

V'Zot HaBerachah וזאת הברכה

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

- וְזֹאת 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.

In various teachings and commentaries, the text explores the relationship between God and Moses, highlighting Moses as a prophet with a unique connection to the divine compared to others. Moses' blessings to Israel before his death are seen as prophetic and important, emphasizing his role as a man of God. The text also discusses the significance of Torah readings on different holidays, specifically focusing on Moses' role and the importance of adhering to Jewish laws and traditions.

- וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מִסִּינִי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִהָרָן וְאָתָה מִרְבֶּבֶת קֹדֶשׁ מִי־מִינֹ 'עֶשׁ (אֲשֶׁדֶת) 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.)

Various texts explore the symbolic significance of Israel as God's chosen people for their acceptance of the Torah, with parallels drawn between biblical narratives and Jewish attributes like fierceness and wisdom. Discussions on the offering of the Torah to other nations and customs related to the Torah emphasize the importance of Jewish traditions and practices. Commentaries delve into the connection between the Torah and divine commandments, highlighting the permanence and significance of the Torah in guiding Jewish faith and practice. Discussions on Divine favor towards the Israelites, rejection of other nations, and the importance of adhering to Jewish laws and traditions underscore the exclusivity of the Divine covenant with the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. Additionally, discussions in Kabbalah emphasize humility and balance in spiritual practice to connect with the Creator.

- אֶף חֶבֶב עַמִּים כָּל־קֹדְשָׁיו בְּיָדְךָ וְהֵם תָּכֹן לְרִגְלְךָ יֵשָׁא מִדְּבַר־תִּיךָ: 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,

Various Jewish texts, including Talmud, Midrash, and Commentary, emphasize the unique relationship between God and the Jewish people, highlighting the protection, love, and special care shown towards them. The texts also discuss the importance of Torah study, righteous deeds, and adherence to God's laws in order to be raised up and uplifted as a treasured and holy nation. Additionally, the Targums and Chasidut teachings explore the role of true Tzaddikim as leaders who draw upon the Torah's light to unite the people and fulfill God's will.

- תּוֹרָה צִוְּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרְשָׁה קֹהֲלֵת יַעֲקֹב: 4 When Moses charged us with the Teaching As the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

The text discusses the importance of Torah as an inheritance for the Jewish people, emphasizing the significance of Torah study, remembrance, commandment observance, and the connection between the Torah and the community of Jacob. Torah is seen as a crown accessible to all of Israel, with teachings highlighting the spiritual wealth, relationship

with the land of Israel, and interdependence of Torah study and prayer within the Jewish tradition. Torah's universal applicability and the unique nature of foundational commandments directly from God are also underscored.

- וַיְהִי בִישֻׁרוּן מֶלֶךְ בְּהַתְאָסֵף רָאשֵׁי עַם יִחָד שְׁבֹטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 5 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, Yitro advises Moses on selecting fair judges to administer justice efficiently, with implications for reducing crime and the need for God as the ultimate judge. Midrash highlights honoring those who fear God, while Halakhah discusses the consequences of sin and the importance of prayer. Various commentaries explore Moses's role as a king and mediator, emphasizing unity under God's sovereignty. In Chasidut, the concept of Malkhut is discussed, while Liturgy emphasizes unity among the tribes of Israel. Targum predicts a king from the house of Jacob, and the Talmud discusses reciting verses for Kingship. Musar emphasizes peace and diligence in observing God's law, while Kabbalah discusses the deserving nature of the People of Israel and Moses for the kingdom based on their covenant-keeping actions.

- יְחִי רְאוּבֵן וְאֶל־יָמָת וַיְהִי מִתּוֹ מִסְפָּר: {ס} 6 May Reuben live and not die, Though few be his numbers.

Midrash and Talmud commentary discuss Reuben from Genesis, focusing on his repentance and blessing from Moses. The commentaries also explore connections between Reuben and Judah, emphasizing forgiveness for past sins and blessings for future prosperity. Jewish Thought and Chasidut further analyze the significance of Reuben's blessing, which symbolizes life, vitality, and essential community membership. Additionally, Second Temple, Targum, and Musar commentaries provide insights on themes of resurrection, inheritance, natural goodness, and recognition of God as king.

