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# Introduction

The Torah, also known as the Five Books of Moses, has always held a special place in my heart. It’s a foundational text that offers wisdom, guidance, and spiritual depth. Every week, Jews around the world read a designated portion of the Torah, known as a parasha (parashot in plural), and reflect on its meaning. Alongside the Torah, generations of scholars have written extensive commentaries, offering their insights and interpretations of the sacred text. These commentaries add layers of richness to the Torah, but navigating through them can often be overwhelming due to their sheer volume and depth.

In this project, I wanted to create something that would help bridge that gap. Using the resources available on Sefaria, an incredible digital library of Jewish texts, I’ve gathered the weekly parashot and their available commentaries. These include the thoughts and reflections of scholars like Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and others, whose words have shaped Jewish learning for centuries. For some lines, there were textbook’s worth of commentary.

But I also recognize that not everyone has the time to dive into the full breadth of these commentaries each week. That’s where I’ve employed OpenAI’s GPT model to help summarize the vast commentaries into concise, digestible insights. My goal is to sacrifice the depth and wisdom of these scholars to make it accessible, whether you’re a seasoned student of Torah or just starting out, to engage with the weekly readings. This way you can read from the generated booklet and have access to interesting notes.

In this book, you’ll find each weekly parasha, followed by a summarized commentary that draws from centuries of tradition. It’s my hope that this resource will make it easier for readers to engage with the text and the accompanying commentary, offering a clearer path into the richness of the Torah.

As part of my commitment to open learning, this project is open source and freely available for anyone to explore, contribute to, or use. You can find the source code on GitHub at https://github.com/DrAnomalocaris/SefriaToBooklets. I welcome contributions and feedback from the community to help this project grow and improve.

I’ve created this book for those who want to study the Torah more deeply, but also for those who might feel daunted by the vastness of the traditional commentaries. Whether you’re reading for personal reflection or using it as a guide for weekly study, I hope these summaries will inspire you to delve deeper into the text and connect with the timeless wisdom it offers.

# **44**: דברים|Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22)

## Deuteronomy 1

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| אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר דִּבֶּ֤ר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל בְּעֵ֖בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן בַּמִּדְבָּ֡ר בָּֽעֲרָבָה֩ מ֨וֹל ס֜וּף בֵּֽין־פָּארָ֧ן וּבֵֽין־תֹּ֛פֶל וְלָבָ֥ן וַחֲצֵרֹ֖ת וְדִ֥י זָהָֽב׃ | 1 | These are the words that Moses addressed to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan.—Through the wilderness, in the Arabah near Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab, |

Chasidut emphasizes the hidden moral lessons in Torah stories, with Moses admonishing Israel discreetly for past sins. Halakhah explains the recitation of Amen after blessings, Jewish Thought highlights the power of unity, Midrash discusses rebuke and the importance of language, Mishnah describes the Torah reading by the king, and Talmud delves into specific sections read by the king and Moses’ rebuke. Tanakh recounts Israelites’ complaints in the wilderness, Targum mentions Moses reproving Israel for sins, Tosefta details the king’s Torah reading and the significance of studying Torah.

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| אַחַ֨ד עָשָׂ֥ר יוֹם֙ מֵֽחֹרֵ֔ב דֶּ֖רֶךְ הַר־שֵׂעִ֑יר עַ֖ד קָדֵ֥שׁ בַּרְנֵֽעַ׃ | 2 | it is eleven days from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by the Mount Seir route. — |

The text discusses the Israelites’ journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea taking eleven days, symbolizing purification from evil forces, with commentators like Ramban, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Rabbeinu Bahya, Siftei Chakhamim, Rav Hirsch, Steinsaltz, Tze’enah Ure’enah, and Chizkuni offering interpretations. It refutes the notion of the Israelites being lost in the desert, emphasizes God’s guidance, and contrasts Spinoza’s approach to biblical texts. The Midrash explores deviations from God’s path, complaints in the wilderness, and consequences like leprosy. Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai challenges interpretations in the Talmud, while the Tanakh recounts the rebellion of the Israelites, their doubts, and defeat by the Amalekites and Canaanites. The Targum highlights the delay in the journey due to sin and provocation of the Lord.

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| וַֽיְהִי֙ בְּאַרְבָּעִ֣ים שָׁנָ֔ה בְּעַשְׁתֵּֽי־עָשָׂ֥ר חֹ֖דֶשׁ בְּאֶחָ֣ד לַחֹ֑דֶשׁ דִּבֶּ֤ר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל כְּ֠כֹ֠ל אֲשֶׁ֨ר צִוָּ֧ה יְהֹוָ֛ה אֹת֖וֹ אֲלֵהֶֽם׃ | 3 | It was in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses addressed the Israelites in accordance with the instructions that יהוה had given him for them, |

Chasidut emphasizes hidden aspects and moral lessons in the Torah, with the Book of Deuteronomy addressing a higher spiritual level and the importance of Torah study. Moses reproved the Israelites before his death, focusing on reverence for God and Jewish traditions. Rashi highlights the democratic nature of allowing all of Israel to hear Moses’ words, emphasizing the importance of narratives in the Torah. Moshe taught the pilpul method to derive new laws, gathering the people to clarify any doubts about the Torah. The Talmud discusses how to count kings’ reigns and debates about the new year, while the Targum states that Moses spoke to the Israelites as commanded by the Lord in the eleventh month of the fortieth year.

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| אַחֲרֵ֣י הַכֹּת֗וֹ אֵ֚ת סִיחֹן֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ הָֽאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר יוֹשֵׁ֖ב בְּחֶשְׁבּ֑וֹן וְאֵ֗ת ע֚וֹג מֶ֣לֶךְ הַבָּשָׁ֔ן אֲשֶׁר־יוֹשֵׁ֥ב בְּעַשְׁתָּרֹ֖ת בְּאֶדְרֶֽעִי׃ | 4 | after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth [and] Edrei. |

In Likutei Moharan 55:10:9, Og is called a “refugee” for his wicked intentions towards Avraham and Sarah. Ramban explains Sihon and Og’s territories, while Rashi interprets Ashtaroth as a place of strength. Midrash compares Moses to a king in battle, praising the defeat of Sihon and Og. The Talmud discusses the timing of kings’ reigns and rejects arguments about Sihon and Aaron. In Tanakh, Israel defeats Sihon and Og, settling in their lands, and in Targum, God defeats Sihon and Og in battle.

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| בְּעֵ֥בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֖ן בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מוֹאָ֑ב הוֹאִ֣יל מֹשֶׁ֔ה בֵּאֵ֛ר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 5 | On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to expound this Teaching. He said: |

Moses translated the Torah into 70 languages in the land of Moab to provide comfort to Jews in exile, emphasizing the importance of living as righteous individuals. The Torah was explained in different languages to ensure understanding before entering the Promised Land and prevent sinful behavior, with non-Jews allowed to study the Written Law but not the Oral Law. Deuteronomy represents a covenant between God and Israel, emphasizing the perspective of the receiver. The Midrash discusses the significance of stones and circumcision in relation to divine knowledge, while the Talmud mentions the stones erected in Eretz Yisrael. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain Moses teaching the Torah in the land of Moab.

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| יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵ֛ינוּ דִּבֶּ֥ר אֵלֵ֖ינוּ בְּחֹרֵ֣ב לֵאמֹ֑ר רַב־לָכֶ֥ם שֶׁ֖בֶת בָּהָ֥ר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 6 | Our God יהוה spoke to us at Horeb, saying: You have stayed long enough at this mountain. |

Horeb near Mount Sinai is where the Israelites dwelled after the exodus, with some interpreting Horeb as a region and others as an alternate name for Mount Sinai. Rabbi Hanina warns the court to judge righteously, G-d reassures Moses of his mission and provides Aaron as a spokesman, and Hashem puts effort into learning for students. Abraham is told to remain seated by God as a sign for his children, and God corrects the scribes by waiting for them. Ramban explains that all commandments were told to Moses on Mount Sinai, Jethro arrived before the Giving of the Torah, and the ark contained only the stone tablets of the covenant made at Horeb. Adonoy tells the Israelites at Choreiv that they have spent enough time at the mountain and it is time to move on.

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| פְּנ֣וּ ׀ וּסְע֣וּ לָכֶ֗ם וּבֹ֨אוּ הַ֥ר הָֽאֱמֹרִי֮ וְאֶל־כׇּל־שְׁכֵנָיו֒ בָּעֲרָבָ֥ה בָהָ֛ר וּבַשְּׁפֵלָ֥ה וּבַנֶּ֖גֶב וּבְח֣וֹף הַיָּ֑ם אֶ֤רֶץ הַֽכְּנַעֲנִי֙ וְהַלְּבָנ֔וֹן עַד־הַנָּהָ֥ר הַגָּדֹ֖ל נְהַר־פְּרָֽת׃ | 7 | Start out and make your way to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Shephelah, the Negeb, the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and the Lebanon, as far as the Great River, the river Euphrates. |

Ramban emphasizes the command for the Israelites to conquer the Land of Israel as a mitzvah, while Rashi details specific locations they are to journey to. Ibn Ezra explains the style of Scripture in using the phrase “and take your journey,” while other commentators provide additional geographical and historical context. In the Halakhah, the great gate leading into the Sanctuary is described in detail. Derashot HaRan highlights the Torah’s focus on demonstrable phenomena, while Akeidat Yitzchak explains Yitro’s role in reuniting Moses and Tzipporah. The Sifrei Devarim describes the Israelites’ journey to various locations, while Bereshit Rabbah discusses the significance of rivers mentioned in Genesis. Metzudat Zion explains the term “bank of the sea” in Judges 5:17:3, Rabbeinu Bahya discusses references to the term “great” in relation to God’s name, and Tze’enah Ure’enah emphasizes the importance of being connected to something significant. The Talmud discusses punishments in the afterlife, including those of Balaam and Jesus, as well as the destruction of the King’s Mountain and Beitar. In Tanakh, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are mentioned in Genesis, and the Targum translations of Deuteronomy 1:7 by Onkelos and Targum Jonathan detail the Israelites’ journey to various regions.

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| רְאֵ֛ה נָתַ֥תִּי לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ בֹּ֚אוּ וּרְשׁ֣וּ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֣ר נִשְׁבַּ֣ע יְ֠הֹוָ֠ה לַאֲבֹ֨תֵיכֶ֜ם לְאַבְרָהָ֨ם לְיִצְחָ֤ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹב֙ לָתֵ֣ת לָהֶ֔ם וּלְזַרְעָ֖ם אַחֲרֵיהֶֽם׃ | 8 | See, I place the land at your disposal. Go, take possession of the land that יהוה swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to assign to them and to their heirs after them. |

The text discusses how God promised to give the land to the Israelites without them needing to wage war, with the inhabitants being described as fearful and unlikely to resist. The commandment is for the people to dwell in and inherit the Land that God has given to them, reiterating the importance of settling in the Land of Israel. The land was promised to the Israelites by God, with each forefather being worthy of the promise individually, emphasizing the enduring covenant with the tribes. The Targum states that God has given up the land’s inhabitants, allowing the Israelites to enter and possess the land as promised to the patriarchs.

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| וָאֹמַ֣ר אֲלֵכֶ֔ם בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִ֖וא לֵאמֹ֑ר לֹא־אוּכַ֥ל לְבַדִּ֖י שְׂאֵ֥ת אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 9 | Thereupon I said to you, “I cannot bear the burden of you by myself. |

Moses acknowledges his inability to judge the Israelites alone, as instructed by God, leading to the need for new leaders due to the growth of the people and the burden of their wrongdoings. The Midrash emphasizes the importance of having judges with specific attributes to handle the needs of the congregation, while Ramban clarifies the timing of events and Moses’ struggle with leadership responsibilities. Targum Jonathan adds that the people will not be left with only one judge, as Moses cannot bear the burden alone.

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| יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֖ם הִרְבָּ֣ה אֶתְכֶ֑ם וְהִנְּכֶ֣ם הַיּ֔וֹם כְּכוֹכְבֵ֥י הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם לָרֹֽב׃ | 10 | Your God יהוה has multiplied you until you are today as numerous as the stars in the sky.— |

Various commentaries explore the eternal existence and greatness of the Jewish people, emphasizing the importance of invoking God’s name, moral refinement, and the role of Torah in achieving perfection. The text from liturgy is a prayer for God’s blessing at the conclusion of Shabbos, while the Midrash discusses the qualities required for judges and the burden of leadership. Rabbenu Bachyah compares creation with the construction of the Tabernacle, and Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight the multiplication of the Jewish people compared to the stars in the sky.

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| יְהֹוָ֞ה אֱלֹהֵ֣י אֲבֽוֹתֵכֶ֗ם יֹסֵ֧ף עֲלֵיכֶ֛ם כָּכֶ֖ם אֶ֣לֶף פְּעָמִ֑ים וִיבָרֵ֣ךְ אֶתְכֶ֔ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּ֥ר לָכֶֽם׃ | 11 | May יהוה, the God of your ancestors, increase your numbers a thousandfold, and bless you as promised.— |

Prayer is seen as a vessel for receiving blessings from God, with the quality of words determining the amount of blessing one can receive. Moses’ blessing of the Israelites in Deuteronomy is contrasted with God’s unlimited blessings, highlighting the importance of mentioning God’s name and the conditional nature of blessings from humans versus unconditional blessings from God. The Priestly Blessing is emphasized in Halakhah as a command to be fruitful and multiply, with the value of life and fertility as promises from God. In the Midrash, Moses’ blessings to Israel are connected to Yom Kippur and the acceptance of rebuke, with the Holy One’s blessings being more significant than those from intermediaries. The Talmud discusses the prohibition of adding blessings to those already commanded by God, while in Tanakh and Targum, the promise of numerous descendants is highlighted as a blessing from God.

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| אֵיכָ֥ה אֶשָּׂ֖א לְבַדִּ֑י טׇרְחֲכֶ֥ם וּמַֽשַּׂאֲכֶ֖ם וְרִֽיבְכֶֽם׃ | 12 | How can I bear unaided the trouble of you, and the burden, and the bickering! |

Chasidut emphasizes Moses’ efforts to influence Israel through relationships with other tzadikim, as seen in Noam Elimelekh’s commentary on Numbers 30:2. Halakhah discusses Rabbi Ritter’s argument against women holding public office based on Sifre’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 1:12. Jewish Thought explores the metaphorical use of “eychah” by Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah to describe Israel’s spiritual decline. Midrash reflects Moses’ concern about bearing the burden of the quarrelsome Israelites alone, as seen in Sifrei Devarim 12:1. Musar delves into themes of cleanliness, intention in serving God, Adam’s sin, Levites’ exile, and Israel’s exile. Quoting Commentary highlights Rashi’s explanation of Moses’ instruction to Joshua and Yitro’s advice to select competent people for assistance. Tanakh contrasts the once righteous city in Isaiah 1:21 with its current corrupt state, and the desolation of the once great city in Lamentations 1:1. Targum presents Onkelos and Targum Jonathan’s questions on how Moses can bear the burdens and contentions of the people alone.

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| הָב֣וּ לָ֠כֶ֠ם אֲנָשִׁ֨ים חֲכָמִ֧ים וּנְבֹנִ֛ים וִידֻעִ֖ים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶ֑ם וַאֲשִׂימֵ֖ם בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶֽם׃ | 13 | Pick from each of your tribes candidates who are wise, discerning, and experienced, and I will appoint them as your heads.” |

Chasidut explains that chabad is the source of all attributes, with chochmah leading to intellect and binah resulting in attributes of love and awe. Judges should embody qualities such as fearing God, being men of truth, and hating unjust gain, as emphasized by Ramban and Rashi. Halakhah outlines seven attributes judges must possess, including wisdom, humility, and fear of God. Kabbalah warns against those who exert power over a congregation, especially orphans. Liturgy involves giving thanks and praise to God through songs and hymns. Midrash discusses the qualities judges should possess and the consequences of not judging wisely. Mishnah details the priority of payment in the case of a man married to two women. Musar emphasizes the heavy burden of leadership and the importance of humility and avoiding flattery. Talmud discusses the benefits of fulfilling conjugal mitzvot. Targum mentions the selection of wise and understanding men as chiefs.

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| וַֽתַּעֲנ֖וּ אֹתִ֑י וַתֹּ֣אמְר֔וּ טֽוֹב־הַדָּבָ֥ר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבַּ֖רְתָּ לַעֲשֽׂוֹת׃ | 14 | You answered me and said, “What you propose to do is good.” |

Rashi explains that the Israelites agreed to Moses’ proposal despite their preference to learn directly from him, while Or HaChaim suggests they were willing to learn from Moses’ disciples to ease his burden. Tur HaArokh emphasizes the need for judges with outstanding qualities, and Siftei Chakhamim clarifies that the Israelites responded with determination for their own benefit. The Midrash highlights the Israelites’ questions about Torah learning and the appointment of judges, while the Musar teaches not to fear man in judgment. In Deuteronomy 1:14, the people consented to Moses appointing deputies, similar to their agreement to send spies in Deuteronomy 1:23, showing involvement in controlling their destiny. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey the response to Moses’ proposal as good and right in Deuteronomy 1:14.

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| וָאֶקַּ֞ח אֶת־רָאשֵׁ֣י שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֗ם אֲנָשִׁ֤ים חֲכָמִים֙ וִֽידֻעִ֔ים וָאֶתֵּ֥ן אוֹתָ֛ם רָאשִׁ֖ים עֲלֵיכֶ֑ם שָׂרֵ֨י אֲלָפִ֜ים וְשָׂרֵ֣י מֵא֗וֹת וְשָׂרֵ֤י חֲמִשִּׁים֙ וְשָׂרֵ֣י עֲשָׂרֹ֔ת וְשֹׁטְרִ֖ים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶֽם׃ | 15 | So I took your tribal leaders, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you: chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens, and officials for your tribes. |

Moses appointed leaders over tribes based on wisdom, righteousness, and renown, setting the precedent for judicial authority. Judges must possess good character traits, wisdom, and valiance, as detailed in Sanhedrin. The concept of Chukkim emphasizes respecting all beings and using resources wisely. Showing respect to elders and Torah scholars is crucial, with consequences for failing to do so. Josephus established a system of governance in Galilee, delegating power to local leaders. The Talmud discusses the importance of fulfilling conjugal mitzvot for exceptional offspring. Leaders were appointed based on wisdom, knowledge, and prudence, with guidelines for showing respect to elders in the Tosefta.

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| וָאֲצַוֶּה֙ אֶת־שֹׁ֣פְטֵיכֶ֔ם בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִ֖וא לֵאמֹ֑ר שָׁמֹ֤עַ בֵּין־אֲחֵיכֶם֙ וּשְׁפַטְתֶּ֣ם צֶ֔דֶק בֵּֽין־אִ֥ישׁ וּבֵין־אָחִ֖יו וּבֵ֥ין גֵּרֽוֹ׃ | 16 | I charged your magistrates at that time as follows, “Hear out your fellow Israelites, and decide justly between one party and the other—be it a fellow Israelite or a stranger. |

In Deuteronomy, judges are instructed to be patient, listen to both sides, judge fairly, and avoid favoritism, ensuring justice for all parties involved. Judges must not show bias, treat all people fairly, and aim for righteous judgment reflecting the truth. It is crucial for judges to be impartial, deliberate, respectful towards the community, and bear patiently with them, ensuring thorough investigation before announcing a verdict. Additionally, flattery is condemned as it diminishes true worship, and judges must ensure both sides are present before hearing arguments, judge each case on its merits, and make prompt judgments. The Torah emphasizes the importance of fair judgment, compassion towards strangers, and the urgency of upholding justice.

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| לֹֽא־תַכִּ֨ירוּ פָנִ֜ים בַּמִּשְׁפָּ֗ט כַּקָּטֹ֤ן כַּגָּדֹל֙ תִּשְׁמָע֔וּן לֹ֤א תָג֙וּרוּ֙ מִפְּנֵי־אִ֔ישׁ כִּ֥י הַמִּשְׁפָּ֖ט לֵאלֹהִ֣ים ה֑וּא וְהַדָּבָר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִקְשֶׁ֣ה מִכֶּ֔ם תַּקְרִב֥וּן אֵלַ֖י וּשְׁמַעְתִּֽיו׃ | 17 | You shall not be partial in judgment: hear out low and high alike. Fear neither party, for judgment is God’s. And any matter that is too difficult for you, you shall bring to me and I will hear it.” |

Chasidut emphasizes self-reflection on Rosh HaShanah to hear the Supernal Voice, while the commentary warns judges against favoritism and fear in their rulings. Halakhah prohibits appointing unlearned judges and recusing due to fear, stressing the importance of fair judgment. Jewish Thought explores the ethical considerations for judges and the significance of character traits in justice. Kabbalah discusses the role of judges in executing divine judgment, while Midrash highlights the need for fairness and integrity in courts. Musar emphasizes honesty and fairness in judgment, cautioning against appointing unqualified judges. Quoting Commentary praises God’s eternal kindness, while Responsa and Second Temple texts underscore the accountability of judges to God. Talmud stresses the importance of unbiased judgment, and Tanakh and Targum emphasize impartiality in hearing all matters. Tosefta discusses the sins that led to the decline of Torah honor and the departure of the Shekhinah from Israel.

