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וזאת הברכה V'Zot HaBerachah

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12





Expanded commentary and sources



GitHub

# Deuteronomy 33

- וְזָאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ: 1 This is the blessing with which Moses, God's agent, (agent Lit. "participant whose involvement defines the depicted situation"; trad. "man"; cf. Exod. 3.10; Num. 12.6–8; 20.16. See the Dictionary under 'ish; Agent.) bade the Israelites farewell before he died.

The Midrash offers interpretations of Isaac's dimmed eyes, citing various reasons such as smoke from offerings, Esau's intentions, and threats against Mordechai. Chasidut highlights the importance of fervent worship and Torah study in connecting to God. Various commentaries emphasize Moses' human qualities, role as a leader, and divinely inspired blessings before his death. The Tanakh and Talmud detail passages read on specific holidays, while Kabbalah emphasizes Moses' blessing purifying thoughts and establishing wisdom. Halakhah outlines Torah readings on Sukkot and Simchat Torah. The Responsum dismisses claims of verses alluding to Mohammed and underscores the Law of Moses being unalterable. Musar discusses Moses' deep understanding of God's names and his progression towards being like God. The Second Temple commentary depicts Moses as a Man of God and God's agent in performing miracles.

- וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מִסִּינִי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִהָרִּן פָּאֲרָן וְאַתָּה מִרְבֶּבֶת קֹדֶשׁ מִיִּמִּינוֹ (אֲשֶׁר) לְמוֹ: 2 He said: הוּא came from Sinai, And shone upon them from Seir; [God] appeared from Mount Paran, And approached from Ribebboth-kodesh, (Ribebboth-kodesh Cf. Meribath-kadesh, 32.51.) Lightning flashing at them from [God's] right. (Lightning flashing ... from [God's] right Meaning of Heb. mi-ymino 'esh dath uncertain, perhaps a place name.)

In Midrash, the tribe of Asher symbolizes judgment and confirmation, with their offering representing the nations of the world and Israel. In Jewish Thought, Joseph is seen as a symbol of the Jewish people, close to his brothers like the Jews were to Edom during the Torah reception. In Talmud, nations question receiving Torah, with reasons for Jerusalem's destruction linked to idolatry and causeless hatred. Quoting commentary discusses G'd offering Torah to different nations, not accepted due to conflicting laws. Chasidut teachings relate to Elijah providing sustenance, G'd's renewal of creation daily, and the Torah offered to Esau's descendants. In Halakhah, leave should be taken from the left first during prayer, and in Musar, the Torah is referred to as "light" and "fire" with mystical connections to G-d.

- אֶף חֶבֶב עַמִּים כָּל־קֹדְשֵׁי בְּיָדְךָ וְהֵם תָּכֹן לְרִגְלְךָ יֵשָׁא מִדְּבַרְתֶּיךָ: 3 (The meaning of vv. 3–5 is uncertain. An alternative rendering, with v. 3 apostrophizing Moses, is: "3 Then were, O lover of the people, / All [God's] worshipers in your care; / They followed your lead, / Accepted your precepts. / 4 Moses charged us with the Teaching / As the heritage of the congregation of Jacob. / 5 Thus was he king in Jeshurun....") Lover, indeed, of the people, Their hallowed are all in Your hand. They followed in Your steps, Accepting Your pronouncements,

In Jewish Thought, Shemot Rabbah 25 interprets Isaiah 33,16 as relating to a table in a garden where G-d is seated, Talmud discusses Torah scholars being exempt from taxes, Commentary explains G-d's love for Israel and the Levites teaching Torah, Quoting Commentary discusses themes in Deuteronomy, Midrash talks about taxation and Torah study, Chasidut emphasizes unity in Torah study, Second Temple mentions Abraham following God's law, Targum mentions God's love for nations and tribes, Musar discusses celestial matters and distinctions between Israel and other nations.

- תּוֹרָה צִוְּהֵנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרְשָׁה קִהַלְתָּ יַעֲקֹב: 4 When Moses charged us with the Teaching As the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

Halakhah emphasizes that Torah is an exclusive inheritance for the Jewish people, with fathers urged to teach their sons from a young age. Belief in God is commanded through the 613 commandments, while Torah study is compared to a crown bestowed upon all Israel. The Talmud discusses the number of mitzvot and the consequences of withholding halakha. Jewish traditional commentary stresses the inheritance of Torah, its accessibility, and the significance of Moses as a transmitter. Musar highlights the importance of Torah study and humility, while Chasidut underscores universal applicability and active participation in God's teachings. Liturgy and Kabbalah explore the structure of prayer and the importance of key commandments in Torah teachings. The Targum reaffirms the Torah as an inheritance for the Jewish people.

- 5    וַיְהִי בִישׁוּרֹן מֶלֶךְ בְּהַתְאָסֵף רָאשֵׁי לֵם יְחַד שְׁבֻטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:    Then [God] became King (King I.e., one who provides protection and caring help. (This poetic figure takes the ancient Near Eastern status and gender hierarchy as a given.) See further the Dictionary under “king.”) in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people assembled, The tribes of Israel together.