- וְנָאֵת לַיהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל יְהוּדָה וְאֶל־עֲמֹן תְּבִיאֵנוּ יָדָיו רַב לוֹ וְעֶזֶר מִצָּרָיו תִּהְיֶה: {פ} 7 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 discusses the importance of Judah's lineage and leadership in Jewish thought, Talmud, Kabbalah, commentary, Tanakh, quoting commentary, Chasidut, Targum, and Musar. Judah's significance is highlighted through his role in battle, prayer for divine assistance, and leadership qualities, with various commentators emphasizing his military prowess, victory over enemies, and loyalty to God. The importance of Torah study, financial support for scholars, and the connection to the Unification above are also underscored throughout the text.

- וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר תִּמְיָךְ וְאוּרִיךְ לְאִישׁ חֲסִידֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בַּמָּסָה תִּרְיָבֵהוּ עַל־מֵי מֵרִיבָה: 8 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 importance of being attached to God in Torah study, symbolized by the name Levi and the oil of the Chanukah lights. The Midrash praises the tribe of Levi for their loyalty and piety, particularly highlighting Aaron's faithfulness in the face of challenges. Moses blesses the Levites for their commitment to God, and Second Temple commentary sees Simeon and Levi as united champions. The Targum versions emphasize Aaron's virtue and devotion, while Musar discusses the Tabernacle as a means of renewing man's relationship with God through loving-kindness. Kabbalah emphasizes serving in the Temple with loyalty and commitment, leading to blessings and enrichment.

- 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־אֲחִיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֹא יָדַע
כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרֹתֶיךָ וּבְרִיתֶךָ יִנָּצְרוּ:

Various texts from sources such as Midrash, Commentary, Chasidut, Halakhah, Targum, Talmud, and Kabbalah discuss the tribe of Levi's loyalty and commitment to God's covenant, highlighting their sacrificial actions during incidents like the golden calf. The Levites were praised for their faithfulness, strict observance of commandments, and willingness to abandon worldly attachments in pursuit of divine service, ultimately leading to their selection and elevation by God.

Additionally, other topics such as circumcision, the role of Zevulun in supporting Torah study, and the spiritual superiority of Levi are explored in these texts.

- 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 יְשִׁימוּ קְטֹרֶת בְּאַפֶּךָ
וְכָלִיל עַל־מִזְבִּיחֶךָ:

The text explores the significance of incense offerings in Jewish thought and tradition, emphasizing the role of the Levites and priests in teaching Torah, offering sacrifices, and providing halakhic instruction. It highlights the importance of action and study in achieving moral objectives, discusses the consequences of improper offerings such as Nadab and Abihu's, and emphasizes the mystical union with God achieved through the incense offering. Additionally, the text touches on the relationships between Torah study, priesthood, and royalty and the importance of supporting those who devote themselves to serving God.

- 11 Bless, הוּא, his substance, And favor his undertakings. Smite the loins of his foes; Let his enemies rise no more.
- בָּרֵךְ יְהוָה חֵילוֹ וּפְעָלָיו יִדְּיוֹ תִרְצָה מְחֹץ מִתְנַגִּים קִמְיוֹ וּמִשְׁנֵאִיו
מִן־יָקוּמוּן: {ס}

Various commentaries, Midrash, Talmud, Halakhah, Targum, Liturgy, Chasidut, and Kabbalah texts all emphasize the importance of blessing the tribe of Levi, particularly in relation to their work in the Temple, with prayers for protection, acceptance of their offerings, and defeat of enemies. Concepts of mercy, faith, analysis in halachic decisions, and the significance of the relationship between Moses and God are also discussed. The Talmud debates the validity of the work of certain priests based on lineage, while Halakhah explains the consequences of serving as a priest while unknowingly disqualified. Ultimately, the texts stress the significance of the Levites' service to God and their material needs being provided for by Him.