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| וָאֲצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֑וא אֵ֥ת כׇּל־הַדְּבָרִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֽׂוּן׃ | 18 | Thus I instructed you, at that time, about the various things that you should do. |

Chasidut discusses the importance of identifying oneself according to paternal lineage, contrasting Israelites and gentiles. Moses taught the people the statutes and laws personally, appointing judges with consultation from God. Me’iri states that it is permitted to give instruction to a prospective convert, and a non-Jew may observe the Sabbath once he has decided to convert. Derashot HaRan emphasizes Torah study as a life-saving drug. The Midrash stresses treating all cases with respect and the need for judges and the community to bear with each other. The Talmud outlines differences between cases of monetary and capital law, including the requirement for inquiry and interrogation of witnesses. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight God’s commandments related to judgments of money and life.

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| וַנִּסַּ֣ע מֵחֹרֵ֗ב וַנֵּ֡לֶךְ אֵ֣ת כׇּל־הַמִּדְבָּ֣ר הַגָּדוֹל֩ וְהַנּוֹרָ֨א הַה֜וּא אֲשֶׁ֣ר רְאִיתֶ֗ם דֶּ֚רֶךְ הַ֣ר הָֽאֱמֹרִ֔י כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֛ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ אֹתָ֑נוּ וַנָּבֹ֕א עַ֖ד קָדֵ֥שׁ בַּרְנֵֽעַ׃ | 19 | We set out from Horeb and traveled the great and terrible wilderness that you saw, along the road to the hill country of the Amorites, as our God יהוה had commanded us. When we reached Kadesh-barnea, |

The wilderness the Israelites traveled through was described as great and fearful due to the presence of large snakes and scorpions, a necessary test of faith in God’s protection. The Holy Land was significant in prophecy, with various biblical figures tied to the land and significant events occurring there. Various commentators provide interpretations of specific locations and events in the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness towards Kadesh Barnea.

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| וָאֹמַ֖ר אֲלֵכֶ֑ם בָּאתֶם֙ עַד־הַ֣ר הָאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽנוּ׃ | 20 | I said to you, “You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which our God יהוה is giving to us. |

Moses reminds the Israelites they have reached the Emorite highlands, as instructed by God, and appoints judges to enforce laws and teach Torah, possibly avoiding mention of Jethro’s advice due to humility or personal reasons. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 1:20 also confirm the arrival at the Emorite hill region given by God.

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| רְ֠אֵ֠ה נָתַ֨ן יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ לְפָנֶ֖יךָ אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ עֲלֵ֣ה רֵ֗שׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר֩ דִּבֶּ֨ר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֱלֹהֵ֤י אֲבֹתֶ֙יךָ֙ לָ֔ךְ אַל־תִּירָ֖א וְאַל־תֵּחָֽת׃ | 21 | See, your God יהוה has placed the land at your disposal. Go up, take possession, as יהוה, the God of your fathers, promised you. Fear not and be not dismayed.” |

Ibn Ezra connects “resh” to “yerushah” and “techat” to “yiddal,” Sforno states no opposition for Israelites, Rabbeinu Bahya mentions the protective angel of the Canaanites was dealt with, Rav Hirsch interprets “techat” as broken or dismayed, Steinsaltz urges Israelites to ascend without fear, Tze’enah Ure’enah notes the Canaanite angel thrown before Israel. Midrash discusses Israelites’ lack of faith leading to delay in entering Promised Land, Ramban explains God’s initial forbidding of Balaam to curse Israel, Talmud explains slaughter from the neck, Tanakh promises a messenger for Israelites’ protection, and Targums encourage Israelites to possess the land without fear.

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| וַתִּקְרְב֣וּן אֵלַי֮ כֻּלְּכֶם֒ וַתֹּאמְר֗וּ נִשְׁלְחָ֤ה אֲנָשִׁים֙ לְפָנֵ֔ינוּ וְיַחְפְּרוּ־לָ֖נוּ אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְיָשִׁ֤בוּ אֹתָ֙נוּ֙ דָּבָ֔ר אֶת־הַדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר נַעֲלֶה־בָּ֔הּ וְאֵת֙ הֶֽעָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָבֹ֖א אֲלֵיהֶֽן׃ | 22 | Then all of you came to me and said, “Let us send agents ahead to reconnoiter the land for us and bring back word on the route we shall follow and the cities we shall come to.” |

Chasidut discusses Moses praying for Joshua’s protection from the spies’ evil influence during the mission to Canaan, emphasizing the importance of Torah observance in establishing a relationship with the land. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Siftei Chakhamim provides insights into the Israelites’ approach to sending spies and the strategic aspects involved. Jewish Thought raises questions about Moses’ actions, the consequences of lack of faith, and the significance of sending spies. Midrash highlights the Israelites’ lack of faith, punishment for not entering the land, and the unnecessary sending of spies. Musar discusses the Israelites’ sin in requesting spies, the wisdom of sending only two spies, and the importance of humility in approaching Moses. Quoting Commentary presents various perspectives on God’s covenant with Noah, Moses sending spies, and the long-lasting repercussions of the spies’ mission. Talmud explores the motivations behind the Israelites’ request for spies, the attribution of actions to individuals and the people, and the significance of the golden calf incident. Tanakh instructs Moses to send scouts to Canaan, while Targum discusses the Israelites collectively approaching Moses to send men to spy out the land.

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| וַיִּיטַ֥ב בְּעֵינַ֖י הַדָּבָ֑ר וָאֶקַּ֤ח מִכֶּם֙ שְׁנֵ֣ים עָשָׂ֣ר אֲנָשִׁ֔ים אִ֥ישׁ אֶחָ֖ד לַשָּֽׁבֶט׃ | 23 | I approved of the plan, and so I selected from among you twelve participants, one representative from each tribe. |

The text discusses how Bnei Yisrael’s request to send spies to Eretz Yisrael, which seemed good in Moshe’s eyes, was actually a reason for rebuke as it reflected poorly on their behavior and impacted their leaders. Moses did not praise the twelve spies for their leadership roles as they acted wickedly, with Rashi explaining that Moses consented to their request to send spies, thinking they would reconsider but they did not. The spies were chosen by Moses and God, but they turned against them and caused trouble for the generation, despite initially being considered righteous. Moses agreed to the request from the people to send spies, believing it was a tactical move to ensure success in conquering the land, reflecting his desire to involve the people in shaping their destiny and military strategy.

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| וַיִּפְנוּ֙ וַיַּעֲל֣וּ הָהָ֔רָה וַיָּבֹ֖אוּ עַד־נַ֣חַל אֶשְׁכֹּ֑ל וַֽיְרַגְּל֖וּ אֹתָֽהּ׃ | 24 | They made for the hill country, came to the wadi Eshcol, and spied it out. |

The spies explored the land from the Brook of Eshcol, deviating from their righteous path towards the mountain, investigating the nature of the land and its people instead of just searching for hidden valuables. Spies typically go up mountains, as seen with Rachav warning Joshua’s spies to hide on a mountain to avoid pursuers, demonstrating the holy spirit upon her. The word “spies” is significant in the Bible, appearing multiple times in certain chapters like Genesis 42 and Deuteronomy 1:22-24, using the verbs laḥpor and leragel. The Israelite spies scouted the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob at Lebo-hamath using these verbs, exploring Wadi Eshkol, also known as the stream of Ethkela or the stream of the Grapes in different versions of the Targum on Deuteronomy 1:24.

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| וַיִּקְח֤וּ בְיָדָם֙ מִפְּרִ֣י הָאָ֔רֶץ וַיּוֹרִ֖דוּ אֵלֵ֑ינוּ וַיָּשִׁ֨בוּ אֹתָ֤נוּ דָבָר֙ וַיֹּ֣אמְר֔וּ טוֹבָ֣ה הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽנוּ׃ | 25 | They took some of the fruit of the land with them and brought it down to us. And they gave us this report: “It is a good land that our God יהוה is giving to us.” |

Moses sent spies to Canaan who brought back a positive report about the land, but only Joshua and Caleb spoke positively about it while the others spread fear. The people should have believed the positive reports, as the negative comments were not part of their mission. The spies hid their negative report from Moses, who had firsthand knowledge of the land. The people’s lack of faith, not God’s shortcomings, led to their refusal to enter the land, but they repented and offered to conquer it. Moses was disappointed with the spies’ focus on physical aspects of the land instead of recognizing its spiritual significance. Despite the promise of a good land, the Israelites were hesitant to proceed.

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| וְלֹ֥א אֲבִיתֶ֖ם לַעֲלֹ֑ת וַתַּמְר֕וּ אֶת־פִּ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 26 | Yet you refused to go up, and flouted the command of your God יהוה. |

The Israelites showed disbelief in God’s promise to conquer Canaan as a gift, leading to their refusal to enter the land despite a positive report from the spies. This betrayal resulted in a plague in the wilderness, angering God and preventing Moses from entering the promised land (Deut. 1:26, 28). The Midrash discusses interpretations related to lending, borrowing, legal judgments, and the importance of the Torah, while Rashi explains the term “אֲבִיּוֹנָה” in Ecclesiastes 12:5 as a reference to the desire for women. Shaphat, son of Hori, represented the tribe of Simeon in scouting Canaan (Numbers 13:5), and the Targum highlights the Israelites’ rebellion against God’s command by believing the negative report of the spies (Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 1:26).

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| וַתֵּרָגְנ֤וּ בְאׇהֳלֵיכֶם֙ וַתֹּ֣אמְר֔וּ בְּשִׂנְאַ֤ת יְהֹוָה֙ אֹתָ֔נוּ הוֹצִיאָ֖נוּ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם לָתֵ֥ת אֹתָ֛נוּ בְּיַ֥ד הָאֱמֹרִ֖י לְהַשְׁמִידֵֽנוּ׃ | 27 | You sulked in your tents and said, “It is out of hatred for us that יהוה brought us out of the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the Amorites to wipe us out. |

Rashi explains that the Israelites interpreted God’s actions as stemming from hatred because they themselves hated Him, while Sforno suggests they believed God was delivering them to the Emorites as an act of revenge. The Midrash texts discuss the consequences of the Israelites’ lack of faith and murmuring, leading to punishment and exile. The Musar text highlights how speaking negatively about others can stem from a tendency to complain and criticize, resulting in misinterpreting others’ actions as malicious. The Talmud records Shimon ben Tarfon’s interpretation of the Jewish people’s response to the spies’ slander as a combination of exploring and disparaging the land in the tent of the Omnipresent, while Targum translations depict the Israelites grumbling in fear and questioning God’s intentions.

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| אָנָ֣ה ׀ אֲנַ֣חְנוּ עֹלִ֗ים אַחֵ֩ינוּ֩ הֵמַ֨סּוּ אֶת־לְבָבֵ֜נוּ לֵאמֹ֗ר עַ֣ם גָּד֤וֹל וָרָם֙ מִמֶּ֔נּוּ עָרִ֛ים גְּדֹלֹ֥ת וּבְצוּרֹ֖ת בַּשָּׁמָ֑יִם וְגַם־בְּנֵ֥י עֲנָקִ֖ים רָאִ֥ינוּ שָֽׁם׃ | 28 | What kind of place are we going to? Our brothers have taken the heart out of us, saying, ‘We saw there a people stronger and taller than we, large cities with walls sky-high, and even Anakites.’” |

The exaggerated descriptions of the fortified cities in Canaan caused the Israelites to lose heart and desire to return to Egypt, leading to punishments and exile. Prophecies in Scripture are often given in exaggerated language that requires interpretation, such as in the description of the Third Beit HaMikdash’s side-chambers. The sin of the spies was not in describing the land negatively but in undermining Jewish morale, contrasting with Moses’ later similar description of the inhabitants. The Talmud discusses examples of exaggerated language in the Torah and Prophets, while the Tanakh lists the descendants of Adam and highlights Noah as the one who will provide relief from humanity’s toil. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe the Israelites feeling discouraged by reports of powerful people and giants in the land they were supposed to conquer.

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| וָאֹמַ֖ר אֲלֵכֶ֑ם לֹא־תַעַרְצ֥וּן וְלֹא־תִֽירְא֖וּן מֵהֶֽם׃ | 29 | I said to you, “Have no dread or fear of them. |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz interpret “לא תערצון” as a command not to be broken by fear or dread, to gather strength and not be intimidated. Sforno, Rabbeinu Bahya, Redeeming Relevance, and Chizkuni discuss Moses’ response to the people’s fear, his fear of Og, lack of leadership during the spies incident, and Caleb’s support of Moses. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey the message in Deuteronomy 1:29 to not be broken-hearted or fearful when facing challenges.

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| יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶם֙ הַהֹלֵ֣ךְ לִפְנֵיכֶ֔ם ה֖וּא יִלָּחֵ֣ם לָכֶ֑ם כְּ֠כֹ֠ל אֲשֶׁ֨ר עָשָׂ֧ה אִתְּכֶ֛ם בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם לְעֵינֵיכֶֽם׃ | 30 | None other than your God יהוה, who goes before you, will fight for you, just as [God] did for you in Egypt before your very eyes, |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Haamek Davar, and Steinsaltz explain that “ילחם לכם” means God will fight on behalf of the Israelites, emphasizing His intention to help them in battle. The Mishnah states that the priest anointed for war addresses soldiers in Hebrew before battle, reminding them not to fear their enemies and to trust in God’s protection. The Targum reiterates that Adonoy will lead and fight for the Israelites, as He did in Egypt.

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| וּבַמִּדְבָּר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר רָאִ֔יתָ אֲשֶׁ֤ר נְשָׂאֲךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר יִשָּׂא־אִ֖ישׁ אֶת־בְּנ֑וֹ בְּכׇל־הַדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר הֲלַכְתֶּ֔ם עַד־בֹּאֲכֶ֖ם עַד־הַמָּק֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 31 | and in the wilderness, where you saw how your God יהוה carried you, as a householder carries his son, all the way that you traveled until you came to this place. |

Rashi connects Deuteronomy 1:31 to God’s kindness in Egypt and the wilderness, Sforno emphasizes God’s protection from predators, Siftei Chakhamim mentions God’s acts of war and love for the Jewish people, Steinsaltz likens God’s care in the wilderness to a father’s love. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai discusses God’s revelation in a thorn bush symbolizing compassion, humility, and protection for Israel. The Second Temple text contrasts God’s unchangeable nature with human mortality, emphasizing gender-specific traits. Tanakh verses highlight God’s protection over Israel and Moses’ trustworthiness. Targums explain God carrying Israel like a father, protecting and guiding them in the wilderness.

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| וּבַדָּבָ֖ר הַזֶּ֑ה אֵֽינְכֶם֙ מַאֲמִינִ֔ם בַּיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 32 | Yet for all that, you have no faith in your God יהוה, |

The Israelites lacked faith in God’s promise and doubted His miracles despite witnessing them, leading to a lack of reliance on Him and disobedience to His commandments and covenant, as highlighted in Deuteronomy 1:32 and other verses. This lack of faith resulted in punishment for Moses and the Israelites, as emphasized in various commentaries and translations of the text.

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| הַהֹלֵ֨ךְ לִפְנֵיכֶ֜ם בַּדֶּ֗רֶךְ לָת֥וּר לָכֶ֛ם מָק֖וֹם לַחֲנֹֽתְכֶ֑ם בָּאֵ֣שׁ ׀ לַ֗יְלָה לַרְאֹֽתְכֶם֙ בַּדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תֵּֽלְכוּ־בָ֔הּ וּבֶעָנָ֖ן יוֹמָֽם׃ | 33 | who goes before you on your journeys—to scout the place where you are to encamp—in fire by night and in cloud by day, in order to guide you on the route you are to follow.” |

Rashi explains the similarity between “לראתכם” and “לְהַרְאֹתְכֶם,” Ibn Ezra clarifies “לחנותכם” as a non-transitive verb, Sforno links seeking a place to pitch tents with seeking rest in the desert, and Steinsaltz describes God leading the Israelites. The Torah’s order of events is intentional, the spies’ lack of faith led to slander, G’d’s punishment was individualized, the forty-year delay was due to disloyalty, and the ark symbolized divine protection. The presence of clouds above the Israelites in the desert provided protection, guidance, and assistance. The Israelites did not need spies as God guided them with a pillar of cloud and fire, leading them throughout their journey. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that God went ahead of the Israelites, providing guidance with a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud by day.

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| וַיִּשְׁמַ֥ע יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶת־ק֣וֹל דִּבְרֵיכֶ֑ם וַיִּקְצֹ֖ף וַיִּשָּׁבַ֥ע לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 34 | יהוה heard your loud complaint and, becoming angry, vowed: |

The commentary highlights the distinction between Moses’ unintentional sin and the people’s deliberate sin, leading to their punishment. The Midrash emphasizes the power of speech and the consequences of speaking ill of others, including God. Musar warns against gossip and evil speech, stating that Torah study does not protect those engaged in such sins. The Targum states that God heard the Israelites’ intentions and swore to punish them for their complaints.

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| אִם־יִרְאֶ֥ה אִישׁ֙ בָּאֲנָשִׁ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה הַדּ֥וֹר הָרָ֖ע הַזֶּ֑ה אֵ֚ת הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר נִשְׁבַּ֔עְתִּי לָתֵ֖ת לַאֲבֹתֵיכֶֽם׃ | 35 | Not one of those involved, this evil generation, shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers— |

The generation in Deuteronomy 1:35 is described as wicked, with some believing Hashem was unable to help them or not wanting His providence. Despite an oath to give the land to their fathers, none of the wicked generation will see the good land. Moses is rebuked by God for not entering the Promised Land due to his anger towards the Israelites, strikes a rock to provide water, and is concerned for Israel’s wealth. Death at age 60 is seen as a punishment, with the word “bklḥ” in Job having a numerical value of 60. The Targum states that none of the wicked generation will see the good land promised to their forefathers.

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| זֽוּלָתִ֞י כָּלֵ֤ב בֶּן־יְפֻנֶּה֙ ה֣וּא יִרְאֶ֔נָּה וְלֽוֹ־אֶתֵּ֧ן אֶת־הָאָ֛רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר דָּֽרַךְ־בָּ֖הּ וּלְבָנָ֑יו יַ֕עַן אֲשֶׁ֥ר מִלֵּ֖א אַחֲרֵ֥י יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 36 | none except Caleb son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his descendants will I give the land on which he set foot, because he remained loyal to יהוה.— |

Caleb receives Hebron as his portion of the land for his courage and loyalty, standing against the majority report of the spies. In the Mishnah, Beit Shammai allows a husband to prevent marital relations for up to two weeks before divorce, while Beit Hillel requires divorce after one week. The Tanakh mentions Caleb encouraging the people to conquer the land despite challenges, and in the Targum, Caleb is praised for his fear of the Lord and integrity.

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| גַּם־בִּי֙ הִתְאַנַּ֣ף יְהֹוָ֔ה בִּגְלַלְכֶ֖ם לֵאמֹ֑ר גַּם־אַתָּ֖ה לֹא־תָבֹ֥א שָֽׁם׃ | 37 | Because of you יהוה was incensed with me too, saying: You shall not enter it either. |

Moses was denied entry into the Promised Land as a consequence of the sins of the Israelites, with Rabbis suggesting that this punishment was ultimately for their benefit. The penalty for Moses and Aaron’s errors included denial of leadership, entry into the holy land, and premature death due to rebellion against God. Moses’ inability to enter the land was attributed to the unworthiness of the generation, as he desired to be closest to the Temple. The sin of Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah involved Moses hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as instructed by God, with various commentators offering different interpretations. Adonoy’s anger towards Moses was due to the actions of the Israelites, leading to his exclusion from the Promised Land.

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| יְהוֹשֻׁ֤עַ בִּן־נוּן֙ הָעֹמֵ֣ד לְפָנֶ֔יךָ ה֖וּא יָ֣בֹא שָׁ֑מָּה אֹת֣וֹ חַזֵּ֔ק כִּי־ה֖וּא יַנְחִלֶ֥נָּה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 38 | Joshua son of Nun, who attends you, he shall enter it. Imbue him with strength, for he shall allot it to Israel.— |

Ibn Ezra and Steinsaltz explain that Joshua will inherit leadership from Moses and should be strengthened for this role. The spies’ fear of the people of Canaan reflected a lack of spiritual elevation, contrasting with Caleb’s call to go up, which was praised by God. Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, but Joshua was chosen to lead instead. Moshe tells the Israelites that Yehoshua will lead them into the Promised Land and instructs them to strengthen him for this role, as stated in Deuteronomy 1:37-38 in the Tanakh and Targum.

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| וְטַפְּכֶם֩ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אֲמַרְתֶּ֜ם לָבַ֣ז יִהְיֶ֗ה וּ֠בְנֵיכֶ֠ם אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹא־יָדְע֤וּ הַיּוֹם֙ ט֣וֹב וָרָ֔ע הֵ֖מָּה יָבֹ֣אוּ שָׁ֑מָּה וְלָהֶ֣ם אֶתְּנֶ֔נָּה וְהֵ֖ם יִירָשֽׁוּהָ׃ | 39 | Moreover, your little ones who you said would be carried off, your children who do not yet know good from bad, they shall enter it; to them will I give it and they shall possess it. |

Ibn Ezra explains “this day” as a reference to God punishing the generation that left Egypt, not Moses reviewing the Torah. Rav Hirsch interprets “children” as reaching moral responsibility when they can distinguish good from evil. Steinsaltz highlights God’s promise that children who do not yet know good and evil will inherit Canaan. The text from Genesis 1:1 states that God began creating heaven and earth. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 1:39 emphasize that the young children of Israel who do not understand good and evil will inherit the promised land.