In Jewish thought, fair judgment by judges is emphasized, with the importance of selecting God-fearing individuals highlighted to prevent corrupt judgments and maintain fairness. Moses follows advice to appoint judges, while ancient Israel's judges acted as both judges and kings. The sin of lashon hara caused exile and factionalism among the tribes, with correction necessary for redemption. Commentaries stress unity, acceptance of God as King, and leadership as key themes throughout Jewish history. Liturgy references emphasize the unity of the tribes of Israel and their relationship with God. Talmud discussions focus on verses related to Kingship for Rosh Hashanah prayers. Musar teachings stress the importance of peace, Torah, and leadership in Jewish traditions. Kabbalistic beliefs revolve around the covenant, with the actions of the people of Israel affecting the presence of God as King.

- 6    יַחֲיֵי רְאוּבֵן וְאַל-יָמֹת וַיְהִי מִתְּיוֹ מִסְפָּר: {ס}    May Reuben live and not die, Though few be his numbers.

The Midrash and Talmud discuss Reuben's blessings, transgressions, and eventual redemption through Moses, specifically focusing on his sins with Bilha, with various texts highlighting his impulsive behavior, repentance, and prayers for forgiveness, as well as examining the connection between the blessings of Reuben and Judah. Tanakh emphasizes Reuben's strength and honor as Jacob's first-born son. Commentary sources illustrate Moses praying for Reuben's tribe to live, grow in numbers, and be spared spiritual death, with different interpretations on his actions and redemption provided by different commentators. Chasidut and Jewish Thought further explore the blessings of Reuben by Moses in response to Jacob's lack of blessing, highlighting vitality, dignity, and life. Second Temple texts mention prayers for Reuben's life and avoidance of death, while Targum emphasizes Reuben's eternal life and inheritance for his children. Musar teachings stress peace and harmony among the people of Israel to perceive God as their king.

- 7    וְנָאֵת לַיהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל יְהוּדָה וְאַל-עֲמֹן תְּבִיאֲנֹנוּ יָדָיו רַב לוֹ וְעֶזֶר מִצָּרָיו תִּהְיֶה: {פ}    And this he said of Judah: Hear, הוהי, the voice of Judah And restore him to his people. Though his own hands strive for him, (Though his own hands strive for him Better (vocalizing rab with patha) “Make his hands strong for him.” Cf. rabbeh, Judg. 9.29.) Help him against his foes.

The text explores the tribes of Judah, Ephraim, Asher, and their descendants, focusing on their traits and actions, including Moses' blessings, the power of prayer, and divine justice. It emphasizes humility, mercy, and the importance of meaningful prayer. References to Reuben's confession after Judah's confession, the significance of the Tribe of Levi, and the close relationship between Judah and Simeon are discussed. Judah's strength in warfare and the importance of constantly seeking to revitalize connection to God through Torah and commandments are highlighted. The Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan provide blessings for the tribe of Yehudah in battle, emphasizing divine assistance.

- 8    וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר תִּמְיָךְ וְאוּרִיִךְ לְאִישׁ חֲסִידֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בַּמֶּסֶה תִּרְיָבָהוּ עַל-יָמֵי מִרְיָבָה:    And of Levi he said: Let Your Thummim and Urim Be with Your faithful one, Whom You tested at Massah, Challenged at the waters of Meribah;

Chasidut emphasizes the connection between Levi and Gd, highlighting that Levi does not need to exert himself when studying Torah. The Midrash delves into the reconciliation and special role of the tribe of Levi after the incidents with the Golden Calf, showcasing their righteousness and faithfulness. Commentary praises the loyalty, steadfastness, and sinlessness of Levi during times of strife, with comparisons made to prophetic actions by the Hasmoneans. Liturgy details the preparation of the High Priest for Yom Kippur and the symbolism of atonement, while Tanakh emphasizes the importance of righteous priests in speaking proper rulings and leading people away from iniquity. The Second Temple texts highlight Simeon and Levi's unity in repelling impurity, while Targum and Musar stress Levi's faithfulness and connection with Gd. Kabbalah discusses Aaron's fitness for Temple service and his ability to bring blessings and enrichment to all worlds.

- 9 Who said of his father and mother, "I consider them not." His brothers he disregarded, Ignored his own children. Your precepts alone they observed, And kept Your covenant.
- הָאֵמֶר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רֵאִיתִיו וְאֶת־אֶחָיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֹא יָדַע  
כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרֹתֶךָ וּבְרִיתֶךָ יִנָּצְרוּ:

The Midrash highlights the tribe of Levi's faithfulness and righteousness, as they were honored by God for their dedication to the Torah and refusal to worship idols. The Second Temple texts praise Levi for forsaking earthly ties to serve God wholeheartedly. Commentary emphasizes Levi's commitment to the covenant and observance of God's word. Halakhah notes Levi's special role in both preserving the covenant through circumcision and providing refuge for accidental killers. The Targum and Kabbalah discuss Levi's dedication to serving God above all else, even at the expense of familial relationships, leading to blessings and enrichment in all realms. The Talmud mentions a dispute regarding the tribe of Levi's engagement in idol worship, with some members being killed by their own relatives.

