as seen in various Biblical passages (Kabbalah | Reshit Chokhmah, Gate of Humility 1:2).

## Musar

The importance of burying the dead and eulogizing them, especially Torah scholars, is emphasized as a way to emulate God's ways, as seen in examples from the Torah such as Abraham mourning for Sarah and God's actions towards the sick and mourners [Musar | Shenei Luchot HaBerit]. The concept of dealing with the dead is linked to the Sefirot and involves repairing, clothing, and raising them up, with reference to the verse in Deuteronomy 34:6 and the connection to mercy and wisdom [Musar | Tomer Devorah].

## Tosefta

Moses was informed by Serakh daughter of Asher that Joseph's coffin lied in the Nile River with metal skewers. Moses called on Joseph's spirit to reveal himself, and the coffin surfaced. Moses retrieved the coffin, demonstrating his power by comparing it to Elisha's ability to make iron float. Moses was buried in the valley, carried by the Shekhinah, signifying his merit to receive the same treatment as Joseph. The text also emphasizes the initiation of transgressions by

individuals or groups, and the subsequent punishment that affects all involved, as seen in various biblical examples.

# Deuteronomy 34:7

## Jewish Thought

In Jewish Thought, the Talmud Sanhedrin 22 states that losing one's first wife is likened to the destruction of the temple in one's lifetime. This loss is compared to losing one's eyesight or ability to make sound judgments. The Rabbis are discussing those who have abused their gifts to the point of forfeiture, like the wicked who are termed "dead" during their lifetimes. The discussion may also contain allegorical references to the ability to overcome fate or mazzal, as seen in Genesis 3,16. In another commentary on Leadership in the Wilderness, Moses is described as a leader who argued and debated from the moment he took on leadership until his death, as depicted in Deuteronomy 34:7, showing a man full of life and vigor until the end.

## Commentary

Moses, at 120 years old, retained his youthful vigor and appearance until the moment of his death, with no signs of aging such as weakened eyesight or loss of moisture in his body, contrasting with typical elderly individuals who experience fading of eyesight and vitality. This unique preservation of his physical health is attributed to his time spent in the divine presence, signified by the presence of light around him and the lack of decay even after death.

## Quoting Commentary

Rashi explains that Yitzchok waited 3 years after marrying Rivkah before she was old enough to engage in intercourse and become pregnant, contradicting the notion that she was only 3 years old at the time. Meanwhile, Moses' vigor and energy at 120 years old are attributed to his unwavering ideals and passion for justice and responsibility. The term "120 years" is associated with the outer limit of a human lifetime, as seen in Genesis 6:3 and Deuteronomy 34:7 regarding Moses. The interaction of old age and maintaining youthfulness is exemplified by Abraham and Moses, serving as models for aging well as leaders.

## Talmud

Rav Mattana explains that if one finds a nest on a person's head, the mitzva of sending away the mother bird still applies as one's head is considered like the ground, based on a verse from II Samuel. Additionally, he shows that the existence of Moses before his birth is alluded to in the Torah through a numerical equivalent in Genesis. In Sotah, the Gemara discusses the meaning of Moses not being able to "go out and come in," ultimately concluding that despite his age, Moses maintained full physical strength as evidenced by his actions before his death.

## Midrash

Rabbi Yoanan reflects on the ten statements linked to Moses's death, highlighting Moses's entreaty for mercy from God and his devotion despite failing to enter the Land of Israel. When Moses's death was impending, he engaged in fervent prayer until his soul was finally embraced by God after dispelling the angel of death. This story portrays Moses's strength and humility, even in the face of his ultimate fate. The text also draws comparisons between Moses and other notable figures like Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, showcasing Moses's unique qualities and establishing his superiority over them. Various Midrashim elaborate on the circumstances of Moses's death, honoring his legacy alongside other revered figures like Hillel the Elder, R. Yochanan b. Zakkai, and R. Akiva who also passed away at the age of one hundred and twenty.