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| וְאַתֶּ֖ם פְּנ֣וּ לָכֶ֑ם וּסְע֥וּ הַמִּדְבָּ֖רָה דֶּ֥רֶךְ יַם־סֽוּף׃ | 40 | As for you, turn about and march into the wilderness by the way of the Sea of Reeds. |

The Israelites were supposed to pass through Edom but were instructed to turn back and travel through the wilderness towards the Red Sea due to their degeneracy, leading to their wandering until death. In Numbers 21, the Israelites were taken captive after a war with the king of Canaan, changing course to the Reed Sea where they were punished for their reaction to the scouts. After Aaron’s death, the Israelites turned back on the way to the Red Sea, mourning for him at Moserah even though he died at Mount Hor. The Israelites grew restless on the journey towards Edom, but God split the sea for them to pass through on dry ground, leading to their gaining faith in God and Moses. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan provide different translations for Deuteronomy 1:40, emphasizing the command to turn back into the wilderness.

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| וַֽתַּעֲנ֣וּ ׀ וַתֹּאמְר֣וּ אֵלַ֗י חָטָ֘אנוּ֮ לַיהֹוָה֒ אֲנַ֤חְנוּ נַעֲלֶה֙ וְנִלְחַ֔מְנוּ כְּכֹ֥ל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּ֖נוּ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ וַֽתַּחְגְּר֗וּ אִ֚ישׁ אֶת־כְּלֵ֣י מִלְחַמְתּ֔וֹ וַתָּהִ֖ינוּ לַעֲלֹ֥ת הָהָֽרָה׃ | 41 | You replied to me, saying, “We stand guilty before יהוה. We will go up now and fight, just as our God יהוה commanded us.” And [the men among] you each girded yourselves with war gear and recklessly started for the hill country. |

In Deuteronomy 1:41, the Israelites are emphasized to go up and fight themselves, ready and willing to ascend the mountain. Midrash texts discuss the Israelites’ conflicting beliefs, disobedience, lack of faith, fear, and punishment for not trusting in God. Ramban, Sforno, Malbim, and Chizkuni provide interpretations of the Israelites’ transgressions and disobedience. In Habakkuk 2:5, the defiant and treacherous will face punishment for their arrogance and insatiability. The Targum highlights the Israelites admitting their sin, deciding to fight as commanded, and arming themselves to ascend the mountain.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י אֱמֹ֤ר לָהֶם֙ לֹ֤א תַֽעֲלוּ֙ וְלֹא־תִלָּ֣חֲמ֔וּ כִּ֥י אֵינֶ֖נִּי בְּקִרְבְּכֶ֑ם וְלֹא֙ תִּנָּ֣גְפ֔וּ לִפְנֵ֖י אֹיְבֵיכֶֽם׃ | 42 | But יהוה said to me, “Warn them: Do not go up and do not fight, since I am not in your midst; else you will be routed by your enemies.” |

Rashi explains that “do not go up” in Deuteronomy 1:42 means there will be no victory, only defeat, while Siftei Chakhamim suggests not going up will prevent war and going up will lead to downfall. Steinsaltz emphasizes that not going up and making war is because God is not with them, and obedience will prevent defeat. The Midrash discusses the significance of the land of Canaan, the consequences of Israel’s disobedience, and the importance of faith and perseverance. In Song of Songs 3:1:2, Rashi links the inability to find the beloved to past sins. In Deuteronomy 1:42, both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that God instructed the Israelites not to go up and wage war because His presence was not with them, to prevent defeat.

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| וָאֲדַבֵּ֥ר אֲלֵיכֶ֖ם וְלֹ֣א שְׁמַעְתֶּ֑ם וַתַּמְרוּ֙ אֶת־פִּ֣י יְהֹוָ֔ה וַתָּזִ֖דוּ וַתַּעֲל֥וּ הָהָֽרָה׃ | 43 | I spoke to you, but you would not listen; you flouted יהוה’s command and willfully marched into the hill country. |

Moses rebuked the Israelites for disobeying God’s command not to ascend the mountain, emphasizing their lack of fear of violating God’s command over their fear of enemies. The text discusses the Israelites’ doubts and fears when approaching the land of Canaan, highlighting their belief that God hated them. The consequences of their disobedience and lack of faith led to their inability to enter the Promised Land. The Israelites erred in thinking that ascending the mountain would demonstrate their faith in God and save them, but God was not impressed as their punishment continued. Some people went up violently into the mountain, where the Amorites came out and wounded them, highlighting their rebellion and disobedience.

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| וַיֵּצֵ֨א הָאֱמֹרִ֜י הַיֹּשֵׁ֨ב בָּהָ֤ר הַהוּא֙ לִקְרַאתְכֶ֔ם וַיִּרְדְּפ֣וּ אֶתְכֶ֔ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֶׂ֖ינָה הַדְּבֹרִ֑ים וַֽיַּכְּת֥וּ אֶתְכֶ֛ם בְּשֵׂעִ֖יר עַד־חׇרְמָֽה׃ | 44 | Then the Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you like so many bees and chased you, and they crushed you at Hormah in Seir. |

The Amorites attacked the Israelites like bees, inflicting wounds but not killing them, leading to their own demise shortly after. The pursuit of the Amorites was compared to bees chasing after someone who touches their hives, resulting in their own deaths. Israel’s lack of faith led to punishment by not being allowed to enter the Promised Land. The Amorites are referred to as Canaanites in Numbers 14:25:1, with the Amalekites not mentioned because the Amorites were more important. The sweetness of the honeycomb ceased when the First Temple was destroyed, with different opinions on what “nofet tzufim” refers to. The Amalekites and Canaanites attacked the Israelites at Hormah in Numbers 14:45, while in Numbers 21:3, God delivered up the Canaanites and their cities were proscribed, leading to the naming of the place Hormah. The Emorites living in the hills pursued and crushed the Israelites in Se’ir, driving them away like hornets from Gebal to Hormah.

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| וַתָּשֻׁ֥בוּ וַתִּבְכּ֖וּ לִפְנֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֑ה וְלֹֽא־שָׁמַ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ בְּקֹ֣לְכֶ֔ם וְלֹ֥א הֶאֱזִ֖ין אֲלֵיכֶֽם׃ | 45 | Again you wept before יהוה; but יהוה would not heed your cry or give ear to you. |

The Israelites wept before the Lord in regret for their sins, but their tears did not reverse the punishment as God did not listen to their prayers. The verb “shama” in reference to God can mean perceiving or responding to prayers. Midrash discusses how God’s presence and response to prayers are based on the actions of individuals or the Israelites as a whole. Sforno explains that atonement for blasphemy against God can only be achieved through the death of the guilty person. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe how the Israelites’ prayers were not accepted despite their weeping before the Lord.

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| וַתֵּשְׁב֥וּ בְקָדֵ֖שׁ יָמִ֣ים רַבִּ֑ים כַּיָּמִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר יְשַׁבְתֶּֽם׃ | 46 | Thus, after you had remained at Kadesh all that long time, |

The Israelites spent 38 years in the wilderness, with 19 years in Kadesh and 19 wandering aimlessly before returning. Abudarham explains God waits for Israel’s praises before angels, as seen in Psalms 22:4. The Midrash emphasizes standing while reading Torah and changes in Torah study. Sefer HaYirah 13 stresses rising early for prayer and learning Torah portions for blessings. The Gemara discusses Moses sitting or standing while learning. God instructs Moses and Aaron to purify themselves and take a red heifer for a sin offering. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan paraphrase Deuteronomy 1:46 about Israelites in Kodeish for an extended period.

## Deuteronomy 2

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| וַנֵּ֜פֶן וַנִּסַּ֤ע הַמִּדְבָּ֙רָה֙ דֶּ֣רֶךְ יַם־ס֔וּף כַּאֲשֶׁ֛ר דִּבֶּ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלָ֑י וַנָּ֥סׇב אֶת־הַר־שֵׂעִ֖יר יָמִ֥ים רַבִּֽים׃ | 1 | we marched back into the wilderness by the way of the Sea of Reeds, as יהוה had spoken to me, and skirted the hill country of Seir a long time. |

The significance of the number eleven in contrast to ten is highlighted in Chasidut, as the Israelites’ journey from Chorev to Kadesh Barnea symbolizes a transition towards spiritually negative forces represented by Mount Seir. The Israelites’ detour around Edom, Moab, and Mount Seir during their journey is detailed in the commentary, explaining the long time taken to reach their destination due to sin and other factors. The Midrash discusses how events affect both the righteous and the wicked, drawing parallels between various figures in history and highlighting the interconnectedness of actions and consequences. Targum translations confirm the Israelites’ lengthy journey through the wilderness, circling Mount Seir and other locations for an extended period.

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| וַיֹּ֥אמֶר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלַ֥י לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 2 | Then יהוה said to me: |

The Lord spoke to Moses after forty years at Kadesh, with prophecy involving the Active Intellect influencing the rational and imaginative faculties, often conveyed through a dream or prophetic vision. The struggles of Joab with various nations highlight the importance of the Sanhedrin and Torah in achieving justice and vindication. The Divine presence returned to the Israelites after leaving Sinai, with Moses receiving new commands after the incident with the spies. Moses reasoned an a fortiori inference when deciding to wage war with the Midianites.

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| רַב־לָכֶ֕ם סֹ֖ב אֶת־הָהָ֣ר הַזֶּ֑ה פְּנ֥וּ לָכֶ֖ם צָפֹֽנָה׃ | 3 | You have been skirting this hill country long enough; now turn north. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 2:3:1 discusses the Israelites turning northward along the eastern side of Moab, with interpretations including hiding from Esau in exile, a warning against making common cause with those who will destroy the Temple, and a command to turn to the north after circling Mount Se’ir, emphasizing the importance of honoring parents. The Midrash highlights the importance of seeking counsel before engaging in warfare, using examples from Dama ben Netina, Esau, and David’s victories over Edom and Moab. The Targum instructions in Deuteronomy 2:3 from Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey a similar message of turning northward after circling the mountain.

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| וְאֶת־הָעָם֮ צַ֣ו לֵאמֹר֒ אַתֶּ֣ם עֹֽבְרִ֗ים בִּגְבוּל֙ אֲחֵיכֶ֣ם בְּנֵי־עֵשָׂ֔ו הַיֹּשְׁבִ֖ים בְּשֵׂעִ֑יר וְיִֽירְא֣וּ מִכֶּ֔ם וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם מְאֹֽד׃ | 4 | And charge the people as follows: You will be passing through the territory of your kin, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. Though they will be afraid of you, be very careful |

The descendants of Esau are considered “brothers” to the Israelites due to their shared descent from Abraham through Isaac, in contrast to Ishmael and Midian who are excluded from this brotherhood. The Israelites are instructed to pass through the territory of the Edomites peacefully, as they will fear the Israelites due to their size and strength, and the Israelites are warned to be cautious in their interactions with them. The Law aims to balance indulgence and self-denial, cultivating virtues like generosity and patience. The Midrash discusses passing through Edom, highlighting the role of Joab and Torah in achieving vindication, emphasizing the need to eradicate Edom gradually, and exploring the covenant and elevation of Israel through Torah. Ramban and Radak provide interpretations related to Israel’s interactions with Esau’s descendants, while Targum emphasizes caution as the Israelites pass through the territory of their brethren, the children of Esau.

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| אַל־תִּתְגָּר֣וּ בָ֔ם כִּ֠י לֹֽא־אֶתֵּ֤ן לָכֶם֙ מֵֽאַרְצָ֔ם עַ֖ד מִדְרַ֣ךְ כַּף־רָ֑גֶל כִּֽי־יְרֻשָּׁ֣ה לְעֵשָׂ֔ו נָתַ֖תִּי אֶת־הַ֥ר שֵׂעִֽיר׃ | 5 | not to provoke them. For I will not give you of their land so much as a foot can tread on; I have given the hill country of Seir as a possession to Esau. |

Rashi explains that the Israelites needed permission to enter the land of Edom, as it was given to Esau’s descendants as an inheritance. The Hivites and Refa’im are interchangeable terms in the list of nations in Canaan. The Torah warns against harassing the Edomites, who are considered brothers to the Israelites. Gentiles inherit from their fathers by Torah law, as seen with Esau and Lot’s descendants. Jacob and Esau part ways peacefully, with Esau heading to Seir.

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| אֹ֣כֶל תִּשְׁבְּר֧וּ מֵֽאִתָּ֛ם בַּכֶּ֖סֶף וַאֲכַלְתֶּ֑ם וְגַם־מַ֜יִם תִּכְר֧וּ מֵאִתָּ֛ם בַּכֶּ֖סֶף וּשְׁתִיתֶֽם׃ | 6 | What food you eat you shall obtain from them for money; even the water you drink you shall procure from them for money. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 2:6:1 emphasizes obtaining food and water from neighboring nations with consent and for a full price, not by force, with some suggesting the Israelites did not actually need to purchase provisions. Admonishment is crucial for Teshuvah, with five deeds locking the paths of repentance, and congregations should appoint a sage for this purpose. Arrogance is equated to idolatry in Kabbalah, with those exhibiting it not being resurrected. The fifteenth of Ab was a joyous festival allowing intermarriage between tribes, and Moses sought passage through Edom and Moav, following traditions. The Talmud discusses buying food and water from Gentiles, with certain foods permitted and exceptions for bread. Targum Jonathan states that food and water should be purchased for consumption.

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| כִּי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ בֵּֽרַכְךָ֗ בְּכֹל֙ מַעֲשֵׂ֣ה יָדֶ֔ךָ יָדַ֣ע לֶכְתְּךָ֔ אֶת־הַמִּדְבָּ֥ר הַגָּדֹ֖ל הַזֶּ֑ה זֶ֣ה ׀ אַרְבָּעִ֣ים שָׁנָ֗ה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ עִמָּ֔ךְ לֹ֥א חָסַ֖רְתָּ דָּבָֽר׃ | 7 | Indeed, your God יהוה has blessed you in all your undertakings. [God] has watched over your wanderings through this great wilderness; your God יהוה has been with you these past forty years: you have lacked nothing. |

The text discusses Divine providence upon individuals when they concentrate on God, as seen in the story of Rabbi Yossi. God blessed the Israelites with wealth and provisions in the wilderness, providing for their every need. The Torah promises rewards and punishments based on observance, with the ultimate reward being the world to come. The relationship between Israel and God is explored through comparisons, including the temples and the complaints of the Israelites in the desert. The Midrash texts discuss the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness, emphasizing God’s provision and the consequences of ingratitude. The Tosefta discusses Divine punishment and beneficence, comparing Abraham’s actions to God’s care for his descendants and describing visions of healing waters flowing from Jerusalem.

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| וַֽנַּעֲבֹ֞ר מֵאֵ֧ת אַחֵ֣ינוּ בְנֵי־עֵשָׂ֗ו הַיֹּֽשְׁבִים֙ בְּשֵׂעִ֔יר מִדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ הָֽעֲרָבָ֔ה מֵאֵילַ֖ת וּמֵעֶצְיֹ֣ן גָּ֑בֶר וַנֵּ֙פֶן֙ וַֽנַּעֲבֹ֔ר דֶּ֖רֶךְ מִדְבַּ֥ר מוֹאָֽב׃ | 8 | We then moved on, away from our kin, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the road of the Arabah, away from Elath and Ezion-geber; and we marched on in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. |

The Israelites maintained brotherly relations with the children of Esau while avoiding conflict, despite turning away from the paths of the Lord and Torah, resulting in a smaller Eretz Yisrael. The Torah prohibits Moabite converts due to their lack of hospitality, contrasting with the positive relationship with Edom. Jacob sent a tithe to Esau to appease him, leading to reciprocal honor, but God reminded Jacob of the prophecy that Esau would ultimately rule over him. Esau resided in the land of Seir, not Greece, and the Israelites changed direction towards the land in Deuteronomy 2:8. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 2:8 mention the Israelites passing by the descendants of Esau in various locations before continuing through the wilderness of Moab.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י אַל־תָּ֙צַר֙ אֶת־מוֹאָ֔ב וְאַל־תִּתְגָּ֥ר בָּ֖ם מִלְחָמָ֑ה כִּ֠י לֹֽא־אֶתֵּ֨ן לְךָ֤ מֵֽאַרְצוֹ֙ יְרֻשָּׁ֔ה כִּ֣י לִבְנֵי־ל֔וֹט נָתַ֥תִּי אֶת־עָ֖ר יְרֻשָּֽׁה׃ | 9 | And יהוה said to me: Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war. For I will not give you any of their land as a possession; I have assigned Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot.— |

Chasidut explains Balak’s fear of the Israelites as a concern that the Moabites would willingly allow themselves to be conquered, making it permissible for Israel to take over their cities. Halakhah states that the number of 613 commandments practiced for all generations does not include temporary commandments, blessings and curses at Gerizim and Eval, building the altar upon entering the Land of Canaan, and sacrificing animals as peace-offerings. Midrash discusses the consequences of Lot’s daughters’ actions, the importance of peace, and how Israel’s actions towards the Moavites and Amonites were justified. Musar highlights the transformation of curses into words of the covenant, the extermination of the Canaanite nations due to their spiritual decline, and the symbolic union between Israel and their land. Talmud explains that a gentile inherits from his father by Torah law, Moab was not allowed to be besieged by the Jews, and Sihon was allowed to conquer Moab’s land, making it permissible for Israel to conquer. Tanakh mentions Heshbon as the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Lot’s daughters bearing sons by their father, giving rise to the Moabites and Ammonites. Targum instructs not to besiege or intimidate Moav in war, as their land is not to be inherited.

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| הָאֵמִ֥ים לְפָנִ֖ים יָ֣שְׁבוּ בָ֑הּ עַ֣ם גָּד֥וֹל וְרַ֛ב וָרָ֖ם כָּעֲנָקִֽים׃ | 10 | It was formerly inhabited by the Emim, a people great and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. |

Moses is warned not to take the lands of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites by force, as these territories were promised to the descendants of Lot and Esau through miraculous events. The scouts sent to Canaan reported that the land was inhabited by powerful people, including the Anakites, causing fear among the Israelites. The Eimim, also known as the Emthanaia, were described as powerful giants who lived in the land.

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| רְפָאִ֛ים יֵחָשְׁב֥וּ אַף־הֵ֖ם כָּעֲנָקִ֑ים וְהַמֹּ֣אָבִ֔ים יִקְרְא֥וּ לָהֶ֖ם אֵמִֽים׃ | 11 | Like the Anakites, they are counted as Rephaim; but the Moabites call them Emim. |

The Rephaim, Emim, and Horim were all considered as part of a race of giants, with the Rephaim also known as Anakim and feared by the Moabites as Emim. The Anakim are linked to chaos and the destruction of the Temple in Kabbalistic teachings, while the defeat of Og by Moses and the Israelites is seen as a reward for acting justly in the Midrash. The Zamzumim are identified as the Zuzim, with variations in spelling explained by different commentators like Radak and Ramban. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also mention the giants known as Refaim or Anokim being called Eimim or Emethanee by the Moabites.

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| וּבְשֵׂעִ֞יר יָשְׁב֣וּ הַחֹרִים֮ לְפָנִים֒ וּבְנֵ֧י עֵשָׂ֣ו יִֽירָשׁ֗וּם וַיַּשְׁמִידוּם֙ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֔ם וַיֵּשְׁב֖וּ תַּחְתָּ֑ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֧ר עָשָׂ֣ה יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל לְאֶ֙רֶץ֙ יְרֻשָּׁת֔וֹ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַ֥ן יְהֹוָ֖ה לָהֶֽם׃ | 12 | Similarly, Seir was formerly inhabited by the Horites; but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them, wiping them out and settling in their place, just as Israel did in the land they were to possess, which יהוה had given to them.— |

The Horites were descendants of Seir, the Israelites were given the lands of Sichon and Og by God, Esau’s children intermingled with the Horites, the Hivites were known for their expertise in land settlement, and the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years until the disobedient generation perished [1.6].

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| עַתָּ֗ה קֻ֛מוּ וְעִבְר֥וּ לָכֶ֖ם אֶת־נַ֣חַל זָ֑רֶד וַֽנַּעֲבֹ֖ר אֶת־נַ֥חַל זָֽרֶד׃ | 13 | Up now! Cross the wadi Zered! So we crossed the wadi Zered. |

The Israelites cross the Zered Ravine as they approach the Promised Land, symbolizing their transition. In the desert, they grumble and are punished with fiery serpents, but through repentance and prayer, they are healed by a bronze serpent. Various commentators discuss the significance of the Israelites’ journeys and encampments, with interpretations ranging from G’d’s anger and forgiveness to the Israelites’ relationship with God. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the crossing of Wadi Zered in Deuteronomy 2:13.