- 10 They shall teach Your laws to Jacob And Your instructions to Israel. They shall offer You incense to savor (They shall offer You incense to savor Lit. "They shall place incense in Your nostril.") And whole-offerings on Your altar.
- יִוְרוּ מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְתוֹרֹתֶיךָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁיִמוּ קְטֹרֶת בְּאַפֶּךָ  
וּכְלִיל עֹל־מִזְבְּחֶךָ:

Elkanah offered sacrifices for the Jewish people, with incense leading to blessings. Levites were obedient and responsible for teaching and judgments, including offerings in the desert. The reward of good deeds leads to positive effects, and Torah objectives are achieved through repeated good habits. Levites were designated for service and Torah instruction. Incense binds the heart and nullifies curses. Mishnah and Talmud discuss the lottery for incense offering and the wealth gained through burning incense. The Levites' role in teaching Torah and offering sacrifices is emphasized in the Targum and Talmud. Musar stresses supporting those serving the Lord and maintaining balance in serving the Almighty, with the Levites dedicated to studying and teaching Torah. Aaron's faithfulness led to blessings and enrichment through Temple service, incense offering, and teaching laws.

- 11 Bless, הוֹדִי, his substance, And favor his undertakings. Smite the loins of his foes; Let his enemies rise no more.
- בָּרַךְ יְהוָה חֵילוֹ וּפָעֲלָיו יִדְּיוֹ תְּרֹצָה מִחוּץ מִתְּנַיִם קָמִיו וּמִשְׁנֵאָיו  
מִן־יָקוּמוּן: {ס}

The Mishnah mentions new priests offering incense, a prized task in the Temple, with blessings given to the one who does so. Midrash discusses Moses pairing tribes with future conquerors, with blessings given in preparation for conflicts. Commentary from various sources prays for blessings and protection for the Levites' work and resources. The Talmud debates the validity of a disqualified priest's work. Halakhah dictates that a challal priest may serve but not in the future. Targum concentrates on blessings for Levi's wealth and enemies' destruction. Chasidut emphasizes noble persistence in righteous deeds, while Kabbalah focuses on Aaron's success in Temple service through faithfulness, leading to blessings and enrichment.

- 12 Of Benjamin he said: Beloved of הוֹדִי, He rests securely beside [God], Who protects him always, As he rests between God's shoulders. (As he rests between God's shoulders Or "He dwells amid God's slopes.")
- לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר יְדִיד יְהוָה יִשְׁכֵּן לְטֶטֶח עָלָיו חֶפֶץ עָלָיו כְּלֵהִיּוֹם  
וּבֵין כְּתָפָיו שָׁכֵן: {ס}

Jewish thought focuses on the uniqueness of the tribe of Benjamin in not sinning, hosting the Temple on its land, and being favored by God with protective presence. Various sources analyze Benjamin's blessings, connection to the

Shekhinah, and role in hosting the Temple. Halakhah emphasizes the significance of the "upah" in marriage ceremonies, while the Talmud and Midrash discuss Benjamin's special role in hosting the Divine Presence and key events in relation to the Temple. Chasidut touches on the blessings of Rachel's sons and the concept of inheritance, while the Targum reiterates Benjamin's secure relationship with God and the Shekinah's presence.

- 13 And of Joseph he said: Blessed of יהוה be his land  
With the bounty of dew from heaven, (With the  
bounty of dew from heaven Targum Onkelos and two  
Hebrew manuscripts: "With the bounty of heaven  
above," reading me'al ("above") for mial (lit.,  
"from dew"), cf. Gen. 49.25.) And of the deep that  
couches below;

Joseph's land is blessed due to his righteousness with fertility from both skies and underground waters, specifically highlighted by Moses and Rashi. The blessing of Joseph's territory is emphasized in Genesis and Deuteronomy, with references to abundant moisture supporting crops. Jewish thought interprets the blessing of Joseph as balancing against the quality of Din, with gematria equaling 985. The Midrash and Targum also discuss the abundant blessings on Joseph's land from above and below, including dew, rain, and deep waters.

- 14 With the bounteous yield of the sun, And the  
bounteous crop of the moons;

The Talmud discusses the ripening of fruit, remedies for bulmos, and the impact of the sun and moon on plant growth. Commentaries by various scholars elaborate on the effects of the sun and moon on fruit trees, crop ripening, and vegetation. Chasidut emphasizes utilizing inclinations for holiness to avoid transgression. The Targum highlights the delight and bounteous produce brought by the sun and moon. In Halakhah, the offering of sacrifices during Rosh Chodesh is mandated to honor the influence of celestial bodies on earthly activities, particularly the sun and moon.

- 15 With the best from the ancient mountains, And the  
bounty of hills immemorial;

The commentary highlights the mountainous blessings on the territories of Joseph and Ephrayim, noting the constant fruit production from the hills. The Talmud discusses the significance of Benjamin's resting place and the connection between the Temple and the territory of Joseph. The Targum commentary emphasizes the righteousness of the patriarchs and matriarchs as the source of fruitfulness in the land. Quoting various sources, it is mentioned that Joseph only provided grain to the Egyptians after circumcision, the abundance of land in Yehudah, and the vastness of Joseph's blessing.