# Chasidut

The text from Likutei Halakhot discusses the symbolism of tefillin as related to the midwives fearing God, with Moshe and Aharon representing the essence of tefillin, emphasizing the connection between the Elder and the suckling youth.

It delves into the concept of Moshe as the Supernal Elder and the repair of the Empty Space through holy vessels, specifically focusing on the significance of the hide in creating vessels for receiving divine light. Likutei Moharan expands on the burial of Moshe in the land of Moav as a symbol of ascending into Ein Sof and Malkhut, highlighting the connection between Ein Sof's will and Malkhut.

## Second Temple

The text explains that although Moses and the guilty may have lived for the same number of years, their powers and qualities can be vastly different as good and bad individuals coexist in the same timeline but have different characteristics (Second Temple, On the Giants 12:5).

## Targum

At the time of his death at 120 years old, Moses' appearance was unchanged, with no fading in his facial radiance, darkening of his eyes, or loss of teeth according to Targum of Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 34:7.

## Musar

The text discusses the idea that Moses' body and soul were well matched, allowing him to stand next to God and be buried without losing physical vigor. Additionally, it explores the concept that G-d's rejection of Moses' prayers signaled a shift in his role as a prophet, indicating a decline in his own intellectual powers and the need to consult other Torah scholars. This decline is further highlighted by Moses' own acknowledgment that he could no longer master Torah studies, leading to occasions where he relied on Joshua's memory or resourcefulness. This shift in Moses' prophecy is reflected in Deuteronomy 18:18, suggesting a progression from silence to direct prophetic utterances to ultimately speaking publicly with God.

# Deuteronomy 34:8

## Jewish Thought

Moses' leadership style in the Wilderness differed from Aaron's due to his focus on weighty matters rather than small talk, leading to a perception among the Israelites that Aaron was a popular and beloved leader, while Moses was merely tolerated. This difference in leadership approach highlighted the importance of fostering unity and peace within the community as a vital aspect of effective leadership and communal well-being (Jewish Thought | Leadership in the Wilderness; Authority and Anarchy in the Book of Numbers, Part II, Chapter 7; The Dark Hours of Leadership 12).

## Talmud

In Talmud commentary, it is noted that Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days because he always judged fairly, being known for bringing peace between husband and wife and being revered by many in Israel, as opposed to Moses, who was mourned with harsher words. Mourning for Moses, Samuel, and Sages, following biblical examples, also highlights the importance of mourning for respected figures for thirty days. Specifically, mourning for a Sage is deemed mandatory for all people as a sign of respect.

## Midrash

Rabbi Yehoshua found it improper to enter the king's palace in mourning, as reflected in Joseph's decision not to enter Pharaoh's palace when delivering a message. Moses' mourning was contrasted with Jacob's, highlighting the difference between quarantine and confirmed leprosy. Shabbat ritual observances in mourning were clarified by the different opinions of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. The Midrash emphasized Aaron's pursuit of peace, contrasting his mourning with that of Moses and showcasing his humility and reverence. Lastly, the time of Moses' death was calculated to have been in the eleventh month after explaining the entire Torah in 36 days.

## Commentary

When Moses died, the Children of Israel wept, but not as strongly as when Aaron died, possibly due to the expectation of Moses' death and immediate effects of Aaron's passing that stirred the nation into mourning (Or HaChaim). Moses' mourning period was marked by wisdom and counsel from Joshua, unlike Aaron's death, which was due to the loss of something irreplaceable (Or HaChaim). Rashi suggests that Aaron's mourning was stronger because he was a peacekeeper, unlike Moses. Ibn Ezra notes that Israel didn't mourn as intensely for Moses as for Aaron due to his advanced notice of his death and the immediate visible effects of Aaron's death (Or HaChaim).