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| וְהַיָּמִ֞ים אֲשֶׁר־הָלַ֣כְנוּ ׀ מִקָּדֵ֣שׁ בַּרְנֵ֗עַ עַ֤ד אֲשֶׁר־עָבַ֙רְנוּ֙ אֶת־נַ֣חַל זֶ֔רֶד שְׁלֹשִׁ֥ים וּשְׁמֹנֶ֖ה שָׁנָ֑ה עַד־תֹּ֨ם כׇּל־הַדּ֜וֹר אַנְשֵׁ֤י הַמִּלְחָמָה֙ מִקֶּ֣רֶב הַֽמַּחֲנֶ֔ה כַּאֲשֶׁ֛ר נִשְׁבַּ֥ע יְהֹוָ֖ה לָהֶֽם׃ | 14 | The time that we spent in travel from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the wadi Zered was thirty-eight years, until that whole generation of warriors had perished from the camp, as יהוה had sworn concerning them. |

The Israelites spent 38 years wandering from Kadesh Barnea to the Wadi Zered, waiting for the generation of men of military age at the time of the Exodus to pass away before entering the land of Canaan, as they had shied away from conquering the land out of fear and forgetfulness of God’s promises. The laws in Numbers were given during the second year after the Exodus, with divine communication with Moses ceasing for a period of thirty-eight years. Ramban explains that the Israelites dwelt in Egypt for a total of 430 years, with the last 30 years not mentioned to Abraham due to their sins. In Psalms 95:11 and Judges 2:15, it is mentioned that God swore in anger and declared that a certain group would never reach His resting place, and His hand was against the people in their campaigns, leading to great distress. The Targum states that the Israelites spent thirty-eight years traveling from Kadesh Barnea to Wadi Zered, with the entire generation of men of war dying out during this time.

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| וְגַ֤ם יַד־יְהֹוָה֙ הָ֣יְתָה בָּ֔ם לְהֻמָּ֖ם מִקֶּ֣רֶב הַֽמַּחֲנֶ֑ה עַ֖ד תֻּמָּֽם׃ | 15 | Indeed, the hand of יהוה struck them, to root them out from the camp until they were finished off. |

The hand of the Lord caused afflictions and accelerated the death of the generation in the wilderness, separating those whose death had been decreed. The term “le-hummam” signifies a sudden calamity. The Torah uses descriptive terms and metaphoric imagery to relate to human thought processes. Whenever “the hand of God” is mentioned, it signifies a plague of pestilence. The Lord’s hand came upon the generation who accepted the majority report of the spies. In Exodus 14:24, God looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud, causing panic among them. A plague from the Lord attacked the people within the camp, leading to their destruction.

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| וַיְהִ֨י כַאֲשֶׁר־תַּ֜מּוּ כׇּל־אַנְשֵׁ֧י הַמִּלְחָמָ֛ה לָמ֖וּת מִקֶּ֥רֶב הָעָֽם׃ | 16 | When all the warriors among the people had died off, |

Deuteronomy 2:16 discusses God speaking to Moses after the death of the men of war, indicating a period of censure for the Israelites. Midrash explores the lack of prophecy and repentance during this time, while Musar highlights the special intimacy between God and Moses. Rashi and Or HaChaim emphasize that God’s communication with Moses was for the benefit of the people. The Talmud notes that the fifteenth of Av marked the end of deaths in the wilderness, leading to a day of rejoicing. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the men of war dying out among the people.

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| וַיְדַבֵּ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלַ֥י לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 17 | יהוה spoke to me, saying: |

The Lord communicated with Moses through brief nocturnal images during the years of Israel’s disobedience, highlighting the importance of the Fifteenth of Av and various events associated with that day. God did not speak affectionately with Moses during this time, emphasizing the divine Presence resting on the prophet for the sake of Israel. The Talmud discusses the importance of great men in a generation, with examples such as God not speaking to Moses until all the warriors had died. In Numbers 21:12, the Israelites camped at the wadi Zered.

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| אַתָּ֨ה עֹבֵ֥ר הַיּ֛וֹם אֶת־גְּב֥וּל מוֹאָ֖ב אֶת־עָֽר׃ | 18 | You are now passing through the territory of Moab, through Ar. |

The land of Ammon was located north of Moab. The timing of Passover is discussed, with the evening of the fifteenth considered the first day, and the smiting of the firstborn at midnight sanctifying all Jewish firstborn on that day. Rashi explains that גבול in Numbers 21:13 refers to the boundary line, while Ramban argues that the Moabites did not assist the Israelites, leading to their ban from the congregation of Israel. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan provide different interpretations of the Israelites crossing the border of Moab.

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| וְקָרַבְתָּ֗ מ֚וּל בְּנֵ֣י עַמּ֔וֹן אַל־תְּצֻרֵ֖ם וְאַל־תִּתְגָּ֣ר בָּ֑ם כִּ֣י לֹֽא־אֶ֠תֵּ֠ן מֵאֶ֨רֶץ בְּנֵי־עַמּ֤וֹן לְךָ֙ יְרֻשָּׁ֔ה כִּ֥י לִבְנֵי־ל֖וֹט נְתַתִּ֥יהָ יְרֻשָּֽׁה׃ | 19 | You will then be close to the Ammonites; do not harass them or start a fight with them. For I will not give any part of the land of the Ammonites to you as a possession; I have assigned it as a possession to the descendants of Lot.— |

Ibn Ezra explains the meaning of specific Hebrew words in the text. Halakhah discusses the 613 commandments given to Moshe at Sinai. Jewish Thought explores the actions of the Midianites and God’s response. Midrash delves into the fear of the Moabites towards the Israelites. Quoting Commentary provides insights from Rashi, Ramban, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Ramban on various topics. Talmud discusses the naming of Ben-Ami by Lot’s daughter. Tanakh mentions the victories and territories of the Israelites. Targum emphasizes that the land of the Ammonites belongs to the descendants of Lot.

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| אֶֽרֶץ־רְפָאִ֥ים תֵּחָשֵׁ֖ב אַף־הִ֑וא רְפָאִ֤ים יָֽשְׁבוּ־בָהּ֙ לְפָנִ֔ים וְהָֽעַמֹּנִ֔ים יִקְרְא֥וּ לָהֶ֖ם זַמְזֻמִּֽים׃ | 20 | It, too, is counted as Rephaim country. It was formerly inhabited by Rephaim, whom the Ammonites call Zamzummim, |

The land of the Rephaim promised to Abraham was dispossessed by the Israelites, while the Ammonites called these people Zamzumim. Ramban emphasizes that G-d divided the lands among the seed of Abraham and warns against forcibly taking land that G-d caused certain groups to inherit. The Talmud explains that Mount Sinai was not named for miracles, but for the hatred that descended upon nations who rejected the Torah, and the desert where Israel stayed for forty years has five names with specific reasons. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention that the land was inhabited by giants, with the Ammonites referring to them as Zamzumim and Zimthanee respectively.

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| עַ֣ם גָּד֥וֹל וְרַ֛ב וָרָ֖ם כָּעֲנָקִ֑ים וַיַּשְׁמִידֵ֤ם יְהֹוָה֙ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֔ם וַיִּירָשֻׁ֖ם וַיֵּשְׁב֥וּ תַחְתָּֽם׃ | 21 | a people great and numerous and as tall as the Anakites. יהוה wiped them out, so that [the Ammonites] dispossessed them and settled in their place, |

Esau settled in Se’ir, fighting with the sons of Se’ir before being given Mount Se’ir by God. The Talmud discusses the status of buying in Ammon and Moab for Sabbatical and tithes, clarifying it refers to the former tribes Reuben and Gad in Transjordan. The Targum mentions the Anokim as a people destroyed by God for the Israelites to settle in their place.

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| כַּאֲשֶׁ֤ר עָשָׂה֙ לִבְנֵ֣י עֵשָׂ֔ו הַיֹּשְׁבִ֖ים בְּשֵׂעִ֑יר אֲשֶׁ֨ר הִשְׁמִ֤יד אֶת־הַחֹרִי֙ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֔ם וַיִּֽירָשֻׁם֙ וַיֵּשְׁב֣וּ תַחְתָּ֔ם עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 22 | as [God] did for the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, by wiping out the Horites before them, so that they dispossessed them and settled in their place, as is still the case. |

God drove out the Chori inhabitants from the land of Seir for the descendants of Esau, who settled there and remained until the present day, displacing the Horites in the process. Ramban explains that the descendants of Mitzraim did not have their habitation specified in Scripture because they all lived around Egypt, with their countries named after them. Sforno highlights that Esau overpowered the Horites in Seir with G-d’s will. Targum mentions how God destroyed the Chori before the descendants of Eisov and allowed them to settle in their place in Seir until the present day.

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| וְהָֽעַוִּ֛ים הַיֹּשְׁבִ֥ים בַּחֲצֵרִ֖ים עַד־עַזָּ֑ה כַּפְתֹּרִים֙ הַיֹּצְאִ֣ים מִכַּפְתֹּ֔ר הִשְׁמִידֻ֖ם וַיֵּשְׁב֥וּ תַחְתָּֽם׃ | 23 | So, too, with the Avvim who dwelt in villages in the vicinity of Gaza: the Caphtorim, who came from Crete, wiped them out and settled in their place.— |

The Avim, originally Canaanites, were destroyed by the Caphtorim, who settled in their place. Different commentators provide varying interpretations of the tribes involved and the legality of Israel’s conquest of the region. The Israelites invoked covenants made by their forefathers to assert their rights to the land in response to challenges from other nations. Ramban explains that the Torah establishes the Jewish people’s rightful claim to the land of Canaan through the creation story. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish argues that seemingly redundant verses in the Torah are essential teachings, using the Avvim being replaced by the Caphtorim as an example. Abraham agrees to a covenant in Genesis 21:24, and the Canaanite territory includes the Avvim in Joshua 13:3. The Avim living in Chatzeirim were destroyed by the Caftorim, according to Onkelos Deuteronomy 2:23 and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 2:23.

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| ק֣וּמוּ סְּע֗וּ וְעִבְרוּ֮ אֶת־נַ֣חַל אַרְנֹן֒ רְאֵ֣ה נָתַ֣תִּי בְ֠יָדְךָ֠ אֶת־סִיחֹ֨ן מֶֽלֶךְ־חֶשְׁבּ֧וֹן הָֽאֱמֹרִ֛י וְאֶת־אַרְצ֖וֹ הָחֵ֣ל רָ֑שׁ וְהִתְגָּ֥ר בּ֖וֹ מִלְחָמָֽה׃ | 24 | Up! Set out across the wadi Arnon! See, I give into your power Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin the occupation: engage him in battle. |

Moses sent messengers to Sihon before being commanded by God to begin the battle, fulfilling the rule of offering peace before expansion. Despite being instructed to provoke war, the Torah emphasizes actively seeking peace, as seen in the Midrash. In Devarim Rabbah, Moses interceded on behalf of Israel, nullifying God’s decree of punishment for the Golden Calf incident. The defeat of adversaries like Sichon begins in the Celestial Regions, reflecting the importance of Israel in the divine plan. Heshbon was the city of Sihon, the Amorite king, who had defeated a previous king of Moab and taken over his land up to the Arnon River. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 2:24 explains that the Israelites are instructed to cross Wadi Arnon and conquer Sichon, King of Cheshbon, and his land by intimidating him through warfare.

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| הַיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֗ה אָחֵל֙ תֵּ֤ת פַּחְדְּךָ֙ וְיִרְאָ֣תְךָ֔ עַל־פְּנֵי֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים תַּ֖חַת כׇּל־הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם אֲשֶׁ֤ר יִשְׁמְעוּן֙ שִׁמְעֲךָ֔ וְרָגְז֥וּ וְחָל֖וּ מִפָּנֶֽיךָ׃ | 25 | This day I begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under heaven, so that they shall tremble and quake because of you whenever they hear you mentioned. |

The defeat of Sichon and Og ensured that no remnants of these nations remained, allowing Israel to inherit their land without any claims from survivors (Akeidat Yitzchak 88:1:8). The Talmud discusses the similarities between the miracles performed for Moses and Joshua, focusing on the sun standing still for both of them, with verbal analogies and direct verses showing that the miracles for Joshua were also performed for Moses and Nakdimon ben Gurion. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 2:25 mention that God will instill fear and awe in the people under heaven, causing them to tremble upon hearing of the Israelites’ reputation and miraculous deeds, such as the sun and moon standing still during battle.

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| וָאֶשְׁלַ֤ח מַלְאָכִים֙ מִמִּדְבַּ֣ר קְדֵמ֔וֹת אֶל־סִיח֖וֹן מֶ֣לֶךְ חֶשְׁבּ֑וֹן דִּבְרֵ֥י שָׁל֖וֹם לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 26 | Then I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to King Sihon of Heshbon with an offer of peace, as follows, |

Moses sent messengers to Sihon with words of peace from the wilderness of Kedemoth, despite God’s command to wage war, following the value of attempting dialogue before conflict. The offer of peace was sincere due to the territory’s history and previous ownership by Moab and Ammon, and was in line with Moses’ actions aligned with God’s will. Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, and two letters were sent with different intentions, suggesting the prince of any generation is equal to the whole generation.

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| אֶעְבְּרָ֣ה בְאַרְצֶ֔ךָ בַּדֶּ֥רֶךְ בַּדֶּ֖רֶךְ אֵלֵ֑ךְ לֹ֥א אָס֖וּר יָמִ֥ין וּשְׂמֹֽאול׃ | 27 | “Let me pass through your country. I will keep strictly to the highway, turning off neither to the right nor to the left. |

Ibn Ezra and Rav Hirsch explain that “the highway” in Deuteronomy 2:27 refers to a well-known public road. The Midrash emphasizes the importance of peace, even in times of war, as shown by Moses offering terms of peace before attacking a city. Ramban clarifies that the Moabites were banned from the congregation of Israel for not providing bread and water, while Haamek Davar notes that Moses informed Sichon they had to pass through his land to avoid war. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan both highlight Moses’ intention to pass through the land without deviating from the main path.

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| אֹ֣כֶל בַּכֶּ֤סֶף תַּשְׁבִּרֵ֙נִי֙ וְאָכַ֔לְתִּי וּמַ֛יִם בַּכֶּ֥סֶף תִּתֶּן־לִ֖י וְשָׁתִ֑יתִי רַ֖ק אֶעְבְּרָ֥ה בְרַגְלָֽי׃ | 28 | What food I eat you will supply for money, and what water I drink you will furnish for money; just let me pass through — |

Israel did not commit to buying food from Sihon as they were sustained by manna, but requested to purchase supplies while passing through his territory, emphasizing the importance of proper conduct and payment for goods. The Midrash highlights the unity of Siḥon’s people and divine intervention in their defeat by Israel. Ramban, Sforno, Tur HaArokh, and Talmudic sources discuss the interactions between Israel and other nations regarding food and payment, with specific examples of food preparation and customs. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan elaborate on the request to buy food and water with money while traveling through Sihon’s land.

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| כַּאֲשֶׁ֨ר עָֽשׂוּ־לִ֜י בְּנֵ֣י עֵשָׂ֗ו הַיֹּֽשְׁבִים֙ בְּשֵׂעִ֔יר וְהַמּ֣וֹאָבִ֔ים הַיֹּשְׁבִ֖ים בְּעָ֑ר עַ֤ד אֲשֶֽׁר־אֶֽעֱבֹר֙ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽנוּ׃ | 29 | as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir did for me, and the Moabites who dwell in Ar—that I may cross the Jordan into the land that our God יהוה is giving us.” |

The commentary explores the meaning of “as the children of Esau did to me” as selling food and water, the Midrash emphasizes etiquette and divine intervention in interactions with Edom and Moab, the Talmud discusses a woman’s consent in preventing a marriage after rape, and the Targum translations mention the actions of Edom and Moab towards the Israelites.

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| וְלֹ֣א אָבָ֗ה סִיחֹן֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ חֶשְׁבּ֔וֹן הַעֲבִרֵ֖נוּ בּ֑וֹ כִּֽי־הִקְשָׁה֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ אֶת־רוּח֗וֹ וְאִמֵּץ֙ אֶת־לְבָב֔וֹ לְמַ֛עַן תִּתּ֥וֹ בְיָדְךָ֖ כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 30 | But King Sihon of Heshbon refused to let us pass through, because יהוה had stiffened his will and hardened his heart in order to deliver him into your power—as is now the case. |

God hardened Sichon’s spirit to prevent the Israelites from passing through his territory, leading to his refusal to allow them through his land. Those who commit great sins may have their chance to repent withheld by God, as seen with Pharaoh, Sichon, the Canaanites, and the Israelites during Elijah’s time. The hardening of Sichon’s heart was a result of his previous misdeeds, not Divine interference with his free will, showcasing God’s power and fulfilling His promises to the Israelites. Sichon’s defeat was a direct result of God hardening his spirit and mind.

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| וַיֹּ֤אמֶר יְהֹוָה֙ אֵלַ֔י רְאֵ֗ה הַֽחִלֹּ֙תִי֙ תֵּ֣ת לְפָנֶ֔יךָ אֶת־סִיחֹ֖ן וְאֶת־אַרְצ֑וֹ הָחֵ֣ל רָ֔שׁ לָרֶ֖שֶׁת אֶת־אַרְצֽוֹ׃ | 31 | And יהוה said to me: See, I begin by placing Sihon and his land at your disposal. Begin the occupation; take possession of his land. |

Rashi explains that God cast down the tutelary angel of the Amorites beneath Moses’ feet, Ibn Ezra discusses the vocalization of the word “I have begun,” Or HaChaim explains that Moses misunderstood the word “I have begun” to refer to the previous paragraph, and Rav Hirsch emphasizes that Sihon’s resistance is the beginning of his downfall. Steinsaltz summarizes this by stating that God has begun delivering Sihon and his land to the Israelites, instructing them to begin taking possession without delay. Sichon misinterpreted Moses’ offer as weakness, leading to arrogance and deserved punishment, while Og’s self-assurance did not need provocation. The conquest of Siḥon and his land by the Israelites was orchestrated by the Holy One to deliver him into their hands easily, emphasizing God’s power in ensuring victory. The defeat of the Canaanite nations by Moses symbolized the union between the people of Israel and the land of Israel as husband and wife. Moses’ initial hesitation to wage war against Og was overcome by God’s assurance of victory, necessary for the overall conquest of Canaan. Rebbi Isaac bar Naḥman clarifies the status of Ammon and Moab in relation to Sabbatical and tithes, concluding that Transjordan is not part of the Holy Land. Adonoy instructs Onkelos to begin inheriting Sichon’s defeated land.

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| וַיֵּצֵא֩ סִיחֹ֨ן לִקְרָאתֵ֜נוּ ה֧וּא וְכׇל־עַמּ֛וֹ לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה יָֽהְצָה׃ | 32 | Sihon with all his troops took the field against us at Jahaz, |

Sihon and Og were powerful rulers who did not need each other’s help in battle. When Israel left Egypt, other nations feared them, including Sihon and Og, who questioned Israel’s strength. Og, with legs eighteen cubits long, instilled fear in Moses, but God assured victory. The territory of Bney Ammon was inviolate against assault by the Israelites, allowing them to conquer other lands. Sichon and Cheshbon were brave and powerful, with Sichon’s son portrayed as even tougher. Siftei Chakhamim discusses Rashi’s explanation of verses in the context of the Amalekite attack. Sichon and his people fought against the Israelites at Yahatz/Jehaz.

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| וַֽיִּתְּנֵ֛הוּ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ לְפָנֵ֑ינוּ וַנַּ֥ךְ אֹת֛וֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָ֖ו וְאֶת־כׇּל־עַמּֽוֹ׃ | 33 | and our God יהוה delivered him to us and we defeated him and his sons and all his troops. |

Sichon had a mighty son, the word “va-nakh” is missing a root nun, Sichon had one son, his sons were prominent individuals or warriors killed with him. The Midrash discusses not fearing enemies, punishment for ancestors’ sins, maintaining fear of God, and destruction of nations in the world to come. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that God defeated the enemy before the Israelites, leading to the destruction of him, his sons, and his entire people.

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| וַנִּלְכֹּ֤ד אֶת־כׇּל־עָרָיו֙ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֔וא וַֽנַּחֲרֵם֙ אֶת־כׇּל־עִ֣יר מְתִ֔ם וְהַנָּשִׁ֖ים וְהַטָּ֑ף לֹ֥א הִשְׁאַ֖רְנוּ שָׂרִֽיד׃ | 34 | At that time we captured all his towns, and we doomed every town—men, women, and children —leaving no survivor. |

Moses offered peace to the Amorites before destroying them, as commanded, while the Israelites plundered Sihon but held Og’s plunder in contempt, only taking silver and gold. The annihilation of the population was justified as the Amorites belonged to the seven Canaanite tribes under the decree to not allow any survivors. Israel destroyed the men, women, and children of the Amorites, leaving no survivors, capturing Midianite women and noncombatants but instructed to kill all male noncombatants and women who had known a man. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that the Israelites conquered and destroyed all the cities, leaving no survivors, including men, women, and children.

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| רַ֥ק הַבְּהֵמָ֖ה בָּזַ֣זְנוּ לָ֑נוּ וּשְׁלַ֥ל הֶעָרִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לָכָֽדְנוּ׃ | 35 | We retained as booty only the cattle and the spoil of the cities that we captured. |

The Israelites took only animals as loot during the war with Sihon, while in the war with Og, they took gold and silver but did not want cattle or garments, burning the garments and chasing away the sheep. Ramban explains that vessels used in the war against Midian required purification to remove traces of forbidden foods absorbed while in the possession of non-Jews, involving washing and scouring in water. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that the Israelites only took animals as plunder and spoils from conquered cities.