- 16 With the bounty of earth and its fullness, And the  
favor of the Presence (Presence Lit. "Dweller";  
cf. Exod. 3.1ff.) in the Bush. May these rest on  
the head of Joseph, On the crown of the elect of  
his brothers.

In Midrash, Joseph reassures his brothers, Benjamin names his sons in connection to his lost brother, and Jacob blesses Joseph. In Tanakh, Moses encounters a burning bush and Joseph's blessings surpass his ancestors. Jewish Thought discusses the concept of Shechinah. Commentary from various sources discusses blessings on the tribe of Joseph. In Talmud, the altar is situated at the border between Joseph and Benjamin. Chasidut touches on the relationship between Yaakov and Rachel, Moshe and Aharon, and the burning bush. Commentary quotes address the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt and the blessings on Joseph. Targum emphasizes blessings and excellence bestowed upon Joseph in various forms.

17      בְּכֹר שׁוֹר הָדָר לוֹ וְקַרְנֵי רֹאם קַרְלָיו בְּהֵם עֲמִים יִנְגַּח יַחְדָּו  
אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ וְהֵם רַבְבוֹת אֶפְרַיִם וְהֵם אֶלְפֵי מְנַשֶּׁה: {ס}

Like a firstling bull in his majesty, He has horns like the horns of the wild-ox; With them he gores the peoples, The ends of the earth one and all. These (These I.e., one of the wild-ox's horns.) are the myriads of Ephraim, Those (Those I.e., the other horn.) are the thousands of Manasseh.

The Midrash connects Benjamin staying with his father to his comparison to a lamb, and discusses the Messiah son of Joseph and David. Jewish thought comments on Reuben, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, and Jacob's actions, noting the loss of independence after Jacob's death and messianic times. Various commentaries explain biblical metaphors and symbols, while the Talmud discusses Moses' blessings, goring, and disputes over terminology. Tanakh mentions battles and authority transfers, while Musar and Chasidut explore themes of holiness and interpretations of symbolic figures. Mishnah details the mitzvah of sounding the shofar, and Halakhah discusses the requirements for a shofar to be fit. Liturgy and Kabbalah touch on prayers for self-improvement and the deeper meanings of symbolic figures and exile.

18      וּלְזִבְלוֹן אָמַר שִׂמְחָה זָבוּלָן בְּצֹאתָךְ וַיִּשְׁשָׁכֶר בְּאַהֲלֶיךָ:  
And of Zebulun he said: Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, And Issachar, in your tents.

The prince of Zebulun presented an offering on the third day highlighting the partnership with Issachar for Torah study and livelihood, while the prince of Gad presented an offering on the sixth day reflecting the tribe's exodus from Egypt. Zebulun complained about less fertile land but was prophesied to benefit from the ocean, while Issachar needed protection for their agricultural land. Zebulun supported Issachar in Torah study through trade, with blessings in this world and the world to come. Torah scholars should be supported discreetly, as scholars are compared to the sanctity of Shabbos. The tribes of Issachar and Zebulun were deeply intertwined through their support and success in Torah study, with financial support leading to shared blessings.

19      עֲמִים הָרִיקְלָאוּ שָׁם יִזְבְּחוּ זִבְחֵי־צֶדֶק כִּי שָׁפַע יָמִים יִלְקֹוּ  
וּשְׁפָנֵי טְמוּנֵי חוֹל: {ס}

They invite their kin to the mountain, Where they offer sacrifices of success. For they draw from the riches of the sea And the hidden hoards of the sand.

The texts explore God's love and protection, including through acts of kindness and redemption, the symbolism of Zebulun and Issachar's offerings, and Moses blessing Israel before the Angel of Death. Commentary delves into Zebulun's wealth from the sea leading to sacrificial offerings. The influence and actions of incorporeal beings are discussed, with some debating whether God commands actions through angels. Tanakh mentions Issacharites' skills in interpreting signs, Liturgy discusses the Shofar during Rosh Hashanah emphasizing God's sovereignty and protection, Talmud explores Zebulun's territory and resources, and Musar delves into punishment for separating from the community and the repair work to restore the world. Kabbalah discusses the seven seas and the highest sea above them, connected to Deuteronomy 33:19.

20      וּלְגָד אָמַר בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵב גֹּד כְּלָבִיָּא שְׁלֹן וְטָרַף זְרוּעַ אִף־קֹדֶקֶד:  
And of Gad he said: Blessed be the One who enlarges Gad! Poised is he like a lion To tear off arm and scalp.

In the Midrash, Joseph selects five brothers, including Gad, for their might; Moses and Miriam are praised for their greatness and measured actions, while Gad is highlighted for bravery and territorial expansion. Commentary elaborates on Gad's military success, strength, and courage, with various sources connecting Gad to physical prowess and battle achievements. The Tanakh discusses the proposal for Gad and Reuben to settle on the east bank of the Jordan, while Targum interpretations emphasize Gad's power in battle and territorial expansion likened to a lion.