- 12 Of Benjamin he said: Beloved of הוּא, 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 לְבֶטֶחַ עָלָיו חֲפָף עָלָיו כְּלֵי־יָם
וּבֵין כְּתָפָיו שָׁכֵן: {ס}

In Jewish Thought, Esau believed Jacob had given all his wealth as atonement, but Jacob clarified it was just a gift, highlighting the importance of material values and spiritual balance. Benjamin's descendants played a role in battles against Esau, emphasizing divine help only after exhausting natural means. Moses' blessing on Benjamin connected to the location of the Temple in his land, symbolizing protection, while Halakhah discusses the significance of the "upah" in marriage ceremonies. The Talmud and Midrash explore Benjamin's unique blessing and the tribes' significance in the encampment. Quoting Commentary highlights connections to the Temple through Saul and Benjamin, while Chasidut discusses the qualities of Jacob's sons. Finally, Targum emphasizes Benjamin's security and protection with God'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;

Moses blesses Joseph's land, emphasizing its fertility and abundance due to blessings from above and below. The tribe of Joseph is awarded for righteousness, with dew and rainfall contributing to its fertility. Additional blessings are based on Joseph's actions during the famine in Egypt, leading to the enlargement of their land. This blessing is seen as a matter of balanced measures, representing Chesed. The blessing ensures crops can grow even in times of drought, showcasing richness and prosperity for the tribe of Asher as well.

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

The Talmud discusses remedies for bulmos, referencing Deuteronomy 33:14 and Ecclesiastes 7:12. Commentary on the verse focuses on the sun and moon's influence on agricultural yield, with interpretations on fruits and celestial bodies. Chasidut emphasizes the stars' impact on human service of God. Targum describes the earth's harvest with the sun's help. In Halakhah, the Sefer HaChinukh explains the spheres' influence on human activities, recommending sacrifices on Rosh Chodesh to acknowledge divine origins.

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

The blessings on the tribe of Joseph in Deuteronomy 33:15, including fertility and prosperity from the ancient mountains and hills in their land, are symbolized by early fruit ripening and continual production, signifying the special nature and importance of the land in the eyes of God. These blessings are further explored in Talmudic discussions, linking them back to specific biblical references and the location of the altar. In various Targum translations, the blessings are emphasized as coming from the righteous actions of the patriarchs and matriarchs in Jewish tradition, symbolized by the abundant fruitfulness akin to the early mountains and perennial hills. Quotations from the Talmud and Commentary further elaborate on the far-reaching blessings on Joseph and the quality of land given to the tribe of Yehudah.

- 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 various Jewish texts, Joseph provides comfort to his brothers, Moses encounters a divine presence in a burning bush, and blessings are discussed in relation to Joseph's virtues. Jewish thought emphasizes God's continuous presence, and commentaries reflect on the significance of Joseph's blessings. The Talmud connects Joseph to sacred locations and offerings, while Chasidut explores attributes like truth and loving-kindness. Quoting commentaries on various texts further delve into themes of oppression, salvation, and blessings bestowed upon Joseph by God's favor. The Targums similarly emphasize Joseph's abundance and leadership among his brothers.

- 17 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 text delves into the symbolism and significance of various flags, colors, and animals associated with the tribes of Israel, emphasizing leadership qualities, blessings, and future events such as Messianic times. References to Midrash,

Talmudic teachings, and commentaries offer theological interpretations and deeper analyses of the texts, highlighting moral conduct, blessings, and inheritance tied to the tribes. The Mishnah clarifies the primary mitzvah of sounding the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, while the Halakhah details the requirements for a shofar to be considered suitable. The Kabbalah explores the symbolism of horns, oxen, and the concept of redemption, tying them to various historical and mystical contexts within Jewish thought.

18 And of Zebulun he said: Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, And Issachar, in your tents.

The text discusses various aspects of Torah study, blessings, and the interconnection between different tribes and their roles. It emphasizes the importance of supporting Torah scholars both financially and spiritually, highlighting how scholars dedicate themselves solely to Torah study. The partnership between Zebulun and Issachar is highlighted, with Zebulun supporting Issachar's Torah study, showcasing the interconnected destinies and roles of the tribes. The importance of balancing spiritual and material pursuits is also emphasized, with a focus on the blessing and support provided to scholars for their dedication to Torah study.