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| מֵֽעֲרֹעֵ֡ר אֲשֶׁר֩ עַל־שְׂפַת־נַ֨חַל אַרְנֹ֜ן וְהָעִ֨יר אֲשֶׁ֤ר בַּנַּ֙חַל֙ וְעַד־הַגִּלְעָ֔ד לֹ֤א הָֽיְתָה֙ קִרְיָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר שָׂגְבָ֖ה מִמֶּ֑נּוּ אֶת־הַכֹּ֕ל נָתַ֛ן יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ לְפָנֵֽינוּ׃ | 36 | From Aroer on the edge of the Arnon valley, including the town in the valley itself, to Gilead, not a city was too mighty for us; our God יהוה delivered everything to us. |

Ibn Ezra connects the word “sagevah” in Deuteronomy 2:36 to “venisgav” in Isaiah 2:11, while JPS 1985 Footnotes and Rav Hirsch discuss the uncertain meaning of “qiryah” and “shagvah.” Steinsaltz explains that the Israelites conquered all cities with God’s help. The Amorites’ iniquity is linked to their power and sin of questioning God’s promise, as noted by the Midrash and Radak. Targum Jonathan and Onkelos emphasize the Israelites’ strength in defeating all cities from Aroer to Gilead.

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| רַ֛ק אֶל־אֶ֥רֶץ בְּנֵי־עַמּ֖וֹן לֹ֣א קָרָ֑בְתָּ כׇּל־יַ֞ד נַ֤חַל יַבֹּק֙ וְעָרֵ֣י הָהָ֔ר וְכֹ֥ל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּ֖ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵֽינוּ׃ | 37 | But you did not encroach upon the land of the Ammonites, all along the wadi Jabbok and the towns of the hill country, just as our God יהוה had commanded. |

Rashi explains that “כל יד נחל יבק” refers to the district beside the brook of Jabbok, while Ibn Ezra notes that the land of the children of Ammon is in their hands today. Siftei Chakhamim interprets the phrase as the edge of the river, while Rav Hirsch connects it to Leviticus 4:2. Steinsaltz clarifies that the Israelites did not approach the land of the children of Ammon, and Chizkuni adds that this exclusion only applied to land currently in possession of the Ammonites. The Targum states that the Israelites followed God’s command by not attacking the land of the Ammonites, including the area along Wadi Yabok and the hill cities.

## Deuteronomy 3

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| וַנֵּ֣פֶן וַנַּ֔עַל דֶּ֖רֶךְ הַבָּשָׁ֑ן וַיֵּצֵ֣א עוֹג֩ מֶֽלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁ֨ן לִקְרָאתֵ֜נוּ ה֧וּא וְכׇל־עַמּ֛וֹ לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה אֶדְרֶֽעִי׃ | 1 | We made our way up the road toward Bashan, and King Og of Bashan with all his troops took the field against us at Edrei. |

The Israelites journeyed north towards Canaan through the wilderness, facing battles against Sihon and Og in the Bashan region. The defeat of these kings is highlighted in the Midrash, emphasizing the importance of both simple and weighty commandments in the Torah. Ramban explains the significance of Asshur and Assyria, while the Tanakh recounts the Israelites’ victories over Sihon and Og. Targum describes Og’s battle against the Israelites in Edrei.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֵלַי֙ אַל־תִּירָ֣א אֹת֔וֹ כִּ֣י בְיָדְךָ֞ נָתַ֧תִּי אֹת֛וֹ וְאֶת־כׇּל־עַמּ֖וֹ וְאֶת־אַרְצ֑וֹ וְעָשִׂ֣יתָ לּ֔וֹ כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשִׂ֗יתָ לְסִיחֹן֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ הָֽאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר יוֹשֵׁ֖ב בְּחֶשְׁבּֽוֹן׃ | 2 | But יהוה said to me: Do not fear him, for I am delivering him and all his troops and his country into your power, and you will do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon. |

The text discusses how the Lord assured Moses not to fear Og, as He had already delivered him and his people into the hands of Israel, dating back to the time of Abraham. It emphasizes the importance of not prioritizing one commandment over another, highlights the rewards for honoring parents, and recounts the war with Siḥon and Og, detailing the strategies used by the Israelites and the divine foresight in delivering their enemies into their hands. The tribes on the East Bank argued that the lands they conquered were part of the “Holy Land,” citing Moses’ instructions to conquer Sichon and Og as proof, while the Targum emphasizes the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and Sarah through the victory over their enemies.

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| וַיִּתֵּן֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֵ֜ינוּ בְּיָדֵ֗נוּ גַּ֛ם אֶת־ע֥וֹג מֶֽלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁ֖ן וְאֶת־כׇּל־עַמּ֑וֹ וַנַּכֵּ֕הוּ עַד־בִּלְתִּ֥י הִשְׁאִֽיר־ל֖וֹ שָׂרִֽיד׃ | 3 | So our God יהוה also delivered into our power King Og of Bashan, with all his troops, and we dealt them such a blow that no survivor was left. |

Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, and Steinsaltz explain that the Israelites defeated Og and left no survivors. The Midrash highlights Joshua’s implementation of calling for peace before waging war, the defeat of the Amorites with the help of hornets, and the Israelites being chosen for their humility. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention how God delivered Og, King of the Boshon, into the hands of the Israelites, and they defeated him completely without leaving any survivors.

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| וַנִּלְכֹּ֤ד אֶת־כׇּל־עָרָיו֙ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֔וא לֹ֤א הָֽיְתָה֙ קִרְיָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־לָקַ֖חְנוּ מֵֽאִתָּ֑ם שִׁשִּׁ֥ים עִיר֙ כׇּל־חֶ֣בֶל אַרְגֹּ֔ב מַמְלֶ֥כֶת ע֖וֹג בַּבָּשָֽׁן׃ | 4 | At that time we captured all his towns; there was not a town that we did not take from them: sixty towns, the whole district of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan— |

Various commentators interpret the term “Argob” in Deuteronomy 3:4:1 differently, with Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Siftei Chakhamim offering different explanations. Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir explains that the offerings made by the twelve tribes correspond to various aspects of the universe and Jewish tradition, symbolizing atonement for sins. Rashi, in II Kings 15:25:3, suggests a golden lion may have been in a palace, while the Talmud discusses the walled cities mentioned in the mishna and their consecration by exiles from Babylonia. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe the conquest of sixty cities, including Argov, in Deuteronomy 3:4.

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| כׇּל־אֵ֜לֶּה עָרִ֧ים בְּצֻרֹ֛ת חוֹמָ֥ה גְבֹהָ֖ה דְּלָתַ֣יִם וּבְרִ֑יחַ לְבַ֛ד מֵעָרֵ֥י הַפְּרָזִ֖י הַרְבֵּ֥ה מְאֹֽד׃ | 5 | all those towns were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars—apart from a great number of unwalled towns. |

The term “unwalled cities” refers to cities without protective walls, while strong, fortified cities were surrounded by high walls, gates, and bars. David sang Psalm 3 reflecting on his sins and kingdom’s turmoil, comparing himself to Jacob and Moses before seeing his kingdom established. The Mishnah states that walled cities read the Megillah on the fifteenth of Adar, while villages read on the fourteenth or on the day of assembly. Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Bartenura provide interpretations of the reading of the Megillah in walled and unwalled cities. The Talmud discusses the counting of specific walled cities in the Mishnah, clarifying that they were discovered by exiles from Babylonia and sanctified. The cities mentioned in Deuteronomy 3:5 were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, with many unwalled cities also present.

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| וַנַּחֲרֵ֣ם אוֹתָ֔ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשִׂ֔ינוּ לְסִיחֹ֖ן מֶ֣לֶךְ חֶשְׁבּ֑וֹן הַחֲרֵם֙ כׇּל־עִ֣יר מְתִ֔ם הַנָּשִׁ֖ים וְהַטָּֽף׃ | 6 | We doomed them as we had done in the case of King Sihon of Heshbon; we doomed every town—men, women, and children— |

Rashi interprets “החרם” in Deuteronomy 3:6 as ongoing destruction, similar to the fate of King Sihon of Heshbon. The Akeidat Yitzchak teaches not to condemn without investigation, Moses burnt the platform for the golden calf, and Aaron’s limited involvement was due to circumstances beyond his control. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair turned two measures of barley into a substantial crop over seven years, illustrating God’s reward for good deeds. The Midrash discusses the fear of the righteous, exemplified by Jacob and Moses, and the defeat of Og king of Bashan. Rashi and Rabbeinu Bahya discuss Moses’s role as an angel in driving back Amalek and destroying cities. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the complete annihilation of the Amorites in Deuteronomy 3:6, similar to King Sihon.

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| וְכׇל־הַבְּהֵמָ֛ה וּשְׁלַ֥ל הֶעָרִ֖ים בַּזּ֥וֹנוּ לָֽנוּ׃ | 7 | and retained as booty all the cattle and the spoil of the towns. |

The Torah uses different verbs for “looting” in Deuteronomy 3:7:1 and 2:35 to convey disdain for the loot in the former, with the expression “and all the animals” only found in Deuteronomy 3:7:1. The Midrash discusses the fear of the righteous and the battle with Og, King of Bashan. Rashi explains that the Israelites eagerly took spoils from Sihon but were contemptuous of the spoils from Og, only taking silver and gold. The Targum interprets Deuteronomy 3:7 similarly, stating that the Israelites took the animals and possessions of conquered cities as plunder for themselves.

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| וַנִּקַּ֞ח בָּעֵ֤ת הַהִוא֙ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ מִיַּ֗ד שְׁנֵי֙ מַלְכֵ֣י הָאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּעֵ֣בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן מִנַּ֥חַל אַרְנֹ֖ן עַד־הַ֥ר חֶרְמֽוֹן׃ | 8 | Thus we seized, at that time, from the two Amorite kings, the country beyond the Jordan, from the wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon— |

Rashi explains that “מיד” means “from the control of” as the Israelites conquered the land from the Emorite kings Sihon and Og, extending from the Arnon Ravine to Mount Hermon. Siftei Chakhamim clarifies that Og, king of the Chivites, was a remnant of the Refa’im. Ramban adds that Heshbon and Ashtaroth were conquered by Sihon and Og, who built them as their royal capitals, with Ashtaroth being well fortified. Targum mentions the Israelites taking land from two Amorite kings located across the Jordan River, from Wadi Arnon to Mount Chermon.

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| צִידֹנִ֛ים יִקְרְא֥וּ לְחֶרְמ֖וֹן שִׂרְיֹ֑ן וְהָ֣אֱמֹרִ֔י יִקְרְאוּ־ל֖וֹ שְׂנִֽיר׃ | 9 | Sidonians called Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir— |

Mount Hermon, also known as Chermon, had multiple names such as Sirion and Senir, reflecting the different nations that prided themselves in the mountain. The various names mentioned in Scripture highlight the importance and esteem in which the Land of Israel was held, with nations vying for recognition through the naming of the mountain. The Targum further elaborates on the different names given to Mount Hermon by the Sidonians and Amorites, emphasizing the significance of the mountain in different cultures.

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| כֹּ֣ל ׀ עָרֵ֣י הַמִּישֹׁ֗ר וְכׇל־הַגִּלְעָד֙ וְכׇל־הַבָּשָׁ֔ן עַד־סַלְכָ֖ה וְאֶדְרֶ֑עִי עָרֵ֛י מַמְלֶ֥כֶת ע֖וֹג בַּבָּשָֽׁן׃ | 10 | all the towns of the Tableland and the whole of Gilead and Bashan as far as Salcah and Edrei, the towns of Og’s kingdom in Bashan. |

Og ruled in Bashan as the last remaining Refaim after a war, mentioned cities in his kingdom include Salecah, Salchah, Salka, and Edre’i. The tablets of testimony symbolize dualities like heaven and earth, groom and bride, and this world and the world to come. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the cities of Gilead, Mathnan, Selukia, Edrehi, and Boshon as part of Og’s kingdom.

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| כִּ֣י רַק־ע֞וֹג מֶ֣לֶךְ הַבָּשָׁ֗ן נִשְׁאַר֮ מִיֶּ֣תֶר הָרְפָאִים֒ הִנֵּ֤ה עַרְשׂוֹ֙ עֶ֣רֶשׂ בַּרְזֶ֔ל הֲלֹ֣ה הִ֔וא בְּרַבַּ֖ת בְּנֵ֣י עַמּ֑וֹן תֵּ֧שַׁע אַמּ֣וֹת אׇרְכָּ֗הּ וְאַרְבַּ֥ע אַמּ֛וֹת רׇחְבָּ֖הּ בְּאַמַּת־אִֽישׁ׃ | 11 | Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaim. His bedstead, an iron bedstead, is now in Rabbah of the Ammonites; it is nine cubits long and four cubits wide, by the standard cubit! |

Chasidut discusses how Moshe Rabeynu feared Og, King of Bashan, due to his appearance of having the sign of the covenant, but God revealed that his insides were not clean. The Commentary and Midrash elaborate on Og’s extraordinary size and power, his survival from the flood, and the fear he instilled in others. The Talmud describes Abraham as a giant and Og as consuming vast amounts of food and drink, while the Tanakh and Targum mention Og as the only survivor of the giants with his iron bed placed in Rabbah of the Ammonites.

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| וְאֶת־הָאָ֧רֶץ הַזֹּ֛את יָרַ֖שְׁנוּ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֑וא מֵעֲרֹעֵ֞ר אֲשֶׁר־עַל־נַ֣חַל אַרְנֹ֗ן וַחֲצִ֤י הַֽר־הַגִּלְעָד֙ וְעָרָ֔יו נָתַ֕תִּי לָרֽאוּבֵנִ֖י וְלַגָּדִֽי׃ | 12 | And this is the land which we apportioned at that time: The part from Aroer along the wadi Arnon, with part of the hill country of Gilead and its towns, I assigned to the Reubenites and the Gadites. |

The land mentioned in Deuteronomy 3:8 extended from the brook of Arnon to Mount Hermon and was possessed by the Israelites, with the Reubenites and Gadites receiving land from Aroer. Moses prayed to enter the land of Israel, but God denied his request, stating that all creatures are destined to die because of Adam’s sin. The tribe of Menashe did not own land in Ramot in Gilad, sharing territory with other tribes on the east bank of the Jordan. The Reubenites and Gadites settled in Jazer and Gilead, agreeing to serve as shock-troops in battle before receiving Gilead as their inheritance. The land from Aro’er to Wadi Arnon and half of the Gilod hills with its cities was given to the Reuvenites and Gaddites at that time.

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| וְיֶ֨תֶר הַגִּלְעָ֤ד וְכׇל־הַבָּשָׁן֙ מַמְלֶ֣כֶת ע֔וֹג נָתַ֕תִּי לַחֲצִ֖י שֵׁ֣בֶט הַֽמְנַשֶּׁ֑ה כֹּ֣ל חֶ֤בֶל הָֽאַרְגֹּב֙ לְכׇל־הַבָּשָׁ֔ן הַה֥וּא יִקָּרֵ֖א אֶ֥רֶץ רְפָאִֽים׃ | 13 | The rest of Gilead, and all of Bashan under Og’s rule—the whole Argob district, all that part of Bashan which is called Rephaim country—I assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh. |

The land of Argob in Bashan, ruled by Og and associated with the Rephaim, was not part of the original lands promised to Abraham on the West Bank of the Jordan. The tribes of Gad and Manasseh received portions of the Gilead, but the lands of Sichon and Og were not considered suitable for the Temple or the Shekhinah to settle. The territory of Argob was given to half the tribe of Menashe.

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| יָאִ֣יר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁ֗ה לָקַח֙ אֶת־כׇּל־חֶ֣בֶל אַרְגֹּ֔ב עַד־גְּב֥וּל הַגְּשׁוּרִ֖י וְהַמַּֽעֲכָתִ֑י וַיִּקְרָא֩ אֹתָ֨ם עַל־שְׁמ֤וֹ אֶת־הַבָּשָׁן֙ חַוֺּ֣ת יָאִ֔יר עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 14 | Jair son of Manasseh received the whole Argob district (that is, Bashan) as far as the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and named it after himself: Havvoth-jair —as is still the case. |

Jair, the son of Manasseh from the tribe of Judah, conquered the region of Argov and named it Havvoth Ya’ir, which remained to this day. He had thirty sons who owned thirty towns in Gilead, called Havvoth-jair, and warlords descended from Mochir captured sixty cities in the area. The Midrash praises God as great, mighty, and rich, with no limits to His wealth.

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| וּלְמָכִ֖יר נָתַ֥תִּי אֶת־הַגִּלְעָֽד׃ | 15 | To Machir I assigned Gilead. |

Ibn Ezra explains that “To Machir” means to the children of Machir, who received Gilad as an inheritance from the tribe of Manasseh. The Midrash discusses Abraham’s fear of neglecting God’s commandments after killing kings but reassures him of great rewards for uprooting evil. Jair, originally from Judah, is linked to his mother’s family, Menasheh, and received an inheritance with them in Gilead. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan both state that Gilead was given to Machir.

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| וְלָראוּבֵנִ֨י וְלַגָּדִ֜י נָתַ֤תִּי מִן־הַגִּלְעָד֙ וְעַד־נַ֣חַל אַרְנֹ֔ן תּ֥וֹךְ הַנַּ֖חַל וּגְבֻ֑ל וְעַד֙ יַבֹּ֣ק הַנַּ֔חַל גְּב֖וּל בְּנֵ֥י עַמּֽוֹן׃ | 16 | And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I assigned the part from Gilead down to the wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi being the boundary, and up to the wadi Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites. |

The land given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad extends from the Gilad to the Yabok Ravine, bordering Moav and Ammon respectively. Ramban discusses the angels meeting Jacob in Mahanaim to reassure him in enemy territory, and the order of mentioning Gad and Reuben in Numbers 32:2:1. Moses’s request to enter the land is denied in Deuteronomy 3:23:1, leading to the appointment of Joshua. Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 3:16 describes the division of land given to the Reubenites and Gadites from Gilead to the river Arnon and the border of the descendants of Ammon.

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| וְהָֽעֲרָבָ֖ה וְהַיַּרְדֵּ֣ן וּגְבֻ֑ל מִכִּנֶּ֗רֶת וְעַ֨ד יָ֤ם הָֽעֲרָבָה֙ יָ֣ם הַמֶּ֔לַח תַּ֛חַת אַשְׁדֹּ֥ת הַפִּסְגָּ֖ה מִזְרָֽחָה׃ | 17 | [We also seized] the Arabah, from the foot of the slopes of Pisgah on the east, to the edge of the Jordan, and from Chinnereth down to the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea. |

The tribe of Gad’s territory extended from the eastern side of the Jordan River to the Sea of Galilee, with the Jordan River serving as their western border. Naphtali’s land is compared to a doe let loose, with Barak leading fighters to victory over the Canaanites. Ramban explains that the “book of the wars of the Eternal” refers to wise men writing history using proverbs, while the Talmud discusses whether the Jordan River is part of the Land of Israel or a boundary itself. The Targums describe the boundaries of the land, including specific locations like Kinneres and Tebaria.

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| וָאֲצַ֣ו אֶתְכֶ֔ם בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִ֖וא לֵאמֹ֑ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֗ם נָתַ֨ן לָכֶ֜ם אֶת־הָאָ֤רֶץ הַזֹּאת֙ לְרִשְׁתָּ֔הּ חֲלוּצִ֣ים תַּֽעַבְר֗וּ לִפְנֵ֛י אֲחֵיכֶ֥ם בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל כׇּל־בְּנֵי־חָֽיִל׃ | 18 | At that time I charged you [men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh], saying, “Your God יהוה has given you this country to possess. You must go as shock-troops, warriors all, at the head of your Israelite kin. |

Chasidut emphasizes Moshe Rabbeinu’s ability to receive unearned gifts from God through the Ten Utterances, allowing him to conquer the Land of Israel. The Midrash explains that giving charity will hasten the arrival of the messianic era and the World to Come, bringing blessings and guidance from the Lord. The Mishnah discusses the permissibility of bathing in a bathhouse dedicated to Aphrodite, concluding that it is not forbidden if the idol is not treated as a deity. The Tanakh details the Israelites’ plans for establishing themselves in the land, with shock-troops leading the way, and Moses instructs them to go to battle at the command of יהוה. Targum interpretations specify commands given to specific tribes, such as Reuben, Gad, and half of Menasheh, to go armed before their brethren.

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| רַ֠ק נְשֵׁיכֶ֣ם וְטַפְּכֶם֮ וּמִקְנֵכֶם֒ יָדַ֕עְתִּי כִּֽי־מִקְנֶ֥ה רַ֖ב לָכֶ֑ם יֵֽשְׁבוּ֙ בְּעָ֣רֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖תִּי לָכֶֽם׃ | 19 | Only your wives, children, and livestock—I know that you have much livestock—shall be left in the towns I have assigned to you, |

In Deuteronomy 3:19, Steinsaltz explains that only the wives, children, and livestock of the Israelites were allowed to live in the cities given to them on the eastern side of the Jordan River. This restriction was likely put in place to ensure the safety and security of the land. The Targum states that the wives, children, and cattle will remain in the cities given to the Israelites.

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| עַ֠ד אֲשֶׁר־יָנִ֨יחַ יְהֹוָ֥ה ׀ לַֽאֲחֵיכֶם֮ כָּכֶם֒ וְיָרְשׁ֣וּ גַם־הֵ֔ם אֶת־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֛ם נֹתֵ֥ן לָהֶ֖ם בְּעֵ֣בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן וְשַׁבְתֶּ֗ם אִ֚ישׁ לִֽירֻשָּׁת֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖תִּי לָכֶֽם׃ | 20 | until יהוה has granted your kin a haven such as you have, and they too have taken possession of the land that your God יהוה is assigning them, beyond the Jordan. Then you may return each to the homestead that I have assigned to him.” |

Rashbam interprets Exodus 33:14 as God’s presence remaining with the Israelites until they have settled in Canaan and have rest from enemies. Nehemiah 9:22 mentions territories allotted to the people, including Sihon and Og. Moses instructs in Joshua 1:13-15 to help others gain possession before returning to their own land. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 3:20 discuss Israelites returning to their inheritance after their brothers have peace and inherit land.