- 21 וַיִּרְא רָאשֵׁית לּוֹ כִּי־שָׁם חֻלְקֶת מַחֲקָק סָפֹן וַיִּתֵּא רָאשֵׁי לָם צִדְקָת  
יְהוָה עֲשֶׂה וּמִשְׁפָּטֵיו עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס} (Meaning of verse uncertain; cf. vv. 3–5 (with  
note there), and saphun “esteemed” in  
post-biblical Heb.) He chose for himself the  
best, For there is the portion of the revered  
chieftain, Where the heads of the people come. He  
executed יהוה's judgments And God's decisions for  
Israel.

In Jewish thought, merit is brought to the masses through righteousness and adherence to Torah, protecting against evil and ensuring participation in a bright future. Midrash and Talmud discuss Moses' burial in the land of Gad, emphasizing his righteousness and defense of the Jewish people. Commentary from various sources expounds on Moses' involvement and significance in Israel's conquest. Men are called to arm themselves and accompany their kindred in battle, with variants in the translation of the Hebrew term used. Chasidut speaks on charity, drunkenness, and the burial place of Moses. Targum highlights the righteous leadership of Moses in burial, and Mishnah contrasts Moses' righteousness with Jeroboam's sinfulness. Musar reflects on the negativity of rebels and the righteousness of Moses, while Kabbalah delves into symbolic interpretations of Moses' burial and righteousness. Tosefta recounts Moses' discovery of Joseph's coffin and further explorations of transgressions.

- 22 וּלְדָן אָמַר דָּן גִּיּוֹר אַרְיֵה יִזְקֶה מִדְּבָשָׁן: And of Dan he said: Dan is a lion's whelp That leaps  
forth from Bashan.

In Midrash, Elyasaf son of Deuel's offering symbolized the Exodus, Yokheved's age at Moses's birth had significance, the ladle of incense represented the plagues, Judah and Benjamin played key roles, and tribes before Pharaoh were chosen based on strength. The Commentary compares Dan to a lion in Bashan guarding borders, Talmud discusses Phineas executing idolaters, and Targum describes Dan as a lion cub with different territories. In Musar, the numerical values of names are equated and Jacob's blessings of Judah and Dan are explored.

- 23 וּלְנַפְתָּלִי אָמַר נַפְתָּלִי שִׁבְעַת רְצוֹן וּמָלֵא בְרִכַּת יְהוָה יָם וְדָרוֹם  
יִרְשֶׁה: {ס} And of Naphtali he said: O Naphtali, sated with  
favor And full of יהוה's blessing, Take possession  
on the west and south.

The text discusses the association of different tribes with specific attributes and directions, such as Judah and kingship in the east and Naftali's possession of the Sea and South. It emphasizes reciting blessings over a full cup of wine for spiritual rewards, inheritance, and merit in this world and the World to Come. The Torah is viewed as a source of blessings and wisdom, leading to fulfillment and inheritance. Naftali is praised for his content character, possessive qualities, and favorable land blessed by the Lord, symbolized by a hind binding society and a source of good tidings.

- 24 וּלְאַשֵׁר אָמַר בְּרוּךְ מִבְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יְהִי רְצוֹי אֶחָיו וְטָבָל בְּשֶׁמֶן  
רִגְלֵה: And of Asher he said: Most blessed of sons be  
Asher; May he be the favorite of his brothers, May  
he dip his foot in oil.

The midrash discusses the positioning and attributes of the tribes of Judah, Reuben, and Dan, with Judah associated with light and wealth, Reuben with penitence, and Dan with darkness. Chasidut connects the tribe of Asher to abundance and wisdom through olive oil. Commentary emphasizes Asher's blessings of oil, prosperity, and descendants, while quoting commentary mentions the high quality and importance of Asher's olive oil. The Talmud discusses various rules, including compensation for damaging crops and the number of nails allowed in shoes on the Sabbath. The Targum emphasizes Asher's blessings of many sons and oil production, while Musar connects the tribe of Asher to blessings and tithing obligations.

- 25 בְּרִזְל וְנִחְשֶׁת מְעַלְלֶךָ וּבְיָמֶיךָ דְּבִאָּה: (Meaning of verse uncertain.) May your doorbolts  
be iron and copper, And your security last all your  
days.

In Midrash, Rabbi Yehoshua teaches Torah with novel ideas and scholars must contemplate Sages' statements. Exerting oneself in studying leads to removing evil inclinations. Torah masters' departure leads to deeper understanding for students. Commentary on Asher's blessings and protection with iron and copper gates. Jewish Thought discusses the significance of the term male. The Talmud details rules for nails on shoes and footwear maintenance on the Sabbath. In Targum, different interpretations describe Asher's strength. Quoting Commentary references Torah study in Israel and

Moses' blessings. Chasidut emphasizes remembering Hashem in youth for a fruitful old age and how Moshe Rabbeinu passed down wisdom.

26 אין כאַל יִשְׁרוּן רַבָּב שְׁמַיִם בְּעֶזְרְךָ וּבְגִאֲוֹתָו שְׁחָקִים: O Jeshurun, there is none like God, Riding through the heavens to help you, Through the skies in His majesty.