## Quoting Commentary

Aaron and Moses were mourned for thirty days each, with Aaron specifically mourned by both men and women due to his role in restoring peace and relationships. Notably, the mourning for leaders should not exceed thirty days according to tradition, as seen in the cases of Moses and Aaron. While Moses was a man of truth, Aaron was a man of peace. In other instances, the mourning period was also observed, as seen in the case of Jephthah's daughter who was foolishly mourned for her virginity instead of her impending death. Additionally, the whole community was expected to observe mourning customs, as seen in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, emphasizing the importance of these rituals.

## Guides

The children of Israel mourned Moses for thirty days in the plains of Moab, as stated in Deuteronomy 34:8. This marked the end of their period of mourning for Moses.

## Halakhah

The text discusses the appropriate time period for mourning and eulogizing the deceased, stating that for the general populace, mourning should not exceed three days and eulogies should not be longer than seven days. However, for Torah scholars, the mourning period may be extended up to 30 days depending on their wisdom. The text also mentions that the greatest Torah scholars, such as Moses and Rabbeinu Hakodesh, were mourned and eulogized for specific lengths of time, with the maximum being twelve months. If news of a wise man's death is received after twelve months, no eulogy is necessary [Halakhah | Mishneh Torah, Mourning 13:10].

## Tanakh

After Aaron died, the entire community of Israel mourned his passing for a period of thirty days, showing the respect and sorrow they felt for him [Tanakh | Numbers 20:29].

## Targum

The children of Israel mourned Moses for thirty days on the plains of Moab, after which their period of mourning ended according to various Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 34:8.

## Musar

The Torah is described as both G-d's and Moses' Torah, with Moses receiving principles of Torah exegesis directly from G-d at Mount Sinai, leading to the recognition of an oral Torah. Moses' relationship with this oral Torah is symbolized by his giving up his physical bride, as reflected in his title as מִיְּקוּלָאָה שִׂיא and his mourning period being described in terms of numerical values representing G-d's name. This special relationship distinguishes Moses from other figures also given the title מִיְּקוּלָאָה שִׂיא in the Bible. [Musar | Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, V'Zot HaBerachah, Torah Ohr

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## Tosefta

It is derived that Moses was born on the 7th of Adar from the verse in Deuteronomy stating he was 120 years old on that day, with the word "today" emphasizing the completion of his years. Additionally, it is learned that Moses died on the 7th of Adar by counting back 33 days from the date the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, as indicated in various verses in the Torah.

# Deuteronomy 34:9

## Jewish Thought

In Jewish Thought from Akeidat Yitzchak, it is explained that offerings play a significant role in achieving closeness with G'd. The daily offerings of the people of Israel aim to achieve this closeness beyond mere atonement, while the sacrifices in the days of Solomon represented the desire for communion with G'd. The text also highlights the importance of different types of offerings, from freewill and peace offerings to sin offerings, each serving a specific purpose related to atonement and closeness with G'd. The concept of semichah, transferring attributes through touch, is also discussed, emphasizing the symbolic significance of the sacrificial rituals in connecting man with his Creator. The offerings of the twelve princes symbolize the Creator and His supervision of human fate, further emphasizing the importance of offerings and sacrifices in religious practice. Additionally, Moses' prayer for a successor who embodies both authority and shepherding qualities reflects the significance of leadership in religious matters. Ultimately, communal offerings are seen as a reminder of the purpose of Israel's existence in the land, emphasizing the connection between faith, service to G'd, and divine bounty.

## Midrash

The texts focus on the appointment of elders and the passing on of wisdom and understanding, highlighting figures like Moses, Joshua, and Bilam. The narratives emphasize the importance of wisdom and how it can be beneficial or harmful. They also touch on the completion of merits and punishment in various contexts, setting the stage for lessons on wealth, valor, and wisdom. The texts also delve into the influences of Miriam, the blessings of the tribes, understanding the construction of the Temple, and the importance of Torah knowledge and wisdom in leadership.