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| וְאֶת־יְהוֹשׁ֣וּעַ צִוֵּ֔יתִי בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִ֖וא לֵאמֹ֑ר עֵינֶ֣יךָ הָרֹאֹ֗ת אֵת֩ כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֨ר עָשָׂ֜ה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם֙ לִשְׁנֵי֙ הַמְּלָכִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה כֵּֽן־יַעֲשֶׂ֤ה יְהֹוָה֙ לְכׇל־הַמַּמְלָכ֔וֹת אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתָּ֖ה עֹבֵ֥ר שָֽׁמָּה׃ | 21 | I also charged Joshua at that time, saying, “You have seen with your own eyes all that your God יהוה has done to these two kings; so shall יהוה do to all the kingdoms into which you shall cross over. |

Chasidut explains the loss of the “we will do” aspect of the covenant after the Golden Calf incident, Moses commands Joshua to be fearless in battle with God’s help, Halakhah discusses the consecration of lands conquered by different groups of Jews, Midrash explains Moses’ plea to enter the land and Targum emphasizes remembering God’s past victories in battle.

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| לֹ֖א תִּֽירָא֑וּם כִּ֚י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם ה֖וּא הַנִּלְחָ֥ם לָכֶֽם׃ | 22 | Do not fear them, for it is your God יהוה who will battle for you.” |

Moses instructs Joshua and the Israelites not to fear the Canaanite kings, as God will fight for them in their conquest of the land. The text emphasizes the prohibition against soldiers being afraid in war, with references to Deuteronomy 7:21 and 3:22. Midrash highlights that when Israel fears God, even nations and animals fear them, and in the future, those who oppose Israel will not succeed as God will protect them. Targum interprets Deuteronomy 3:22 as emphasizing that God’s word will fight for the Israelites, encouraging them not to fear their enemies.

# **45**: ואתחנן|Vaetchanan (Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)

## Deuteronomy 3

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| וָאֶתְחַנַּ֖ן אֶל־יְהֹוָ֑ה בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִ֖וא לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 23 | I pleaded with יהוה at that time, saying, |

Moses pleads with God for unearned gifts in prayer, seeking mercy to enter the Land of Israel, focusing on pure intentions and concentration in prayer, reflecting on the reasons his request was not granted, and emphasizing the importance of continued prayer even in times of division. Moses’ prayers are analyzed in various contexts and interpretations, with insights on his pleading and beseeching modes, the significance of specific Torah readings before holidays, and the connection between prayer and supplication in seeking divine grace.

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| אֲדֹנָ֣י יֱהֹוִ֗ה אַתָּ֤ה הַֽחִלּ֙וֹתָ֙ לְהַרְא֣וֹת אֶֽת־עַבְדְּךָ֔ אֶ֨ת־גׇּדְלְךָ֔ וְאֶת־יָדְךָ֖ הַחֲזָקָ֑ה אֲשֶׁ֤ר מִי־אֵל֙ בַּשָּׁמַ֣יִם וּבָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂ֥ה כְמַעֲשֶׂ֖יךָ וְכִגְבוּרֹתֶֽךָ׃ | 24 | “O Lord יהוה, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal! |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of prayers from the righteous in reversing harmful decrees, with Moses’ prayer showcasing God’s interest in such prayers and the attribute of tiferet in His response. Ramban criticizes Rashi’s interpretation of Divine Names in Deuteronomy 3:24, with the Sifre and Midrash Yelamdeinu supporting Ramban’s view. Halakhah highlights the importance of praising God before making requests in prayer, following the structure of the berachot in the Amidah. Jewish Thought discusses Moses’ humility in asking God to show His greatness, the significance of the thirteen attributes of God, and the importance of following God’s laws. Kabbalah delves into the creation of the world with qualities of judgment and mercy, the manifestation of Divine Names, and the interconnectedness of different aspects of creation. Midrash compares Moses to Abraham and David in praying for justice or mercy, repentance leading to being beloved by God, and the importance of calling oneself a servant of God. Musar views Moses as the head and end of the world, with his qualities leading to a more perfect world. The Commentary discusses Jacob’s sacrifices to avoid divine judgment, the sin of Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah, the importance of understanding commandments, and different types of prayers. Talmud teaches the importance of beginning prayers with praise of God before personal requests, following Moses’ example in his prayers. Tanakh shows God’s anger towards the Israelites in Exodus 32:10, while Targum translations emphasize God’s greatness and power.

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| אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּ֗א וְאֶרְאֶה֙ אֶת־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּעֵ֣בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן הָהָ֥ר הַטּ֛וֹב הַזֶּ֖ה וְהַלְּבָנֹֽן׃ | 25 | Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon.” |

Chasidut discusses the significance of G’d’s names in relation to the Jewish people’s journey to the Holy Land and the need to fulfill commandments there, while Likutei Halakhot and Likutei Moharan focus on refining good points through communal prayer and connecting the unlearned to daat. The commentary emphasizes Moses’ desire to see the Promised Land and fulfill commandments there, highlighting the importance of prayer and spiritual duties. In Halakhah, the practice of removing a knife before birkat ha-mazon is based on the association of iron with destruction, emphasizing the connection between Torah, covenant, and the Land of Israel. Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of praising God before prayer and submitting to His will, while Liturgy symbolizes exile from the Temple and the journey ahead. In Musar, the spelling of the word טוב indicates the visibility or intrinsic nature of good, with Moses warning against abandoning the Torah. Quoting Commentary discusses Moses’ denied request to enter the land, highlighting the importance of communal prayers and understanding God’s reasons. Talmud discusses the necessity of being a king for Jerusalem to be handed over, the importance of reciting specific benedictions, and the requirement for blessings after meals and before eating, with references to Jerusalem and the Torah. Tanakh and Targum emphasize God’s promise to plant the Israelites in His mountain and the significance of Moses’ request to see the good land, Jerusalem, and the Temple. Lastly, Tosefta states that the Beracha of Zimun is a Torah obligation, corresponding to the first four Berachot of Birkat Hamazon.

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| וַיִּתְעַבֵּ֨ר יְהֹוָ֥ה בִּי֙ לְמַ֣עַנְכֶ֔ם וְלֹ֥א שָׁמַ֖ע אֵלָ֑י וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֵלַי֙ רַב־לָ֔ךְ אַל־תּ֗וֹסֶף דַּבֵּ֥ר אֵלַ֛י ע֖וֹד בַּדָּבָ֥ר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 26 | But יהוה was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. יהוה said to me, “Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again! |

Rashi explains that God’s anger towards Moses was due to the actions of the Israelites, leading to the decree that Moses would not enter the Promised Land. Despite his good deeds, Moses’ request was only granted through prayer, exemplifying the importance of prayer over good deeds alone. Moses desired to enter the holiest part of the land of Israel to be closest to the holiest part of the celestial land, but God denied his request to prevent the people from being raised spiritually to his level. Ultimately, Moses accepts his fate and dies on the border before the Israelites enter the land, leaving readers in awe of God’s mercy and rejection of complaints.

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| עֲלֵ֣ה ׀ רֹ֣אשׁ הַפִּסְגָּ֗ה וְשָׂ֥א עֵינֶ֛יךָ יָ֧מָּה וְצָפֹ֛נָה וְתֵימָ֥נָה וּמִזְרָ֖חָה וּרְאֵ֣ה בְעֵינֶ֑יךָ כִּי־לֹ֥א תַעֲבֹ֖ר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֥ן הַזֶּֽה׃ | 27 | Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go across yonder Jordan. |

Moses is granted the ability to see the land of Israel from the top of Pisgah, but is not allowed to enter it due to his disowning of his land as an Egyptian. The Mishnah prohibits renting a house to a gentile for residence or a bathhouse to avoid idol worship or violating Shabbat. Moses’ inability to enter the land despite intense prayers is attributed to a change in fate and a decree from God. Humility is emphasized as essential for survival, contrasting with arrogant leaders of other nations. Rabbi Elazar argues that prayer is greater than good deeds without prayer, exemplified by Moses’ ability to see Eretz Yisrael through prayer. Targum texts emphasize Moses’ ability to see the land with his own eyes from Pisgah.

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| וְצַ֥ו אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁ֖עַ וְחַזְּקֵ֣הוּ וְאַמְּצֵ֑הוּ כִּי־ה֣וּא יַעֲבֹ֗ר לִפְנֵי֙ הָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה וְהוּא֙ יַנְחִ֣יל אוֹתָ֔ם אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּרְאֶֽה׃ | 28 | Give Joshua his instructions, and imbue him with strength and courage, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he shall allot to them the land that you may only see.” |

Moses instructs Joshua to lead the people into the promised land, ensuring his authority and encouragement, as seen in the defeat at Ai. The passing of leadership is crucial for the success of the Israelites, as indicated in various instances throughout the Torah. Moses expresses disappointment in not crossing over with the Israelites, beseeching God to rescind the decree but being commanded to charge Joshua instead. The term “command” indicates immediate and future performance, galvanizing the Israelites for success. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize the importance of Moses instructing and encouraging Joshua to lead the people into the promised land and apportion the land to the Israelites.

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| וַנֵּ֣שֶׁב בַּגָּ֔יְא מ֖וּל בֵּ֥ית פְּעֽוֹר׃ | 29 | Meanwhile we stayed on in the valley near Beth-peor. |

On Shabbat, refraining from routine ways allows for repentance and acceptance from God, symbolized by attaining Keter and God’s outstretched right hand for repentance. Moses reminds Israelites of their idol worship near Beth Peor, emphasizing the need to heed God’s statutes for forgiveness. Despite sins like idolatry at Peor, God’s love for the Jewish people remains steadfast, highlighting the importance of following God’s statutes. Moses reflects on his own sins and supplications not being forgiven, contrasting with Israel’s sins being forgiven upon repentance. The Israelites’ sins at Peor led to a plague, with Phinehas stopping it by taking action against idol worshipers. The Targum translations mention dwelling in the valley and weeping for sins, specifically mentioning joining worshippers of Peor.

## Deuteronomy 4

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| וְעַתָּ֣ה יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל שְׁמַ֤ע אֶל־הַֽחֻקִּים֙ וְאֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָֽנֹכִ֛י מְלַמֵּ֥ד אֶתְכֶ֖ם לַעֲשׂ֑וֹת לְמַ֣עַן תִּֽחְי֗וּ וּבָאתֶם֙ וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֣ם אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֧ר יְהֹוָ֛ה אֱלֹהֵ֥י אֲבֹתֵיכֶ֖ם נֹתֵ֥ן לָכֶֽם׃ | 1 | And now, O Israel, give heed to the laws and rules that I am instructing you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that יהוה, the God of your fathers, is giving you. |

The importance of observing the commandments is emphasized in Deuteronomy, with Moses warning against adding or subtracting from them to avoid destruction. Torah study should lead to practical fulfillment, as deeds are the essence of Torah. God’s love for the Jewish people is highlighted, even after their sins, urging them to heed His statutes and judgments. Moses reflects on his prayers and emphasizes the importance of Torah, while various commentators stress the need to follow God’s statutes for forgiveness and blessings. In the Second Temple text, God is referred to differently based on individuals’ spiritual status, and in the Targum, Israel is instructed to listen to the statutes and laws to live and inherit the land.

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| לֹ֣א תֹסִ֗פוּ עַל־הַדָּבָר֙ אֲשֶׁ֤ר אָנֹכִי֙ מְצַוֶּ֣ה אֶתְכֶ֔ם וְלֹ֥א תִגְרְע֖וּ מִמֶּ֑נּוּ לִשְׁמֹ֗ר אֶת־מִצְוֺת֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 2 | You shall not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, but keep the commandments of your God יהוה that I enjoin upon you. |

Chasidut highlights the influence of Jewish people on the world through the name Elo-him and emphasizes the unity of causes in the universe. Commentary on Deuteronomy 4:2:1 warns against adding or subtracting from Torah laws, with examples of prohibited alterations. Halakhah prohibits adding blessings to the priestly blessing and warns against adding to or subtracting from God’s commands. Jewish Thought explores Pinchas’s actions against Zimri and the importance of acting to prevent desecration of God’s name. Mishnah details the handling of phylacteries found outside the city on Shabbat. Quoting various commentaries, the importance of following God’s instructions precisely and the consequences of adding or subtracting from commandments are discussed. Talmud debates the prohibition of adding blessings to the Priestly Blessing, and Targum emphasizes the importance of faithfully keeping and guarding God’s commandments.

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| עֵֽינֵיכֶם֙ הָֽרֹא֔וֹת אֵ֛ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה בְּבַ֣עַל פְּע֑וֹר כִּ֣י כׇל־הָאִ֗ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֤ר הָלַךְ֙ אַחֲרֵ֣י בַֽעַל־פְּע֔וֹר הִשְׁמִיד֛וֹ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 3 | You saw with your own eyes what יהוה did in the matter of Baal-peor, that your God יהוה wiped out from among you every person who followed Baal-peor; |

Moses warns against idolatry using the example of Baal Peor, highlighting the severity of punishment for idol worship, as seen with the Israelites’ experience. Various commentators discuss the number of judges involved in the Baal-peor incident, with Ramban questioning the high number given in the Jerusalem Talmud. Or HaChaim suggests that the plague was a punishment for the sin of Baal-peor, leading to the death of those actively involved. In Numbers 25, the Israelites sin by engaging in idolatry and sexual immorality with Moabite women, resulting in God’s anger and Phinehas stopping a plague by killing an Israelite man and a Midianite woman. The Targum emphasizes God’s destruction of those who worshipped Baal Peor from within the community of Israel.

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| וְאַתֶּם֙ הַדְּבֵקִ֔ים בַּיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם חַיִּ֥ים כֻּלְּכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 4 | while you, who held fast to your God יהוה, are all alive today. |

Various commentaries from Chasidut, Halakhah, Jewish Thought, Kabbalah, Liturgy, Midrash, Musar, Quoting Commentary, Second Temple, Talmud, and Targum emphasize the importance of cleaving to God, following His commandments, and maintaining a close relationship with Him to receive blessings, eternal life, and spiritual enlightenment. The concept of clinging to God is seen as a source of life, connection to the Divine, and salvation, contrasting with idol worship and emphasizing the unique relationship between the Jewish people and God. The texts also discuss the significance of prayer, Torah study, and fulfilling one’s purpose in life to deepen one’s attachment to God and achieve closeness to His essence.

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| רְאֵ֣ה ׀ לִמַּ֣דְתִּי אֶתְכֶ֗ם חֻקִּים֙ וּמִשְׁפָּטִ֔ים כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוַּ֖נִי יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהָ֑י לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת כֵּ֔ן בְּקֶ֣רֶב הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם בָּאִ֥ים שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 5 | See, I have imparted to you laws and rules, as my God יהוה has commanded me, for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. |

Chasidut explains the Israelites’ understanding of commandments after performing them and the Patriarchs’ observance of Torah before Moses. Halakhah discusses payment for teaching Torah and the obligation to teach for free, while Jewish Thought emphasizes love and kindness in fulfilling commandments. Midrash compares Mordekhai to Moses, Mishnah discusses tasks for those prohibited by vow, and Musar emphasizes faith in accepting all laws. Commentary highlights diligence in carrying out duties and freedom of choice in following God’s commandments. Talmud prohibits taking payment for teaching Torah and emphasizes teaching for free. Targum interprets Moses teaching the Israelites laws from God in Deuteronomy 4:5.

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| וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם֮ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם֒ כִּ֣י הִ֤וא חׇכְמַתְכֶם֙ וּבִ֣ינַתְכֶ֔ם לְעֵינֵ֖י הָעַמִּ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִשְׁמְע֗וּן אֵ֚ת כׇּל־הַחֻקִּ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה וְאָמְר֗וּ רַ֚ק עַם־חָכָ֣ם וְנָב֔וֹן הַגּ֥וֹי הַגָּד֖וֹל הַזֶּֽה׃ | 6 | Observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, “Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people.” |

Chasidut emphasizes the connection between Israel’s wisdom and Torah observance, highlighting the importance of pure thoughts and firmness in fixing one’s thoughts. Halakhah discusses various prohibitions and obligations related to Torah observance, including the calculation of equinoxes and solstices. Jewish Thought emphasizes the role of Torah study and observance in shaping the Jewish nation and projecting its values onto mankind. Kabbalah delves into the transformative nature of fulfilling Torah and mitzvot, aiming to change one’s nature from self-love to love of others. The Midrash, Musar, Commentary, Second Temple, Talmud, and Targum all echo the theme of the wisdom and understanding reflected in Torah observance, highlighting its significance in shaping the identity and greatness of the Jewish people.

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| כִּ֚י מִי־ג֣וֹי גָּד֔וֹל אֲשֶׁר־ל֥וֹ אֱלֹהִ֖ים קְרֹבִ֣ים אֵלָ֑יו כַּיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֔ינוּ בְּכׇל־קׇרְאֵ֖נוּ אֵלָֽיו׃ | 7 | For what great nation is there that has a god so close at hand as is our God יהוה whenever we call? |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of prayer and belief in God’s goodness, highlighting His pride in Israel and the fear and awe this inspires. Halakhah discusses the importance of confession and repentance, especially during the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Jewish Thought explores the purity of the soul and the symbolic nature of building a tabernacle for God. Kabbalah discusses the ability to tear up decrees for the good through prayer, while Midrash emphasizes God’s closeness to Israel. Musar presents a challenge from the nations towards the laws, and Talmud explores themes of repentance, prayer, and faith. Tanakh questions if the people are repaying God, and Targum highlights the greatness of Israel and God’s closeness to them.

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| וּמִי֙ גּ֣וֹי גָּד֔וֹל אֲשֶׁר־ל֛וֹ חֻקִּ֥ים וּמִשְׁפָּטִ֖ים צַדִּיקִ֑ם כְּכֹל֙ הַתּוֹרָ֣ה הַזֹּ֔את אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י נֹתֵ֥ן לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 8 | Or what great nation has laws and rules as perfect as all this Teaching that I set before you this day? |

The text highlights the significance of God’s commandments and statutes in setting Israel apart as a wise and righteous nation, promoting justice and fairness, restitution for victims, and righteousness for wrongdoers. It praises the Torah for containing all worth knowing and emphasizes the importance of obedience to God’s laws for true freedom. Additionally, it discusses the distinction between divine Law and prophetic teachings, the power of annulment in understanding God’s decrees, and the unique relationship between God and Israel as His chosen people.

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| רַ֡ק הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֩ וּשְׁמֹ֨ר נַפְשְׁךָ֜ מְאֹ֗ד פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּ֨ח אֶת־הַדְּבָרִ֜ים אֲשֶׁר־רָא֣וּ עֵינֶ֗יךָ וּפֶן־יָס֙וּרוּ֙ מִלְּבָ֣בְךָ֔ כֹּ֖ל יְמֵ֣י חַיֶּ֑יךָ וְהוֹדַעְתָּ֥ם לְבָנֶ֖יךָ וְלִבְנֵ֥י בָנֶֽיךָ׃ | 9 | But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously, so that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes and so that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live. And make them known to your children and to your children’s children: |

The importance of remembering Torah teachings and passing them on to future generations is emphasized throughout various Jewish texts, with a focus on safeguarding physical and spiritual health, teaching Torah to children and students, and ensuring the eternal relevance of Torah principles. The duty to remember and transmit the Revelation at Mount Sinai is crucial for solidifying faith, preventing forgetfulness, and connecting with the Divine, with severe consequences for forgetting Torah study and violating oaths related to God and one’s ancestors. Torah study is considered a lifeline, with the obligation to teach Torah to grandchildren, prioritize daily study, and avoid distractions to maintain a strong connection with God and live in accordance with His will.

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| י֗וֹם אֲשֶׁ֨ר עָמַ֜דְתָּ לִפְנֵ֨י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֘יךָ֮ בְּחֹרֵב֒ בֶּאֱמֹ֨ר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י הַקְהֶל־לִי֙ אֶת־הָעָ֔ם וְאַשְׁמִעֵ֖ם אֶת־דְּבָרָ֑י אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִלְמְד֜וּן לְיִרְאָ֣ה אֹתִ֗י כׇּל־הַיָּמִים֙ אֲשֶׁ֨ר הֵ֤ם חַיִּים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהֶ֖ם יְלַמֵּדֽוּן׃ | 10 | The day you stood before your God יהוה at Horeb, when יהוה said to me, “Gather the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.” |

Chasidut emphasizes wholehearted service to HaShem and the importance of the Torah representing space, time, and spirit, with its words having the power to gather the Jewish people for generations. Halakhah states the obligation to study Torah until death to avoid forgetting knowledge. Jewish Thought focuses on moral perfection through refining one’s personality and reflecting Torah and truth, while Kabbalah warns of consequences for neglecting Torah study. Liturgy and Midrash stress the importance of passing down the experience of standing before God at Horeb to future generations to instill reverence. Talmud highlights the equivalence of teaching Torah to one’s grandson to receiving it at Mount Sinai, and Tanakh and Targum emphasize the importance of teaching future generations to revere God.