In Jewish thought, Rabbi Eleazar emphasizes the importance of children seeing the king read the Torah to increase reverence for God. The number ten in the Torah signifies the directives used in creating the universe, and in Nefesh HaChayim, it is expressed that God's interactions with the world are influenced by human actions. In the Midrash, various pillars and firmaments in heaven support the world, with different celestial beings residing in different locations. In the Talmud, there is a discussion on God dwelling above the angels in the heavens, and in commentary, Moses blesses Israel, emphasizing their unique relationship with God. Chasidut connects G'd's attributes to the behavior of His people. In Kabbalah, the verse "Who rides upon the heavens" is linked to Binah and righteousness, and in the Targum, it is emphasized that there is no god like the God of Israel in the heavens. Musar teaches that studying Torah for its own sake is an act of kindness to God, leading to God expressing pride in the skies.

27 מַעֲנֵה אֱלֹהֵי לָדָם וּמִתַּחַת זֶרַעַת עוֹלָם וְיִגְרֶשׁ מִפְּנֶיךָ אוֹיֵב וְיֵאמַר הַשִּׁמָּד: (Meaning of verse uncertain.) The ancient God is a refuge, A support are the arms everlasting. He drove out the enemy before you By His command: Destroy!

In Midrash, Jacob relies securely on the Lord in Canaan, the righteous uphold the world, and King David recognizes God's protection. Jewish Thought explores refraining from contact during menstrual cycles, battling physical urges, and praising God's dominion. In Talmud, Rabbi Yosei discusses the earth's support by God's arm, while Kabbalah focuses on creation through God's desire. Commentary highlights God's eternal support and driving out of enemies, and Quoting Commentary emphasizes human connection to Earth for inhabiting it through love for God. Halakhah details Torah reading practices, and Chasidut delves into spiritual concepts for blessings and healing. Targum discusses God's abode, enemies, and destruction, while Musar emphasizes humility, divine presence, and the importance of good deeds.

28 וַיִּשְׁכֵּן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בְּדָד עֵין יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אֶרֶץ דִּגְן וְתִירוֹשׁ אֶרֶץ־שִׁמְיוֹ יַעֲרֹפוּ טֵל: Thus Israel dwells in safety, Untroubled is Jacob's abode, (abode Others "fountain.") In a land of grain and wine, Under heavens dripping dew.

Midrash emphasizes Israel's relationship with God through dew imagery and prayer over sacrifices, while also highlighting God's changing of nature for their benefit and the importance of righteousness. Jewish Thought explores the consequences of Jacob receiving Isaac's blessing meant for Esau, contrasting material and spiritual wealth. Commentary stresses the uniqueness of Eretz Yisrael and Jewish gifts like prophecy, with future physical resurrection and a fruitful, rainless Israel in the messianic age. Quoted commentaries interpret various biblical passages, while Tanakh verses speak of blessings of abundance and security. Chasidut ties foreign thoughts to corruption of mishpat, liturgy praises God's protection, Talmud discusses historical decrees, and Mishnah describes the Paschal lamb roasting process. Targum points to Jacob's blessing leading to secure and fruitful living, while Kabbalah focuses on Jacob's lineage dwelling securely and alone as a symbol of redemption from exile and purity.

29 אֲשֶׁר־יָ\* יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי כְמוֹךָ עִם נוֹשַׁע בִּיהוּדָה מִגֵּן עֶזְרְךָ וְאַשְׁרֵי־רַב גִּבּוֹרְתְּךָ וְיִכְבְּשׁוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ לָךְ וְאַתָּה עַל־בְּמוֹתֶימוֹ תִּדְרֹךְ: {ס} O happy Israel! Who is like you, A people delivered by הוּדָה, Your protecting Shield, your Sword triumphant! Your enemies shall come cringing before you, And you shall tread on their backs.

During Sukkot, prayers are said on the ninth night as on the eighth, with the Parashah reading focusing on King Solomon's blessings. Midrash discusses the prohibition of high places after the Tabernacle's setup. Gersonides and Maimonides delve into G'd's foreknowledge, while Talmudic texts stress Israel's greatness and the importance of enjoying Shabbat. Commentary highlights various metaphors and blessings in the Tanakh, emphasizing God's protection and rewards for keeping commandments. Kabbalah discusses spiritual ascension for the Jewish people, and Targum praises Israel as a fortunate people saved by God. Musar touches on the significance of Israel receiving blessings and the Torah.