19 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.

In the text, various aspects of Jewish thought, Midrash, Halakhah, Talmud, Liturgy, and more are explored. It discusses the significance of God's love, the challenges of finding the Hillazon for Techelet dye, the offerings and partnership of Zebulun and Issachar, the concept of influence in divine beings, and the importance of Torah study. It also touches on the role of the Issacharites in advising Israel, the sovereignty of God, and the rewards and punishment for actions. Overall, the text emphasizes the importance of following Jewish laws, traditions, and teachings for the betterment of the community and the world.

20 And of Gad he said: Blessed be the One who enlarges Gad! Poised is he like a lion To tear off arm and scalp.

The Midrash explains the selection of men by Joseph before Pharaoh, linking it to their lack of might compared to others. The tribe of Gad was blessed with a large territory reflecting their strength and prowess, particularly in warfare and cattle-raising. They were known for their bravery and military capabilities, symbolized by their lion-like courage and ability to defend and expand their territory. The Gadites were willing to settle in risky areas and were praised for their readiness to fight and conquer enemies. Moses' blessing highlighted their strength and power in battles, emphasizing their role as warriors. In Deuteronomy 33:20, Gad is portrayed as a lion-like warrior capable of defeating kings with his strength.

21 (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 the Lord's judgments And God's decisions for Israel.

God's varying levels of tolerance aim to bring people closer to righteousness and rectify their actions towards a higher purpose, praising leaders like Moses who lead the Jewish people towards righteousness through keeping Torah commandments integral to achieving humanity's lofty purpose. In the Talmudic texts, the debate centers on Moses' burial place and the importance of honoring the dead, contrasting righteous leaders like Moses with those who lead others to sin like Jeroboam. The choice of Gad's territory on the east bank of the Jordan River signifies justice and righteousness for Israel, with commentaries interpreting biblical verses to delve into deeper meanings and connections between divine interactions and human actions. Moses' impact as an intermediary between divine will and humanity is emphasized, as well as the importance of leaders in reflecting collective sin or merit. Ultimately, Moses exemplifies righteousness and justice in his leadership, with his interactions with his family and the Israelites demonstrating fairness and deep moral values.

22 And of Dan he said: Dan is a lion's whelp That leaps forth from Bashan. וַלְדָן אָמַר דָּן גֵּיּוֹר אַרְיָה יִזְנֵק מִבְּשָׁן:

Midrashic texts discuss the offerings made by the princes of the tribes, emphasizing themes of redemption, bravery, and justice. Commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:22 highlight Dan's courage in guarding the borders, connecting this to Samson's actions. Other commentaries interpret Dan's leap as symbolic of tactical prowess. Talmudic texts recount the actions of Phineas in executing sinners and stopping a plague. Targums and Musar commentaries provide additional insights into blessings and symbolism related to the tribe of Dan.

23 And of Naphtali he said: O Naphtali, sated with favor And full of the Lord's blessing, Take possession on the west and south. וּלְנַפְתָּלִי אָמַר נַפְתָּלִי שָׂבַע רְצוֹן וּמִלָּא בְרַכַּת יְהוָה יָם וְדָרוֹם יִרְשֶׁה: {ס}

Various texts, including Midrash, Talmud, Commentary, and Kabbalah, explore the blessings and attributes of the tribes of Naphtali and Asher, highlighting their connection to God's favor and fulfillment of desires. The Torah is seen as a blessing symbolized by the letter ב, associated with divine counsel and inheritance in both this world and the World-to-Come. The eternal nature of the Torah is emphasized as the essence of all blessings, with specific guidelines for the cup of blessing outlined in Halakhah.