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| וַתִּקְרְב֥וּן וַתַּֽעַמְד֖וּן תַּ֣חַת הָהָ֑ר וְהָהָ֞ר בֹּעֵ֤ר בָּאֵשׁ֙ עַד־לֵ֣ב הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם חֹ֖שֶׁךְ עָנָ֥ן וַעֲרָפֶֽל׃ | 11 | You came forward and stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain was ablaze with flames to the very skies, dark with densest clouds. |

Chasidut: Moshe’s soul embodied the three Patriarchs’ qualities, allowing him to draw their respective influences: Avraham’s lovingkindness, Yitzchak’s presence, and Yaakov’s sustenance. Commentary: Various interpretations on the location and symbolism of the revelation at Mount Sinai are discussed, emphasizing the darkness and fire surrounding the mountain. Jewish Thought: The text explores the role of the body in understanding the divine, the necessity of mediation in divine encounters, and the consequences of Moses and Aaron’s errors. Kabbalah: Symbolic meanings of darkness and fire, the importance of the Torah in saving from punishment, and the Havdalah prayer’s significance are discussed. Midrash: Various elements of nature being given attributes by God, such as the sea, terebinth tree, and heavens, are explained. Musar: Jacob’s ladder dream symbolizing the giving of the Torah, Moses reaching understanding allowing direct communication with God, and the significance of Moses’ name change are discussed. Quoting Commentary: Ramban and Rashi explain symbolism in Abraham’s vision and the thunderings at Mount Sinai, while Rabbeinu Bahya discusses Jacob’s ladder dream. Responsa: The ability to connect Torah verses and understand their context is emphasized, with examples from Rabbi Abahu and Rabbi Levi. Talmud: Elisha’s actions on the Sabbath, his repentance, and the value of Torah learning are debated. Tanakh: The Israelites stayed back as Moses approached the cloud where God was present. Targum: Descriptions of the Israelites approaching the burning mountain surrounded by darkness and clouds are provided.

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| וַיְדַבֵּ֧ר יְהֹוָ֛ה אֲלֵיכֶ֖ם מִתּ֣וֹךְ הָאֵ֑שׁ ק֤וֹל דְּבָרִים֙ אַתֶּ֣ם שֹׁמְעִ֔ים וּתְמוּנָ֛ה אֵינְכֶ֥ם רֹאִ֖ים זוּלָתִ֥י קֽוֹל׃ | 12 | יהוה spoke to you out of the fire; you heard the sound of words but perceived no shape—nothing but a voice. |

Various commentators explain that the Israelites heard God’s voice at Mount Sinai without seeing any physical form, highlighting the importance of the revelation’s content over miracles and emphasizing the auditory nature of Jewish revelation. The Midrash stresses the consequences of not honoring God with one’s possessions, while the Targum describes how the Israelites heard God’s voice from within the fire but saw no image. Additionally, Jewish thought emphasizes the importance of heeding one’s soul to avoid attributing corporeal elements to God and the significance of words in Judaism as the vehicle of revelation from an invisible God.

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| וַיַּגֵּ֨ד לָכֶ֜ם אֶת־בְּרִית֗וֹ אֲשֶׁ֨ר צִוָּ֤ה אֶתְכֶם֙ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת עֲשֶׂ֖רֶת הַדְּבָרִ֑ים וַֽיִּכְתְּבֵ֔ם עַל־שְׁנֵ֖י לֻח֥וֹת אֲבָנִֽים׃ | 13 | [God] declared to you the covenant that you were commanded to observe, the Ten Commandments, inscribing them on two tablets of stone. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of reciting the Haggadah aloud to signify redemption through voice and links it to the Covenant, stressing the rectification of daat and the generality of the gidim. Halakhah states it is a mitzvah to love and fear God, as seen in Deuteronomy. Jewish Thought highlights the direct experience of the Jewish people at Mount Sinai hearing the Ten Commandments, with Moses as their intermediary, emphasizing obedience to the prophet. Midrash discusses the revelation of the Torah beyond Exodus 12:2 due to Israel’s commitment, while quoting commentary explores Nachmanides’ belief that the people heard all Ten Commandments and Ibn Ezra’s questions about discrepancies. The Talmud presents various opinions on how the tablets were written, with Rebbi Hanania ben Gamliel, the rabbis, Rebbi Simeon ben Yohai, and Rebbi Simai suggesting different numbers of commandments on each tablet. Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 4:13 mentions God writing the Ten Commandments on two sapphire tablets as part of His covenant.

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| וְאֹתִ֞י צִוָּ֤ה יְהֹוָה֙ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֔וא לְלַמֵּ֣ד אֶתְכֶ֔ם חֻקִּ֖ים וּמִשְׁפָּטִ֑ים לַעֲשֹׂתְכֶ֣ם אֹתָ֔ם בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם עֹבְרִ֥ים שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 14 | At the same time יהוה commanded me to impart to you laws and rules for you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy. |

Various commentators provide insights into the commandment given to Moses to teach the Israelites, emphasizing the importance of the Oral Law, additional commandments beyond the Ten Commandments, and the fulfillment of commandments in the Holy Land. The Midrash discusses topics such as the origins of the Torah, prayer, and tithing, while the Mishnah warns against using Torah knowledge for personal gain. Quoting commentators further delve into the significance of teaching Torah for free, the prohibition of taking payment for it, and the unique nature of divine commandments. The Talmud explores the teaching of Torah for free, the importance of displaying and respecting the Torah scroll, and the individual nature of divine commandments. The Targum and Tosefta highlight the command to teach statutes and laws to be fulfilled in the land of Israel, with insights into the roles of Moses and Ezra in teaching Torah to the Jewish people.

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| וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּ֥ם מְאֹ֖ד לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶ֑ם כִּ֣י לֹ֤א רְאִיתֶם֙ כׇּל־תְּמוּנָ֔ה בְּי֗וֹם דִּבֶּ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֲלֵיכֶ֛ם בְּחֹרֵ֖ב מִתּ֥וֹךְ הָאֵֽשׁ׃ | 15 | For your own sake, therefore, be most careful—since you saw no shape when יהוה spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire— |

Chasidut discusses the purpose of names and attributes in creation, cautioning against making any formal representation of God. Halakhah emphasizes God’s lack of physical form and guidelines for prayer interruptions. Jewish Thought highlights the abstract nature of God and the symbolic representation in the sanctuary. Kabbalah explains the use of metaphorical language to convey spiritual truths. Midrash discusses God’s appearance based on repentance and the judgment of the wicked. Musar emphasizes seeking medical treatment and not solely relying on trust in God. Quoting Commentary links the structure of man to the ten emanations and the prohibition against making images of God. Responsa forbids hunting unless essential for sustenance. Talmud specifies penalties for harm and the importance of treating others with respect. Targum stresses the importance of protecting one’s life.

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| פֶּ֨ן־תַּשְׁחִת֔וּן וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֥ם לָכֶ֛ם פֶּ֖סֶל תְּמוּנַ֣ת כׇּל־סָ֑מֶל תַּבְנִ֥ית זָכָ֖ר א֥וֹ נְקֵבָֽה׃ | 16 | not to act wickedly and make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness whatever: the form of a man or a woman, |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 4:16 emphasizes the prohibition against creating graven images or idols to worship, warning against corrupting beliefs by making physical representations of God or celestial forms. The Akeidat Yitzchak commentary discusses the illusory powers recognized as deities by Achaziah, linking them to the first five of the Ten Commandments and highlighting the importance of not attributing predestination to God. Kabbalistic texts discuss the Middle Pillar in Yesod and prophets imagining through their hands. Midrashim discuss idolatry among the people of Judah and provide lists of forbidden materials for creating idols. Quoted commentaries connect corruption, idolatry, and sexual immorality, while the Talmud explains that “corruption” refers to both sexual immorality and idol worship. Targum translations warn against creating idols in male or female forms to avoid corruption and destruction.

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| תַּבְנִ֕ית כׇּל־בְּהֵמָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר בָּאָ֑רֶץ תַּבְנִית֙ כׇּל־צִפּ֣וֹר כָּנָ֔ף אֲשֶׁ֥ר תָּע֖וּף בַּשָּׁמָֽיִם׃ | 17 | the form of any beast on earth, the form of any winged bird that flies in the sky, |

The text discusses the prohibition of making images of animals or birds for worship, citing the Golden Calf as an example. Hebrew words “temunah” and “tabnit” have different meanings, and “kanaf” in Hebrew has various metaphorical meanings. The Midrash emphasizes the importance of tithing and the prohibition of creating idols in various forms. Chizkuni explains that “שמים” can refer to the air or atmosphere in the Torah, while the Gemara interprets the term “tzippor” in the prohibition against fashioning idols. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the prohibition against making representations of animals and birds.

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| תַּבְנִ֕ית כׇּל־רֹמֵ֖שׂ בָּאֲדָמָ֑ה תַּבְנִ֛ית כׇּל־דָּגָ֥ה אֲשֶׁר־בַּמַּ֖יִם מִתַּ֥חַת לָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 18 | the form of anything that creeps on the ground, the form of any fish that is in the waters below the earth.— |

Chasidut emphasizes the role of Malchut of Asiyah as the “word of the L-rd” bringing life to the world, including dust and water below the earth. Steinsaltz explains that images of beings on the ground and in the water symbolize various forces in other cultures. The Rabbi compares those who venerate sacred places to idols to proselytes who retain relics of idolatry. The Midrash discusses the importance of tithing to become rich and warns against neglecting tithes. The term “tavnis” is used for specific forms, while “demus” is for entities without a specific form. Targum texts prohibit making images of creatures on the ground or in the waters beneath the earth.

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| וּפֶן־תִּשָּׂ֨א עֵינֶ֜יךָ הַשָּׁמַ֗יְמָה וְֽ֠רָאִ֠יתָ אֶת־הַשֶּׁ֨מֶשׁ וְאֶת־הַיָּרֵ֜חַ וְאֶת־הַכּֽוֹכָבִ֗ים כֹּ֚ל צְבָ֣א הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וְנִדַּחְתָּ֛ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִ֥יתָ לָהֶ֖ם וַעֲבַדְתָּ֑ם אֲשֶׁ֨ר חָלַ֜ק יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֹתָ֔ם לְכֹל֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים תַּ֖חַת כׇּל־הַשָּׁמָֽיִם׃ | 19 | And when you look up to the sky and behold the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole heavenly host, you must not be lured into bowing down to them or serving them. These your God יהוה allotted to other peoples everywhere under heaven; |

The text emphasizes the prohibition of worshiping false gods, including stars and spheres, as they can lead to destruction. Various commentaries and texts discuss the importance of avoiding idol worship, the sovereignty of God over celestial bodies, and the consequences of straying from the true path. The Talmud and Targum warn against worshiping the sun, moon, and stars, which were created by God for observation, not worship. Additionally, alterations were made to the Torah to prevent misinterpretations and accusations of mockery by King Ptolemy.

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| וְאֶתְכֶם֙ לָקַ֣ח יְהֹוָ֔ה וַיּוֹצִ֥א אֶתְכֶ֛ם מִכּ֥וּר הַבַּרְזֶ֖ל מִמִּצְרָ֑יִם לִהְי֥וֹת ל֛וֹ לְעַ֥ם נַחֲלָ֖ה כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 20 | but you יהוה took and brought out of Egypt, that iron blast furnace, to be God’s very own people, as is now the case. |

The text discusses God’s love in bringing the Jewish people out of Egypt, highlighting the need for unity among the Jewish people for redemption and the significance of God being the only true possession of the Jewish people. The Torah teaches important lessons about knowing God’s unity, serving Him actively, and trusting in His eternal faithfulness, symbolizing the difficulty of connecting with God while in Egypt as a partition. The Midrash discusses the difficulty of the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, emphasizing the importance of mentioning the exodus from Egypt in prayer and purifying one’s heart before prayer. Rabbeinu Bahya explains the acrostic of G’d’s name in the Ten Commandments emphasizes both the attributes of Justice and Mercy, highlighting the acceptance of G’d’s Kingdom. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 4:20 emphasize that God chose the people of Israel as His own, bringing them out of Egypt to be His special possession and beloved treasure.

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| וַֽיהֹוָ֥ה הִתְאַנַּף־בִּ֖י עַל־דִּבְרֵיכֶ֑ם וַיִּשָּׁבַ֗ע לְבִלְתִּ֤י עׇבְרִי֙ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן וּלְבִלְתִּי־בֹא֙ אֶל־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָֽה׃ | 21 | Now יהוה was angry with me on your account and swore that I should not cross the Jordan and enter the good land that your God יהוה is assigning you as a heritage. |

Moses reiterates his inability to enter the Land of Israel due to the people’s actions, emphasizing the importance of not forgetting the covenant or making graven images. Rashi explains that “התאנף” means “he was filled with wrath,” while Ibn Ezra clarifies that Moses was not to share in the good of entering the land. Or HaChaim discusses the reasons behind Moses not entering the land, while Tur HaArokh emphasizes the paradox of Moses teaching the people the laws they would not see him live to experience. Midrash recounts how Moses asked God for an oath to fulfill his desires, except for entering Canaan, which was denied after the Israelites created the golden calf. Tanakh describes the consequences of the Israelites’ lack of faith, leading to Moses being denied entry into the promised land, while Targum explains that God’s anger towards Moses was due to the Israelites’ complaints about water.

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| כִּ֣י אָנֹכִ֥י מֵת֙ בָּאָ֣רֶץ הַזֹּ֔את אֵינֶ֥נִּי עֹבֵ֖ר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן וְאַתֶּם֙ עֹֽבְרִ֔ים וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֕ם אֶת־הָאָ֥רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֖ה הַזֹּֽאת׃ | 22 | For I must die in this land; I shall not cross the Jordan. But you will cross and take possession of that good land. |

Moses emphasizes the importance of remembering his teachings after his death to ensure the people continue to fulfill the Torah’s commandments, despite not being able to enter the Land of Israel. The reactions to the deaths of Aaron and Moses differed, with Aaron’s unexpected death having a more profound effect on the people. The Targums also reinforce the message that Moses will die in the current land and not cross the Jordan, while the people will inherit the good land.

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| הִשָּׁמְר֣וּ לָכֶ֗ם פֶּֽן־תִּשְׁכְּחוּ֙ אֶת־בְּרִ֤ית יְהֹוָה֙ אֱלֹ֣הֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר כָּרַ֖ת עִמָּכֶ֑ם וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֨ם לָכֶ֥ם פֶּ֙סֶל֙ תְּמ֣וּנַת כֹּ֔ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוְּךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 23 | Take care, then, not to forget the covenant that your God יהוה concluded with you, and not to make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness, against which your God יהוה has enjoined you. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of not forgetting the covenant with God and warns against creating graven images, symbolized by the “likeness of male” and “likeness of female.” Halakhah stresses the importance of humility before God and people, warning against arrogance when blessed with prosperity. In Kabbalah, the absence of the Shekhinah in YQV"Q is described as a consuming fire, with Yod, Vav, and Hei representing different aspects of this process. Quoting Commentary discusses incidents where the Israelites tested God in the wilderness and interprets the prohibition against graven images as encompassing all celestial beings, animals, and demons. Targum warns against forgetting the covenant with God and creating forbidden images.

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| כִּ֚י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ אֵ֥שׁ אֹכְלָ֖ה ה֑וּא אֵ֖ל קַנָּֽא׃ | 24 | For your God יהוה is a consuming fire, an impassioned God. |

Chasidut emphasizes the transformation of the animal soul to draw the light of the Shechinah, while Halakhah discusses emulating God’s qualities and attaching to Torah scholars. Jewish Thought focuses on imitating God’s attributes, and Kabbalah explores God as a consuming fire. Liturgy describes God’s Throne and servants as fiery, while Midrash emphasizes serving God as the primary focus. Musar delves into the transformation of Chanoch and the symbolism behind Torah commandments. Quoting Commentary discusses Jacob’s sacrifices and the importance of true oaths, while Talmud addresses ways to merit the World-to-Come and the concept of God as a devouring fire. Tanakh mentions God appearing in a burning bush, and Targum emphasizes God as a consuming fire in Deuteronomy.

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| כִּֽי־תוֹלִ֤יד בָּנִים֙ וּבְנֵ֣י בָנִ֔ים וְנוֹשַׁנְתֶּ֖ם בָּאָ֑רֶץ וְהִשְׁחַתֶּ֗ם וַעֲשִׂ֤יתֶם פֶּ֙סֶל֙ תְּמ֣וּנַת כֹּ֔ל וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֥ם הָרַ֛ע בְּעֵינֵ֥י יְהֹוָה־אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לְהַכְעִיסֽוֹ׃ | 25 | When you have begotten children and children’s children and are long established in the land, should you act wickedly and make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness, causing your God יהוה displeasure and vexation, |

Moses warns the Israelites of the risk of idolatry and exile if they forget God, with numerical allusions to the timing of exile. Halakhah details customs for Tish’ah B’Av and other fast days, emphasizing repentance and restrictions on prayer and behavior. Jewish Thought highlights the importance of Torah observance and God’s assistance in Israel’s survival despite sins. The Midrash discusses prohibitions related to idol worship and the potential for repentance and redemption. Various commentators elaborate on the consequences of disobedience and the timing of events based on numerical values. In Responsa, caution is advised against calculating the exact date of redemption, and the Talmud discusses the passing of time and the hastening of exile to avert complete punishment. Targum translations warn against idolatry and evil deeds leading to God’s anger.

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| הַעִידֹ֩תִי֩ בָכֶ֨ם הַיּ֜וֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֣יִם וְאֶת־הָאָ֗רֶץ כִּֽי־אָבֹ֣ד תֹּאבֵדוּן֮ מַהֵר֒ מֵעַ֣ל הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתֶּ֜ם עֹבְרִ֧ים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֛ן שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּ֑הּ לֹֽא־תַאֲרִיכֻ֤ן יָמִים֙ עָלֶ֔יהָ כִּ֥י הִשָּׁמֵ֖ד תִּשָּׁמֵדֽוּן׃ | 26 | I call heaven and earth this day to witness against you that you shall soon perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess; you shall not long endure in it, but shall be utterly wiped out. |

Moses warns the Israelites that heaven and earth will serve as witnesses against them if they fail to follow the Torah, symbolizing constant monitoring and urging them to avoid consequences. Belief in God and rejection of idolatry are essential commandments, with punishment for idolaters emphasized. Midrash discusses the correlation between creation and the Tabernacle, the role of various entities as witnesses, and the interconnectedness between the Tabernacle, heaven, and earth. The Tabernacle is considered equal in significance to heaven and earth as a witness for Israel. Various commentaries and Targum emphasize the reliability and permanence of heaven and earth as witnesses against the Israelites, predicting their destruction if they stray from the Torah.

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| וְהֵפִ֧יץ יְהֹוָ֛ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם בָּעַמִּ֑ים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם֙ מְתֵ֣י מִסְפָּ֔ר בַּגּוֹיִ֕ם אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְנַהֵ֧ג יְהֹוָ֛ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם שָֽׁמָּה׃ | 27 | יהוה will scatter you among the peoples, and only a scant few of you shall be left among the nations to which יהוה will drive you. |

Chasidut: The Baal Shem Tov tells a parable about a merchant whose wife is seduced by a non-Jewish idolater, ultimately revealing the truth and convicting the deceitful non-Jew. Commentary: Various commentators discuss the scattering of the Jewish people among nations, emphasizing their continued existence as a sizable nation and the spread of a different worldview. Midrash: Devarim Rabbah discusses Israel’s exile, repentance, and redemption, Moses’ ten “deaths,” and Israel’s growth from a small number to an uncountable multitude. Quoting Commentary: The Pesach Haggadah discusses the liberation of holy sparks in Egypt through exile and the practice of reading Scripture twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic to gather divine sparks in holiness. Tanakh: Jacob reprimands Simeon and Levi for their violent actions, causing him to be despised and vulnerable. Targum: Adonoy will scatter the Israelites among the nations as a small minority.

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| וַעֲבַדְתֶּם־שָׁ֣ם אֱלֹהִ֔ים מַעֲשֵׂ֖ה יְדֵ֣י אָדָ֑ם עֵ֣ץ וָאֶ֔בֶן אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־יִרְאוּן֙ וְלֹ֣א יִשְׁמְע֔וּן וְלֹ֥א יֹֽאכְל֖וּן וְלֹ֥א יְרִיחֻֽן׃ | 28 | There you will serve gods of wood and stone, made by human hands, that cannot see or hear or eat or smell. |

Serving idols outside the Land is equated with direct idol worship, leading to moral degradation and enslavement to idolaters. Blessings are emphasized before sensory pleasures, highlighting the importance of human senses in spiritual connection. The Nazir legislation warns against drunkenness leading to loss of faith, while the story of Ḥananya, Mishael, and Azarya illustrates loyalty to God over earthly rulers. Abarbanel discusses repentance and God’s gathering of faithful and strayed individuals, emphasizing the uniqueness of the Jewish religion. The Targum mentions serving lifeless idols that lack basic senses.

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| וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּ֥ם מִשָּׁ֛ם אֶת־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ וּמָצָ֑אתָ כִּ֣י תִדְרְשֶׁ֔נּוּ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 29 | But if you search there, you will find your God יהוה, if only you seek with all your heart and soul— |

In Chasidut, the blind beggar presents a gift to the groom at a wedding, emphasizing the importance of seeking the Lord with all one’s heart and soul during morning prayer. Commentary from Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Or HaChaim, Rabbeinu Bahya, and others highlights the significance of seeking God sincerely to find Him and receive favor and healing. Kabbalah emphasizes seeking HaShem with a perfect heart, Liturgy calls for God’s compassion and forgiveness, Midrash discusses various times and actions in relation to Israel, and Musar stresses the availability of repentance to those who seek to draw closer to God. The promise of finding God when seeking Him wholeheartedly is reiterated in Second Temple writings and Targum interpretations of Deuteronomy 4:29.