## Talmud

In Talmud Bava Kamma 92b:10, Rabba bar Mari explains to Rava that the concept of giving credit to the one who pours the wine, even though it belongs to the owner, is derived from the transfer of authority from God to Moses to Joshua. Moses laying his hands on Joshua symbolized the transfer of authority, even though the actual spirit of God was not directly given by Moses. This illustrates the notion of giving credit to the conduit rather than the source [1].

## Quoting Commentary

The texts cited illustrate how spiritual wisdom and prophecy were passed down through Jewish generations, starting with Moses passing it to Joshua as seen in Deuteronomy 34:9, and continuing through the elders, prophets, and eventually to the Men of the Great Assembly and the masters of the Mishnah. Despite sharing their wisdom and prophecy, such as Joshua receiving the spirit of wisdom from Moses as mentioned in Numbers 27:18, it did not diminish the source, similar to a shared light that remains undiminished. This tradition of passing down wisdom is compared to a watchman asking for assistance in guarding a garden, with the idea that Moses gave from his prophecy without diminishing it.

## Commentary

Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom because the spirit of the Lord was upon him, as evidenced by Moses laying his hands on him. Additionally, Joshua did as the Lord commanded Moses, demonstrating his leadership and willingness to obey divine instructions. Furthermore, Joshua's need for confirmation from the urim vetumim in the breastplate of the High Priest highlights his inferiority as a leader compared to Moses, who never had to seek indirect methods of

receiving messages from God.

## Halakhah

On the last day of the festival of Simchat Torah, it is customary for more than a quorum to read the Torah, with everyone in the congregation participating, even those not usual readers. This custom is meant to increase joy, but only one individual reads specific verses in Parashat Zot HaBerakhah, from "And Moshe ascended" to "And Yehoshua son of Nun", without dividing them in two [Halakhah | Kol Bo 52:12].

## Chasidut

In Chasidut, the ability to produce worthy students and instill wisdom in them is symbolized by "a yad," acquired from the House of God. This ability is linked to writing and authority, as seen in the ordination of Yehoshua by Moshe. The spelling of ChaNUKaH is also hinted at in the verse about Moshe laying his hands on Yehoshua, symbolizing the connection between wisdom and authority.

## Targum

Joshua, the son of Nun, was filled with wisdom and the Spirit of Wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. The children of Israel listened to him and followed the commandments of the Lord as given by Moses.

## Tosefta

In the Tosefta Sanhedrin 4:5, Rabbi Yosei suggests that if Moses had not preceded him, the Torah could have been given through Ezra, highlighting similarities in their teachings and authority. The text explores the significance of the Assyrian script in the Torah's transmission to Israel, emphasizing the importance of constant engagement with the Torah for all individuals, especially leaders like Joshua ben Nun.



# Deuteronomy 34:10

## Jewish Thought

Jewish thought emphasizes that the prophecy of Moses was unique and supernatural, as he was the only prophet to have a face-to-face relationship with God, signified by the fact that no other prophet like him would ever arise in Israel. This distinction is crucial in understanding the eternal nature of the Torah, as Moses' exceptional connection with God sets him apart from all other prophets. Moses' prophecy is seen as a miraculous phenomenon that cannot be equaled by any other prophet, as it transcended the boundaries of human nature and understanding.

## Chasidut

The Ba'al Shem Tov and the Ari z'al teach that Adam's sin caused holy sparks to be mixed with impure shells, requiring them to be sifted out through Torah study and mitzvos with G-d's help. Israel was sent into exile among the nations to extract and rectify these sparks from their own souls, exemplified by Moses' separation from the impure da'at of Balaam. In a different commentary, Moses' exceptional closeness to G-d and his constructive use of prophecy is contrasted with Balaam's destructive approach. Other sages compare their prophecies as being sourced from the same celestial area, with Moses using his gift positively and Balaam negatively. The significance of da'at in relation to Moses is highlighted in various commentaries, emphasizing his unique prophetic abilities and great spiritual heights.