24 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. וּלְאַשֶׁר אָמַר בְּרוּךְ מִבְּנֵי אֶשֶׁר יְהִי רְצוֹי אֶחָיו וְטָבַל בַּשֶּׁמֶן רַגְלֵוֹ:

The text discusses various aspects of the tribe of Asher as highlighted in different Midrashim, Chasidut, commentaries, the Talmud, and the Targum. Asher is portrayed as being blessed with abundance, particularly in terms of olive oil, leading to favor among his brothers and prosperity. The commentary explores Asher's role as a provider for other tribes and his significance in terms of blessings and abundance, with an emphasis on the importance of oil in his territory. The Talmudic references further discuss Asher's blessings and connections to oil, highlighting his prosperity and generosity. Additionally, Musar teachings associate Asher with charitable giving and promise unlimited blessings from God.

25 (Meaning of verse uncertain.) May your doorbolts be iron and copper, And your security last all your days. בְּרִזְלָה וּנְחָשֶׁת מְנַעֲלֶךָ וּכְיָמֶיךָ דְּבִאָדָר:

The text emphasizes the importance of Torah scholars and their teachings, comparing them to goads and nails that guide individuals towards the paths of life. It discusses Moses blessing Asher to have strength and vitality in old age, with iron and copper symbolizing physical strength and prosperity. Additionally, it explores the concept of strength and excellence in Jewish thought, the prohibition of wearing nail-studded work-boots on the Sabbath in the Talmud, and the tribe of Asher remaining strong in their old age in the Targum. The text also delves into the benefits of studying Torah in Israel, the significance of naming certain brothers twice in blessings, and the importance of maintaining strength and virtues from youth into old age in Chasidut.

26 O Jeshurun, there is none like God, Riding through the heavens to help you, Through the skies in His majesty. אֵין כָּאֵל יִשְׁרָאֵן רַבָּב שְׁמַיִם בְּעֻזּוֹ וּבְגִאֲוָתוֹ שְׁחֻקִּים:

Various Jewish texts explore themes such as reverence for God, divine interactions, creation, and the interconnectedness of the world. The importance of observing commandments and the impact of human actions on manifestations of God's power are emphasized. Additionally, concepts related to righteousness, divine assistance, and the practice of wisdom and kindness are discussed, highlighting the special relationship between God and his people and the significance of following Torah principles.

27 (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! מַעֲנֶה אֱלֹהֵי קֹדֶם וּמִתְחַת זְרַעַת עוֹלָם וַיִּגְרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אוֹיֵב וַיֹּאמֶר הָשִׁמְד:

The text delves into various Jewish perspectives, discussing the idea of God as the dwelling place of the world, the significance of refraining from contact during menstruation for blessings, God's omnipresence and attributes, and the importance of sustaining thoughts of the Creator. It also explores Kabbalistic teachings on God's necessary existence

and the divine mysteries contained in the Torah, as well as the concept of spiritual ascension and humility in the pursuit of righteousness and blessings. The discussion covers Halakhah practices regarding Torah reading and the rejection of idolatry in Chasidut teachings, emphasizing divine guidance and faith. Additionally, various Targums highlight God's power over the world and the defeat of enemies through His word.

28 וַיֵּשְׁבֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בְּדֹד עֵין יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַגֵּן וְתִירוֹשׁ אֶף־שָׁמַיִם יִעֲרֹפוּ טֶלֶל: Thus Israel dwells in safety, Untroubled is Jacob's abode, (abode Others "fountain.") In a land of grain and wine, Under heavens dripping dew.

The texts explore the relationship between God and Israel, stressing the importance of following God's will for protection. Various biblical figures show that humility, prayer, Torah study, and gratitude are key in worship and divine forgiveness. Isaac's blessing to Jacob in Jewish thought highlights serving God with spiritual and material blessings. Commentary and quotes from different sources further emphasize the special connection between the Jewish people and divine gifts, while Tanakh passages illustrate God's promise of protection to Israel. The Talmud and Mishnah discuss decrees by Moses and laws for roasting the Paschal lamb, respectively, reflecting on Jewish spiritual states and practices. Kabbalistic texts stress the purity and uniqueness of the descendants of Jacob.