## Deuteronomy 34

- 1 וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַּר מוֹאָב אֶל־הָר נֶבֹּוֹ רֹאשׁ הַפְּסָגָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־כְּנִי יְרֵחוֹ וַיִּרְאֵהוּ יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד עַד־הַיָּם 1 Moses went up from the steppes of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, and הוה showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan;

In Jewish thought, Moses requested to cross the Jordan for the people's success in conquering the West Bank. He was denied physically crossing but granted a view of the land and prepared Joshua for leadership. In Talmud, there is discussion about where Moses died and the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael. Moses was shown the land of Canaan and the Territories of Gilead and Dan with supernatural eyesight. In Midrash, it is detailed how Moses' requests were granted by God, despite initially being refused entry into the Holy Land. The Tanakh mentions Jonathan serving as a priest for the Danites, with the possibility of being related to Moses. Halakhah highlights the custom of having more than a quorum read the Torah on Simchat Torah to increase joy. Quoting Commentary from various sources emphasizes Moses' extraordinary vision and the divine nature of his experiences. In Musar, Moses' requests for a successor were granted by God showing him future Jewish leaders until the Resurrection. The Tosefta explains how Moses was buried and connects various biblical examples of punishment for transgression.

- 2 וְאֵת כָּל־נַפְתָּלִי וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה וְאֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה עַד הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרִי׃ 2 all Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; the whole land of Judah as far as the Western (Western I.e., Mediterranean; cf. 11.24.) Sea;

God showed Moses the entire land of Israel including territories of the tribes of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh, as well as Judah and the western boundary. The "last sea" can symbolize future events in Israel. Each region mentioned is connected to the tribe that settled there. The Torah indicates leaders from each tribe after Moses, like Barak from Naftali and Joshua from Ephraim. The Targum mentions Naftoli, Ephraim, Menasheh, and Judah, as well as specific leaders like Barak and Gideon. The term "the well of Yaakov" refers to Jewish people's exclusive claim to gifts like prophecy and the land of Israel. The Sea the Israelites crossed was the Sea of Reeds, and the Hebrew terms for directions have symbolic meanings.

- 3 וְאֶת־הַנֶּגֶב וְאֶת־הַבְּכָר בְּקַעַת יְרֵחוֹ עַיִר הַתְּמָרִים עַד־צֹר׃ 3 the Negeb; and the Plain—the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar.

Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi discusses the future rebuilding of the Temple between Judah and Benjamin and the Kenites who ate from Jericho's fields, mentioning the descendants of Jethro receiving rewards. Commentary interprets locations like Baal Tamar as Jericho and Zoar as a city abundant in dates. The Tanakh mentions King casting bronze items in the Jordan plain, while Chasidut connects the city of Jericho to looking forward to the end. Midrash emphasizes the singular nature of God and shows Moses various events, while the Mishnah discusses allowing women to remarry based on varying testimonies. Targum adds details about the south, Jericho, and date palms in different translations.

- 4 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו זֹאת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיָּעֶקֶב לֵאמֹר לְוָרְעֶךָ אֶתְנַנָּה הָרְאִיתִיךָ בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְשָׂמָה לֹא תַעֲבֹר׃ 4 And הוה said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 'I will assign it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross there."

In Jewish thought, Moses was shown the land of Gilead but not allowed to enter it, with interpretations suggesting a vision of the future rather than physical space. In the Midrash, Moses saw past and future events, including specific individuals, and the oath to the patriarchs regarding the land was fulfilled for their descendants. Talmudic teachings include discussions on the dead conversing, cemetery etiquette, and the number of mitzvot in the Torah. Halakhah emphasizes teaching Torah to children from a young age, with interpretations varying. Second Temple concepts focus on departing from lower realities to higher ones, emphasizing faith and hope. In the Targum, Moses is shown the land but not permitted to enter, and commentaries discuss the fulfillment of oaths and reasons for Moses not entering the land.

- 5 וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבְד־יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב עַל־כִּי יְהוָה׃ 5 So Moses the servant of הוה died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of הוה.

Moses died in Moab to prevent enemies from his grave. He asked God to live longer, but was commanded to die. His death was seen as a divine kiss, possibly transporting his soul. There are discussions on who wrote the final Torah verses. The Talmud debates the fate of the generation in the desert. Moses was a servant of the Lord only after his death.

Moses' significance is emphasized through his leadership and humility. In the Jewish mystical tradition, Moses and Aaron's deaths were seen as a divine kiss. Moses blessed the tribes before his death. Moses did not enter the Land of Israel due to various reasons. Moses resigned himself to God's will and his soul was comforted before his death. Moses hoped his followers to approach their tasks spiritually. Moses's body remaining strong before death prevented it from being found, showing his vigor.

- וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאב מִן הַבֵּית פְּעוֹר וְלֹא יָדָע אִישׁ אֶת-קְבֻרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 6 [God] buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, near Beth-peor; and no one knows his burial place to this day.

The text delves into various interpretations of Hebrew Bible verses through Midrash, Jewish Thought, Commentary, Talmud, Chasidut, Mishnah, Second Temple writings, Targum, Kabbalah, Musar, and Tosefta. Specific points include Moses' burial place remaining a mystery, acts of kindness mentioned in the Torah, divine intervention in burial rituals, human interpretations of divine actions, the significance of righteous burials, and the mystical nature of the soul's journey after death. These discussions highlight the value of interpretation, divine interaction, and acts of kindness in Jewish theology.