## Midrash

Moses was a prophet like no other in Israel, as seen in his unique qualities compared to other prophets like Bilam. Despite his greatness, Moses was unable to save himself from death, as shown by the decree from the Holy One. Moses' death was a moment of great mourning and reflection on his unparalleled role as a prophet, with his soul ultimately being taken by the Holy One. His legacy and righteousness were remembered even after his passing, showcasing his unmatched stature among Israel's prophets.

## Commentary

Despite the lack of prophets rising to the stature of Moses in Israel, the relationship between Moses and God was unparalleled, as Moses knew God face to face in intimate communication beyond mere belief, and received direct revelation while others received prophecy in obscurity [Tur HaArokh, Deuteronomy 34:10:1; Sforno, Deuteronomy 34:10:1]. The phrase "whom the Lord knew face-to-face" emphasizes that Moses' familiarity with God was unique and direct, contrasting Moses' special relationship with God against that of other prophets [Rashi, Deuteronomy 34:10:1].

## Quoting Commentary

Rabbis and commentators discuss Moses' unique prophetic status, highlighting that he had intimate communication with God face-to-face and performed signs and miracles unlike any other prophet. They emphasize that Moses' prophetic abilities were granted by God, making his prophecy a miraculous act distinct from other prophets who performed miracles through prayer. Moses' prophetic perfection was not due to a natural predisposition, and his signs and wonders were done immediately and in public view, setting him apart from all other prophets. The significance of Moses' prophetic greatness lies in the fact that his ability to communicate directly with God and perform miracles stemmed from divine intervention.

## Responsa

The text refutes claims that certain verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed, explaining that these arguments are feeble and fallacious. It clarifies that the promise of blessing and revelation of the Torah was exclusively for the descendants of Isaac and Jacob, not Ishmael. The text emphasizes the importance of staying true to the laws of Moses and warns against corrupt heretics who may try to undermine faith, stating that it is permissible to slay them if needed. The commentary stresses the need to educate the young generation on these principles, which are considered pillars of faith.

## Targum

No prophet in Israel has ever arisen like Moshe, whom the Lord knew face-to-face and spoke with word for word, as described in Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 34:10.

## Talmud

King Solomon, referred to as Kohelet, sought to reach the fiftieth gate like Moses but failed, as indicated in Ecclesiastes 12:10. A Divine Voice then reminded him that the Torah contains words of truth, referencing Deuteronomy 34:10 which states there has not arisen a prophet like Moses in Israel.

## Halakhah

In Sefer HaMitzvot, Shorashim 8:3, it is explained that negations of the positive, such as saying "X did not eat yesterday" or "Reuven is not Shimon's father", have no relation to the notion of a commandment. The Hebrew word "lo" is used for negation, as well as ayin and its derivatives. It is emphasized that a prohibition is a type of command with a specific verb tense, while a negation can be in the past, present, or future, and can be part of a narrative sentence. Therefore, negative statements that are negations should not be considered negative commandments.

## Kabbalah

The Sixth Sefirah is known as Torah SheB'Khtav, representing the Written Torah, as Moshe was the only one able to approach the Great Name HaShem. This is evidenced by verses in Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers that highlight Moshe's unique closeness to HaShem and clear communication with Him, attributed to his ability to see through the Aspaklariya HaMe'irah and access the inner aspect of the middle line, represented by the final letter Hey.

## Musar

The commentary addresses the unique qualities and abilities of Moses as a prophet, emphasizing that no other prophet could compare to him in terms of his closeness to God, understanding of metaphysical significance, and ability to purify himself spiritually. References are made to different sages' interpretations of Moses' actions, struggles, and relationships with others, highlighting the exceptional nature of his prophetic role and achievements.