29 אֲשֶׁר־יָיִךְ *יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי כְמוֹךָ עִם נוֹשֵׁעַ בַּיְהוּדָה מִגֵּן עֶזְרָךְ וְאַשְׁר־חָרָב נִאֲוֹתֶיךָ וַיִּכְחָשׁוּ אִיְלֶיךָ לָךְ וְאַתָּה עַל־בְּמוֹתֵימָו תִּדְרֹךְ: {ס} O happy Israel! Who is like you, A people delivered by הוֹדִי, Your protecting Shield, your Sword triumphant! Your enemies shall come cringing before you, And you shall tread on their backs.

Halakhah discusses the prayers and Torah readings on the ninth day of Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret, emphasizing God's lovingkindness and future rewards for the righteous. Midrash warns against offering sacrifices in unauthorized locations, while Jewish Thought explores God's involvement in Jewish history and the importance of fulfilling commandments for the perfection of mankind. Talmud discusses verses praising Israel's greatness and the importance of delighting in Shabbat. Quoting Commentary and Commentary provide interpretations of biblical verses emphasizing Israel's protection and unique relationship with God. Tanakh recounts a group of foreigners seeking protection from the God of Israel, with Chasidut discussing the happiness of Israel. In Kabbalah, the Jewish people are seen as able to ascend to higher spiritual levels by embodying Splendor and knowledge, surpassing the limitations of angels. Targum and Liturgy highlight Israel's triumph and victory over enemies, with Musar discussing G-d's interactions with different nations and the blessings bestowed on Israel.

34

1 וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מִמִּעְרַבְתַּת מוֹאָב אֶל־הָהָר נֶבֹו רֹאשׁ הַפִּסְגָּה אֲשֶׁר עַל־כְּנִי רִחְוֹ וַיֵּרְאוּהוּ יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד עַד־הָיַרְדֵּן: Moses went up from the steppes of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, and הוֹדִי showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan;

The texts discussed in Jewish Thought emphasize the importance of maintaining a relationship with God through observing mitzvot and creating a humane society as a sacred duty. In the Talmud, boundaries of Eretz Yisrael and Moses' death are explored, while in the Midrash, the power of prayer, as exemplified by Moses, is emphasized. In the Tanakh, the Danites' establishment of a sculptured image is mentioned, and in the Halakhah, customs for Simchat Torah are explained. Quoting commentary explores Job's search for truth and insight, Moses' expanded vision of Israel, and divine intervention. Musar delves into Moses' insights and leadership, while the Tosefta discusses Moses' burial location and patterns of divine retribution.

2 וְאֵת כָּל־נַפְתָּלִי וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה וְאֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה עַד הַיָּם הַיָּפוֹת: 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;

Various commentaries and Midrashim on Deuteronomy 34:2 explain that God showed Moses the boundaries of the land of Israel and future events, leaders, and territories associated with each region. The Targums also discuss the division of land among the tribes and rulers, while Rabbeinu Bahya's commentary highlights the exclusive claim of the Jewish people to gifts such as prophecy, Torah, the land of Israel, and resurrection. The significance of directions in Hebrew

and the unique privileges of the Jewish people are also explored in the text.

3 the Negeb; and the Plain—the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi anticipates the Temple's rebuilding between Judah and Benjamin, preparing fields traditionally enjoyed by the Kenites, descendants of Jethro, who were promised a future reward by God for their devotion to Torah study. The city of Jericho, known for its dates and scent, symbolizes a connection to Divinity in Jewish texts. Various interpretations in Jewish commentary, Midrash, and Mishnah highlight significant events and teachings related to Jericho, emphasizing the spiritual significance of the city and its ties to God's will and salvation. King Solomon's basins in the plain of the Jordan also reflect the historical and spiritual importance of Jericho.

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.”

The text discusses various aspects of Jewish thought, including God showing Moses the land of Gilead but not allowing him to enter, the importance of teaching Torah to children, and the significance of God's promises to the patriarchs. It also highlights interpretations from different sages and commentators on passages from the Torah and Talmud, emphasizing the future fulfillment of divine promises and the connection between past events and future outcomes in Jewish belief.