- וּמֹשֶׁה בֶּן-מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בָּמָתוֹ לֹא-כָהָתָה עֵינָיו וְלֹא-נָס לַחָה: 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

In Jewish thought, losing a wife may affect judgment and corrupt one's mazal based on Talmud Sanhedrin. Moses remained full of life and vitality until his death. Commentary from various sources highlights Moses' continued vigor and vitality even in old age. Quoted commentary emphasizes Moses' eternal ideals and passion for justice. In Talmud, residents of Pappunya were ruled obligated in the mitzva of sending away the mother bird from a nest found on someone's head. Midrash notes instances of Moses being told of his impending death, with Samael failing to claim his soul. Chasidut connects Moses' burial in Moav to ascending into Ein Sof and Malkhut. Second Temple texts discuss the significance of Moses dying at a specific age. Targum describes Moses' appearance at death, highlighting his unchanged face and bright eyes. Musar focuses on Moses' physical vitality and his ability to retain physical strength even as his intellectual powers declined.

- וַיִּבְכּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וַיִּתְּמּוּ יָמֵי בְכִי אֲבָל מֹשֶׁה: 8 And the Israelites bewailed Moses in the steppes of Moab for thirty days. The period of wailing and mourning for Moses came to an end.

In Jewish thought, peace is seen as uniting two entities in harmony, with Samuel II emphasizing common bonds between people for true peace. Hillel stressed the importance of peace and community unity, contrasting with Moses' struggle to connect with the Israelites. In Talmud, Aaron and Moses were both mourned for 30 days, with Aaron being remembered for his pursuit of peace, in contrast to Moses' leadership style. Moses' death marked the end of the mourning period in the plains of Moab. The general limit for mourning is three days, but Torah scholars like Moses can be mourned for up to 30 days. The Israelites mourned both Aaron and Moses for thirty days, with specific guidelines and timelines mentioned in Targum and Tanakh.

- וַיְהִי וְשֵׁשׁ בָּנָיו מְלֵא רוּחַ חֵכְמָה כִּי-סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדָיו עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: 9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the Israelites heeded him, doing as הוהי had commanded Moses.

In Jewish Thought, offerings convey closeness and purpose, with various types serving different functions. Moses passed wisdom to Joshua, ensuring continuity of leadership, and elders were appointed to sustain the people. Halakhah dictates customs for Simchat Torah, increasing joy through Torah reading. Chasidut connects laying on of hands with imparting wisdom, and Targum emphasizes Yehoshua's obedience to God. Tosefta argues the Torah was given in Assyrian script, and praises Joshua's commitment to Torah study despite his duties.

- וְלֹא-יָקֻם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדָעוּ יְהוָה פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנָיו: 10 Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—whom הוהי singled out, face to face,

Regarding Jewish Thought, G-d's ability to demonstrate mastery over the Earth through reversing natural phenomena proves its creation, while the ingathering of Israel is seen as a divine act. Prophets receive knowledge and

understanding from G-d through a direct connection, with Moses distinguished as having a prophecy unattainable by human means. In Chasidut, sparks of holy souls must be rectified through Torah study and divine help, while the Talmud notes that King Solomon sought to be like Moses but was directed to focus on the Torah. The musical Moses is regarded as unparalleled in his direct communication with God, a belief echoed in the Targum and Halakhah.

לְכָל־הָאֵתֹת וְהַמּוֹפְתִים אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַח־יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם  
לְפָרְעָה וּלְכָל־עַבְדָּיו וּלְכָל־אֶרֶצוֹ: 11 for the various signs and portents that הוֹדִי sent  
him to display in the land of Egypt, against  
Pharaoh and all his courtiers and his whole  
country,

In Jewish thought, Maimonides explains qualifications for prophets like Moses, while sages suggest the timing was not right for others like Hillel's students. Moses prayed for exclusive prophetic gift to Jews, distinguishing them from gentiles like Bileam. In Midrash, Abraham and Moses' close relationships with God are highlighted. Targums mention miracles in Egypt by Moses. Commentary emphasizes Moses' public miracles and acceptance as a prophet. Moses did not need signs to legitimize himself as he had direct communication with God. Musar discusses Moses' miracles under God's name beyond understanding, linking to laws for faith. His flaws and actions illustrate complex divine essence and wisdom.

וּלְכָל־הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה וּלְכָל־הַמּוֹרָא הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מִשָּׁה לְעֵינֵי  
כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: 12 and for all the great might and awesome power that  
Moses displayed before all Israel.

Chasidut explores the origins of the Torah and its relationship to the creation of the world. Jewish Thought raises questions about the narrative of Moses at Mount Chorev, pointing out specific discrepancies and inconsistencies. Talmud discusses Moses' actions before receiving the Torah and his decisions to maintain holiness. Quoting Commentary highlights various interpretations and references to Moses' deeds and the Torah. Halakhah provides guidelines for Torah reading and organization. Commentary reflects on Moses' actions positively, connecting them to God's power. Midrash explains Moses' decisions based on his own reasoning and God's command. Targum praises Moses for his strength and miracles in front of all Israel. Kabbalah delves into the symbolism of the 42 letters at the end of the Torah. Musar discusses Moses' role in the transmission of the Ten Commandments and his significance in Jewish history.