## Liturgy

Both the Siddur Ashkenaz and the Siddur Sefard express the uniqueness of Moses as a prophet who beheld God's image in Israel.

## Second Temple

Moses is celebrated as a prophet in the Second Temple era, as he had direct interaction with God, unlike other prophets who received visions or riddles. In Numbers 12:6, 8, it is noted that Moses saw God in actual appearance, and in Deuteronomy 34:10, it is mentioned that no other prophet arose like Moses, who knew God face to face (Second Temple | Who is the Heir of Divine Things 52:6).

# Deuteronomy 34:11

## Jewish Thought

Maimonides explains in "Guide for the Perplexed" that not all qualified individuals become prophets due to the lack of worthiness among their contemporaries. The sages highlight how the Jewish people were granted the gift of prophecy due to their unique qualifications, contrasting this with the limitations of gentiles to achieve true prophecy. While figures like Bileam are described as prophets, they are seen more as seers than true prophets. Moses' close relationship with God allowed for certainty in performing miracles, unlike other prophets who needed to pray and await God's response. The portrayal of prophets in the Torah serves to emphasize the unique qualities and relationships with God required for prophecy.

## Midrash

In Bereshit Rabbah 59:5, it is explained that Abraham was fair and blessed by God, receiving spiritual elevation and righteousness. In Midrash Tanchuma, V'Zot HaBerachah 3:1, Moses defied the angel of death's decree, justifying his own death and praising God. Shemot Rabbah 46:3 discusses Moses' reasoning for separating from his wife and breaking the tablets, showing his alignment with the will of God.

## Targum

The three Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 34:11 all emphasize the signs, wonders, and miracles that the Word of the Lord sent Moses to perform in Egypt, specifically to Pharaoh and his servants, in order to demonstrate God's power and authority.

## Commentary

Moses performed miracles face to face with God to prove his prophetic status, and no other prophet arose in Israel like him who had such a powerful connection with God, performed miracles without the need for prayers, and was witnessed by the entire nation, establishing his authenticity as a prophet beyond doubt. Moses' miracles were on a different level compared to other prophets, being performed publicly and continuously for long periods, making him unique in history.

## Quoting Commentary

Ramban explains that the men who rebelled deserved punishment for denying Moses' leadership and G-d's deeds in Egypt and the wilderness. By saying that Moses was not worthy to rule them, these men challenged G-d's authority. Moses' words about if these men die the common death of all men were to show that G-d had indeed sent him to lead the people, as evidenced by the works he had done in front of all of Israel. This phrase refers to the totality of Moses' activities, not just specific appointments like the Levites and priesthood.

## Musar

The Torah describes different aspects of Torah through four expressions, such as Torah of God and Torah of Truth, that represent concealed and revealed meanings, relating to the different dimensions of God. Moses' miracles, performed under the Ineffable Name of God, were only understood by the spiritually elite, leading to consequences for his

leadership. The verse in Samuel highlights the unique status of the Jewish people as distinct from angels, and Moses' stutter is seen as a challenge to his prophetic status. In response to Moses' doubt, God affirms his identity as the Almighty.

# Deuteronomy 34:12

## Chasidut

The commentary in Chasidut Agra DeKala on Bereshit 2 explains that the Torah starts with the letter Beis to signify the existence of two Torahs, the written and the oral. On the other hand, in Chasidut Ba'al Shem Tov, it is discussed how the Torah existed before the creation of the world by two thousand years, posing questions about how events and concepts such as death were written about in advance, before they had come to pass.

## Jewish Thought

The text raises numerous questions about the inconsistencies and illogicalities in the story of Moses at Mount Chorev, particularly regarding Moses' actions, responses, and interactions with God, the Jewish people, and Pharaoh. These include why Moses seemed insignificant and hesitant despite his background, why he doubted God's plan and instructions, why there were discrepancies in the sequence of events, and why certain actions appeared dishonest or lacking in forthrightness. Additionally, there are questions about the significance of specific terms and details in the narrative, as well as the reasons for Pharaoh's refusal to listen to Moses despite his claims about God. The commentary also questions Moses' complaints and God's responses, highlighting apparent inconsistencies and gaps in the story.