5 So Moses the servant of הוה died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of הוה.

Moses' burial in an unknown location and his honorable death as described in various texts reflects his high spiritual status and special relationship with God. He is praised for his obedience and leadership, with interpretations emphasizing his humility and servant leadership. Despite not entering the Land of Israel physically, Moses gains merit from viewing it, highlighting the value of spiritual elevation even without physical presence. His death is seen as painless and symbolic of a righteous person's passing with God's kiss. Various texts discuss Moses' death, with some highlighting his spiritual success despite worldly failures, his pleas for mercy, and the sorrowful acknowledgment of his resignation to God's decree.

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 texts from Midrash, Jewish Thought, Commentary, Talmud, Chasidut, Mishnah, Second Temple, Targum, Kabbalah, Musar, and Tosefta all discuss aspects related to Moses' burial, highlighting the unknown location of his grave, his significance as a role model, and the importance of acts of kindness and humility in serving God. These sacred writings emphasize the divine providence, mercy towards the righteous, and the connection between the living and the dead in Jewish teachings.

7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated.

In Jewish thought, the loss of a first wife is likened to the destruction of the Temple, symbolizing a loss of spiritual connection. Moses' death at 120 years old is noted for his undiminished physical state, inspiring commentary on maintaining youthful passion. Various texts explore Moses' death, discussing his physical strength, the timing of his passing, and the connection between his burial place and cosmic symbolism. The significance of Moses' physical and intellectual evolution, as well as his prophetic abilities, is also examined within the context of his interactions with God.

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 unifying different entities, with Moses focusing on intellectual pursuits and Aaron on establishing harmony through desires for others. Leadership is emphasized as contributing to community peace, with Aaron revered for his peacemaking abilities and Moses mourned differently. The mourning periods for sages like Moses

and Aaron are justified based on specific verses, with the Israelites mourning Aaron for thirty days. Moses' death, although significant, was less intensely mourned due to advanced warning and the immediate presence of the Shechinah providing comfort.

- 9 וַיְהִי וְשֹׁשׁ בֶּן־נֹחַ מָלֵא רוּחַ חֲכָמָה כִּי־סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו
וַיִּשְׁמָעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:
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.

Various texts from Jewish thought, Midrash, Talmud, commentary, Halakhah, Chasidut, Targum, and Tosefta discuss the passing of wisdom and leadership from Moses to Joshua, emphasizing the significance of freewill offerings, divine guidance, and the importance of studying and following the Torah. Joshua's wisdom, leadership, and connection to God are highlighted, showing the continuity of divine knowledge within Israel's leadership. Ultimately, the texts point to the importance of transmitting wisdom and guidance for future generations, ensuring the spiritual growth and continuity of the Jewish people.

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

The text explores Moses' unparalleled prophetic abilities, emphasizing his direct connection with God and unique experiences that set him apart from other prophets. It highlights how Moses' relationship with the divine was exceptional, surpassing human abilities, and unmatched by any other prophet in Israelite history.

- 11 לְכָל־הָאֵתָת וְהַמוֹפְתִּים אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַח יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם
לְפָרְעֹה וּלְכָל־עֲבָדָיו וּלְכָל־אֶרְצוֹ:
for the various signs and portents that הוהי sent him to display in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and his whole country,

The text explores the qualifications and roles of prophets in Jewish thought, with discussions on figures like Moses, Abraham, and Bileam. It highlights the unique relationship between Moses and God, emphasizing his ability to perform miracles and lead the people. The importance of prophecy, divine authority, and the special status of the Jewish people are key themes throughout the text, along with reflections on the nature of Torah and G-d's actions.

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

Various Jewish texts and commentaries explore complex aspects of the Torah and Jewish tradition, such as the preexistence of the Torah, Moses' actions at Mount Chorev, the importance of Torah scrolls, the significance of Torah readings on holidays, the proper construction and deconstruction of reality within Torah commentary, and Moses' separation from his wife and breaking of the tablets. These texts delve into the intricacies of Jewish law, interpretation, and belief, shedding light on the eternal function of the Torah for the Jewish people and the connections between different elements of Jewish tradition.



Expanded commentary and sources



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