## Talmud

The text discusses various actions taken by Moses, such as adding an extra day of purification before receiving the Torah, breaking the tablets when he saw the Israelites worshipping the Golden Calf, and remaining separate from his wife, all in accordance with God's will. It also touches on other concepts related to maintaining distance from heresy and temptation, as well as details regarding the writing of Torah scrolls.

## Quoting Commentary

The text discusses the reading of the Torah on various holidays and special occasions, such as Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, and Sukkot, detailing the Torah portions and Haftarah readings for each day. Additionally, commentaries address the authoritative nature of Moses as a leader and the transformative power of Deuteronomy in shaping religious and intellectual activities. Moshe's passing marks the end of the Torah, providing hope for Israel's future. Ishmaelites and Midianites are highlighted in the text through their roles in the narrative.

## Halakhah

The Ben Ish Hai proclaims a strong and lasting declaration before Hashem and all of Israel, praying for salvation, success in deeds, the rebuilding of the Sukkah of David, the coming of the Righteous Mashiach, the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, and the sanctification of Hashem's name. In Mishneh Torah, it is permitted for an individual to read the eight verses at the conclusion of the Torah when fewer than ten people are present, as they were related by Moses from the Almighty. Regarding the arrangement of the Torah, it is advised to leave four empty lines between each book and complete the entire Torah in the middle of the line at the bottom of the column.

## Commentary

RaShY explains that the act of Moses breaking the tablets before the eyes of the Israelites was considered positive, as indicated in the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 87a. While the act itself was depressing, the breaking of the tablets may have been a construction of a proper reality, tied together with the creation and deconstruction found in the Torah. Other commentaries touch upon the wonders and awe-inspiring manifestations tied to the Torah, including the splitting of the Sea of Reeds and the revelation at Mount Sinai, as well as the fear of God instilled in the people by Moses. All in all, these commentaries reflect on the profound impact of these events on the Israelites and the eternal significance of the Torah.

## Midrash

In Midrash Tehillim 36:1, the text highlights examples of God ensuring the victory of Israel in battle, such as with Moses and David. The Midrash from Sefer HaYashar emphasizes the journey and challenges faced by the children of Israel, including conflicts with Midian and Moab, and the commandment not to fight the sons of Esau. Additionally, in Shemot Rabbah 46:3, Moses' decision to separate from his wife is analyzed, with different rabbis providing interpretations and reasoning for his actions.

## Targum

The Targums of Onkelos, Jerusalem, and Jonathan all praise Moshe for his strong hand and great displays of miracles in front of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 34:12. They highlight his actions such as dividing the sea, striking the rock, and receiving the tablets of stone, expressing gratitude and awe for his deeds.

## Kabbalah

In Kabbalah, it is suggested that the 42 letters at the end of the Torah correspond to three hands in the verse "And all the mighty hand and all the great terror." These hands are divided into different sections, with each section representing a specific concept or idea related to the Name from "In the beginning." Additionally, Rabbi Shlomo Molcho identified names in the book "HaKaneh" whose initial letters formed the 42-letter Name, serving as a garment for this sacred Name.

## Musar

Moses is described in Isaiah 53 as being marred in appearance and unlike a regular man, with his radiating forehead symbolizing his connection to all generations and their sins. The prophet Isaiah speaks of Moses interceding for sinners and sharing in the merits of each generation. The Ten Commandments, heard by all Israelites without punctuation, were repeated by G-d to ensure understanding, totaling twelve phrases heard directly from G-d, symbolizing the twelve tribes, with two special functions and the tablets representing the written and oral law, totaling 14, symbolizing Moses as the recipient of the Torah.