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| בַּצַּ֣ר לְךָ֔ וּמְצָא֕וּךָ כֹּ֖ל הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֑לֶּה בְּאַחֲרִית֙ הַיָּמִ֔ים וְשַׁבְתָּ֙ עַד־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ֖ בְּקֹלֽוֹ׃ | 30 | when you are in distress because all these things have befallen you and, in the end, return to and obey your God יהוה. |

In Likutei Moharan, repentance nullifies time and elevates time-based mitzvot to unite time and hear the voice of holiness, as seen in the return from the Babylonian exile. Repentance is crucial for facing distress and judgment, ensuring God’s compassion and preserving the covenant with the ancestors. Israel’s redemption is tied to distress, repentance, and the merit of the patriarchs, with the importance of following God’s statutes, prayer, and wisdom highlighted in various Midrashim. The significance of repentance for redemption is emphasized in Musar texts, with the Creator’s acts of kindness and grace implemented for His own sake. Economic hardship may result from a lack of commitment to mitzvot, but redemption is possible through repentance and returning to God, as seen in historical events and biblical narratives.

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| כִּ֣י אֵ֤ל רַחוּם֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לֹ֥א יַרְפְּךָ֖ וְלֹ֣א יַשְׁחִיתֶ֑ךָ וְלֹ֤א יִשְׁכַּח֙ אֶת־בְּרִ֣ית אֲבֹתֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לָהֶֽם׃ | 31 | For your God יהוה is a compassionate God, who will not fail you nor let you perish; [God] will not forget the covenant made on oath with your fathers. |

Various Jewish commentaries interpret the phrase “לא ירפך” as God will not abandon, fail, weaken, or forsake His people, emphasizing His love, care, and mercy, and the enduring covenant with the Jewish people. The Liturgy calls upon God to remember the covenant, show compassion, and bring joy, while the Midrash highlights the importance of repentance, acts of kindness, and God’s mercy and judgment. The Musar tradition discusses the debate on the efficacy of relying on the merits of the patriarchs today. The Talmud recounts stories of repentance, redemption, and the debate on the extent of the merit of the forefathers, while the Targum emphasizes God’s mercy and faithfulness to His covenant.

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| כִּ֣י שְׁאַל־נָא֩ לְיָמִ֨ים רִֽאשֹׁנִ֜ים אֲשֶׁר־הָי֣וּ לְפָנֶ֗יךָ לְמִן־הַיּוֹם֙ אֲשֶׁר֩ בָּרָ֨א אֱלֹהִ֤ים ׀ אָדָם֙ עַל־הָאָ֔רֶץ וּלְמִקְצֵ֥ה הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וְעַד־קְצֵ֣ה הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם הֲנִֽהְיָ֗ה כַּדָּבָ֤ר הַגָּדוֹל֙ הַזֶּ֔ה א֖וֹ הֲנִשְׁמַ֥ע כָּמֹֽהוּ׃ | 32 | You have but to inquire about bygone ages that came before you, ever since God created humankind on earth, from one end of heaven to the other: has anything as grand as this ever happened, or has its like ever been known? |

Various Jewish commentaries emphasize the unique relationship between the Israelites and God, warning against idolatry and corruption while urging adherence to God’s commandments for prosperity. Kabbalistic teachings caution against investigating certain aspects of creation and emphasize the importance of humility and rejecting idolatry. Midrashic texts explore the creation of Adam, discussing potential inheritance of two worlds and accountability for actions. Mishnaic and Talmudic teachings prohibit certain inquiries into forbidden matters and emphasize the importance of respecting God’s honor. Responsa highlight the persecution of the Jewish people throughout history and stress the importance of adhering to the Torah. Targum texts emphasize the uniqueness of God’s creation of Adam, while Tosefta warns against speculation on matters before and after creation.

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| הֲשָׁ֣מַֽע עָם֩ ק֨וֹל אֱלֹהִ֜ים מְדַבֵּ֧ר מִתּוֹךְ־הָאֵ֛שׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַ֥עְתָּ אַתָּ֖ה וַיֶּֽחִי׃ | 33 | Has any people heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have, and survived? |

Rav Hirsch explains that the Israelites are the eternal bearers of divine revelation, having heard God’s voice directly and remained alive, contrasting with the usual outcome of death when exposed to such a revelation. The purpose of the revelation at Mount Sinai was to demonstrate God’s presence and involvement in the personal fate of each Jew, ensuring future generations would remember this living experience. The Midrash explains that the voice of God at Mount Sinai was heard differently by the nations and Israelites, with the latter being protected by the Tent of Meeting. The uniqueness of the Israelites hearing God’s voice at Mount Sinai is highlighted, emphasizing the awe and significance of the event. In Nehemiah 9:13 and Exodus 20:1, God spoke to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, giving them rules and commandments. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 4:33 discuss the rarity of a people hearing God’s voice from within fire and surviving.

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| א֣וֹ ׀ הֲנִסָּ֣ה אֱלֹהִ֗ים לָ֠ב֠וֹא לָקַ֨חַת ל֣וֹ גוֹי֮ מִקֶּ֣רֶב גּוֹי֒ בְּמַסֹּת֩ בְּאֹתֹ֨ת וּבְמוֹפְתִ֜ים וּבְמִלְחָמָ֗ה וּבְיָ֤ד חֲזָקָה֙ וּבִזְר֣וֹעַ נְטוּיָ֔ה וּבְמוֹרָאִ֖ים גְּדֹלִ֑ים כְּ֠כֹ֠ל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֨ה לָכֶ֜ם יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֛ם בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם לְעֵינֶֽיךָ׃ | 34 | Or has any deity ventured to go and take one nation from the midst of another by prodigious acts, by signs and portents, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and awesome power, as your God יהוה did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? |

Chasidut explains the necessity of the plagues in Egypt for the Israelites’ refinement and spiritual growth, leading to their connection with God. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Rabbeinu Bahya, Steinsaltz, Da’at Zekenim, Chizkuni, and Halakhah discuss God’s miraculous acts during the Exodus and the revelation of the Divine Presence. Jewish Thought explores Moses’ unique experiences, miracles, and the importance of belief, prayer, and repentance in the relationship with God. Liturgy references the Pesach Haggadah declaration, Midrash emphasizes belief, prayer, and repentance, and Musar discusses G-d’s favors, the revelation at Mount Sinai, and curses. Quoting Commentary reflects on the wonders and miracles performed by God for the Israelites in Egypt, showcasing divine intervention and moral responsibility. Talmud discusses God’s closeness to the Jewish people, contrasting the actions of the righteous and the wicked. Tanakh highlights the Jewish people’s unique relationship with God and Moses’ role as an intermediary. Targum emphasizes God’s miraculous revelations and separation of a people for Himself through signs and wonders.

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| אַתָּה֙ הׇרְאֵ֣תָ לָדַ֔עַת כִּ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה ה֣וּא הָאֱלֹהִ֑ים אֵ֥ין ע֖וֹד מִלְּבַדּֽוֹ׃ | 35 | It has been clearly demonstrated to you that יהוה alone is God; there is none else. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of knowledge and faith in understanding God’s unity and presence, while Halakhah highlights the significance of reciting specific verses on Rosh Hashanah. Jewish Thought discusses the necessity of correct knowledge of God for true worship, Liturgy emphasizes belief in God’s eternal reign and blessings, Midrash underscores the importance of accepting the commandments, Musar stresses the importance of recognizing and serving God, and Talmud debates the effectiveness of sorcery against the righteous. Targum emphasizes that the wonders shown to the people are to make them aware that the Lord is the only God.

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| מִן־הַשָּׁמַ֛יִם הִשְׁמִֽיעֲךָ֥ אֶת־קֹל֖וֹ לְיַסְּרֶ֑ךָּ וְעַל־הָאָ֗רֶץ הֶרְאֲךָ֙ אֶת־אִשּׁ֣וֹ הַגְּדוֹלָ֔ה וּדְבָרָ֥יו שָׁמַ֖עְתָּ מִתּ֥וֹךְ הָאֵֽשׁ׃ | 36 | From the heavens [God] let you hear the divine voice to discipline you; on earth [God] let you see the great divine fire; and from amidst that fire you heard God’s words. |

Chasidut explains that the shofar of Rosh Hashanah symbolizes the ram sacrificed in place of Isaac, while the fire and torchfires associated with the giving of the Torah represent the fire of judgment that purifies the Jewish people. Commentary from various sources interprets different aspects of the Torah, such as afflicting the body to attain prophecy and the last eight commandments being heard through an angel. Jewish Thought discusses the creation of the heavens and the earth, the creation of man and woman, and the importance of their relationship. Midrash explores the miraculous ways in which the voice of God was heard at Sinai, tailored to each individual’s capability. Musar highlights the division of the Torah into two aspects, the written and oral Torah, symbolizing Heaven and Earth respectively. Quoting Commentary resolves apparent contradictions in the Torah regarding the prohibition of eating fat and blood, and Tanakh and Targum mention God’s voice being heard from the heavens and the sky, respectively.

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| וְתַ֗חַת כִּ֤י אָהַב֙ אֶת־אֲבֹתֶ֔יךָ וַיִּבְחַ֥ר בְּזַרְע֖וֹ אַחֲרָ֑יו וַיּוֹצִֽאֲךָ֧ בְּפָנָ֛יו בְּכֹח֥וֹ הַגָּדֹ֖ל מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 37 | And having loved your ancestors, [God] chose their heirs after them; [God] personally —in great, divine might—led you out of Egypt, |

God chose the descendants of the forefathers, specifically Jacob’s, for a unique relationship, leading them out of Egypt to appreciate His intentions and favoring them over other nations. The offerings of the princes symbolize justice, Torah study, and the crowns of Torah, priesthood, and kingship given to Israel. The Israelites were favored due to their righteous ancestry, experiencing redemption despite idol worship, while God’s love for the ancestors led to blessings and protection for their descendants. God’s actions towards the Israelites, including signs and wonders, moving behind them, promising to go ahead, and delivering them with love and pity, highlight His care and favor towards them.

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| לְהוֹרִ֗ישׁ גּוֹיִ֛ם גְּדֹלִ֧ים וַעֲצֻמִ֛ים מִמְּךָ֖ מִפָּנֶ֑יךָ לַהֲבִֽיאֲךָ֗ לָֽתֶת־לְךָ֧ אֶת־אַרְצָ֛ם נַחֲלָ֖ה כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 38 | to drive from your path nations greater and more populous than you, to take you into their land and assign it to you as a heritage, as is still the case. |

Rashi explains Deuteronomy 4:38 as dispossessing nations greater and mightier than Israel, while Ibn Ezra clarifies it refers to the land of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Sforno describes the land as God’s favorite, Rashbam notes it refers to the conquest of Sichon and Og’s lands, Chizkuni interprets it as the day the Israelites conquered those lands, and Steinsaltz summarizes it as dispossessing nations to give Israel their land as an inheritance. The text in Kabbalah emphasizes the singular rule of God with no other power that can prevent His will. Rashi interprets making Abraham into nations as referring to the Jewish people and Edom, while Nachmanides argues against this, Rabbeinu Bahya explains the phrase “the chirping locust will impoverish,” and Ibn Ezra explains “lest thou come to poverty.” Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan discuss expelling stronger nations to give Israel their land.

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| וְיָדַעְתָּ֣ הַיּ֗וֹם וַהֲשֵׁבֹתָ֮ אֶל־לְבָבֶ֒ךָ֒ כִּ֤י יְהֹוָה֙ ה֣וּא הָֽאֱלֹהִ֔ים בַּשָּׁמַ֣יִם מִמַּ֔עַל וְעַל־הָאָ֖רֶץ מִתָּ֑חַת אֵ֖ין עֽוֹד׃ | 39 | Know therefore this day and keep in mind that יהוה alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. |

The commentary emphasizes the importance of faith, humility, and unity with God, highlighting the significance of spiritual practices such as washing hands, understanding the Lord’s supremacy, and the unity of God as central tenets of Hasidism. The Mishneh Torah and Arukh HaShulchan stress the belief in one singular and unique God, while the Talmud discusses instances of martyrdom for refusing to worship idols. The importance of knowing and recognizing God as the only deity in heaven and on earth is reiterated in various texts, emphasizing the obligation to praise and worship the Creator and avoid spiritual arrogance. Additionally, the text warns against deviating from the teachings of the Torah and highlights the interconnectedness of the Upper and Lower Shechinah as inseparable.

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| וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֞ אֶת־חֻקָּ֣יו וְאֶת־מִצְוֺתָ֗יו אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֤י מְצַוְּךָ֙ הַיּ֔וֹם אֲשֶׁר֙ יִיטַ֣ב לְךָ֔ וּלְבָנֶ֖יךָ אַחֲרֶ֑יךָ וּלְמַ֨עַן תַּאֲרִ֤יךְ יָמִים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ כׇּל־הַיָּמִֽים׃ | 40 | Observe God’s laws and commandments, which I enjoin upon you this day, that it may go well with you and your children after you, and that you may long remain in the land that your God יהוה is assigning to you for all time. |

Observing God’s statutes and commandments leads to long life and possession of the land, with specific mourning practices on the day of 9 Av including reading Lamentations and kinot in the synagogue. The importance of purifying one’s inner character and following God’s laws is emphasized in Jewish thought, with specific Haftarot recited on holidays and fast days. Targum Jonathan underscores the importance of following God’s commandments for receiving blessings and longevity on the land.

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| אָ֣ז יַבְדִּ֤יל מֹשֶׁה֙ שָׁלֹ֣שׁ עָרִ֔ים בְּעֵ֖בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן מִזְרְחָ֖ה שָֽׁמֶשׁ׃ | 41 | Then Moses set aside three cities on the east side of the Jordan |

Chasidut discusses the importance of recognizing God’s greatness through acts of victory and salvation, as seen in the psalmist’s description of God’s throne being established. Commentary highlights Moses’ establishment of cities of refuge as a key part of his discourse on the Torah, symbolizing the importance of observing God’s laws. Midrash explores the significance of Torah study, Moses’ designation of cities of refuge, and the symbolism of the eastern direction. Mishnah details the exile of unintentional murderers to cities of refuge and the measurement of Shabbat limits. Musar emphasizes the importance of guarding one’s tongue and displaying eagerness in performing commandments. Quoting Commentary explains the relationship between directions, the establishment of cities of refuge by Moses, and the use of future tense in biblical verses. Talmud discusses the designation of cities of refuge by Moses and the parallel between cities in Eretz Yisrael and Transjordan. Tanakh mentions Cain settling in the land of Nod and the designation of six cities of refuge. Targum references Moshe designating three cities east of the Jordan River as places of refuge.

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| לָנֻ֨ס שָׁ֜מָּה רוֹצֵ֗חַ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִרְצַ֤ח אֶת־רֵעֵ֙הוּ֙ בִּבְלִי־דַ֔עַת וְה֛וּא לֹא־שֹׂנֵ֥א ל֖וֹ מִתְּמֹ֣ל שִׁלְשֹׁ֑ם וְנָ֗ס אֶל־אַחַ֛ת מִן־הֶעָרִ֥ים הָאֵ֖ל וָחָֽי׃ | 42 | to which [a man] who has killed someone could escape, one who unwittingly slew another without having been an enemy in the past; he could flee to one of these cities and live: |

In Deuteronomy 4:42, cities of refuge are designated for unintentional murderers who do not hate their victim, with specific laws regarding who is exiled for killing whom, the actions of killers in the city of refuge, and the temporary shelter provided by the altar. Rashbam explains the different terms for killing in the Torah, emphasizing the distinction between deliberate murder and other types of killing. The Gemara discusses various scenarios related to unintentional murder, including the treatment of a slave in a city of refuge and the relationship between Torah scholars. In Tanakh, the establishment of cities of refuge and the consequences for intentional murder are detailed, with ransom not accepted for murderers. Targum translations also mention the provision for murderers to flee to specific cities for refuge.

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| אֶת־בֶּ֧צֶר בַּמִּדְבָּ֛ר בְּאֶ֥רֶץ הַמִּישֹׁ֖ר לָרֽאוּבֵנִ֑י וְאֶת־רָאמֹ֤ת בַּגִּלְעָד֙ לַגָּדִ֔י וְאֶת־גּוֹלָ֥ן בַּבָּשָׁ֖ן לַֽמְנַשִּֽׁי׃ | 43 | Bezer, in the wilderness in the Tableland, belonging to the Reubenites; Ramoth, in Gilead, belonging to the Gadites; and Golan, in Bashan, belonging to the Manassites. |

The cities of refuge were designated in specific locations for different tribes, with Bezer in the desert assigned to Reuven, Ramot in Gilad for the Gadites, and Golan in the Bashan for the Manassites, providing protection for unintentional human killers only. Moses and Joshua each designated three cities of refuge on opposite sides of the Jordan River, corresponding to the number of murderers in those areas, with the concept of exile and redemption tied to the idea of cities of refuge. The section of Deuteronomy serves as an introduction to the book, warning the new generation about the failings of their predecessors and setting the stage for the Deuteronomistic History that follows. Rabbi Yoḥanan states that a teacher of Torah who is exiled has his school exiled with him, aligning the status of Torah with that of a city of refuge, clarifying the distinctions between Bezer and Bozrah. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan list the cities of Betzer, Romos, and Golon as designated for the tribes of Reuven, Gadd, and Menasheh respectively.

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| וְזֹ֖את הַתּוֹרָ֑ה אֲשֶׁר־שָׂ֣ם מֹשֶׁ֔ה לִפְנֵ֖י בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 44 | This is the Teaching that Moses set before the Israelites: |

Chasidut discusses the sanctity differences between Prophets and Writings, with Zohar distinguishing between prophecy and ruach hakodesh. The Torah in Deuteronomy 4:44 is emphasized as a city of refuge, providing protection even to intentional wrongdoers. Kabbalah symbolizes the Torah with Tiferet, Nezaḥ, and Hod, and Liturgy highlights Adonoy’s desire to make the Torah great. Midrash emphasizes the Torah’s enduring nature, protection, and importance in the face of adversity. Musar discusses revealing new Torah insights and Gentiles claiming reward based on contributions to civilization, but being rejected by G-d. Quoting Commentary explains the curses for denying or rebelling against the Torah, and Talmud discusses the Torah as a potion of life or death, like a city of refuge, and emphasizes the importance of Torah study for reward. Targum mentions Moshe setting the Torah before the sons of Israel.

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| אֵ֚לֶּה הָֽעֵדֹ֔ת וְהַֽחֻקִּ֖ים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר דִּבֶּ֤ר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל בְּצֵאתָ֖ם מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 45 | these are the decrees, laws, and rules that Moses addressed to the people of Israel, after they had left Egypt, |

Moses spoke testimonies to the Israelites when they left Egypt and reiterated them in the plains of Moab, with practical aspects of the Torah outlined in subsequent verses. The Tabernacle is considered a testimony to God, with disparaging the Torah seen as equivalent to disparaging God. The word “testimonies” can also mean “encounter” in this context, with the Tabernacle symbolizing the Torah and serving as a protection akin to a king safeguarding his daughter. The appearance of “משכן” twice in the text hints at the future existence of two permanent Temples, with numerical values indicating the years each Temple stood.

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| בְּעֵ֨בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֜ן בַּגַּ֗יְא מ֚וּל בֵּ֣ית פְּע֔וֹר בְּאֶ֗רֶץ סִיחֹן֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ הָֽאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר יוֹשֵׁ֖ב בְּחֶשְׁבּ֑וֹן אֲשֶׁ֨ר הִכָּ֤ה מֹשֶׁה֙ וּבְנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל בְּצֵאתָ֖ם מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 46 | beyond the Jordan, in the valley at Beth-peor, in the land of King Sihon of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, whom Moses and the Israelites defeated after they had left Egypt. |

Mount Abarim is in a different district from the plains of Moab, emphasizing the defeat of two kings during the Israelites’ journey from Egypt, with the intention to defeat them since the Exodus. The mention of the Israelites inheriting these lands in the next verse confirms this interpretation. The names in Deuteronomy 1:1 are locations where parts of the Torah were revealed, “These are the words” refers to the commandments Moses will mention, and “in the desert, the Aravah” indicates Moses had already spoken to the Israelites about upcoming topics. Moshe led the Israelites to defeat King Sichon of the Emorites in the land of Cheshbon after crossing the Jordan River from Egypt.

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| וַיִּֽירְשׁ֨וּ אֶת־אַרְצ֜וֹ וְאֶת־אֶ֣רֶץ ׀ ע֣וֹג מֶֽלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁ֗ן שְׁנֵי֙ מַלְכֵ֣י הָֽאֱמֹרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּעֵ֣בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן מִזְרַ֖ח שָֽׁמֶשׁ׃ | 47 | They had taken possession of his country and that of King Og of Bashan—the two kings of the Amorites—which were on the east side of the Jordan |

Moses emphasized the importance of remaining loyal to God in the new territories after conquering Sihon and Og’s lands, which were east of the Jordan River. The Torah passage in Va-es’hanan detailed laws, testimonies, and rules presented to the Israelites after their victory over Sichon, king of the Amorites, in Heshbon. The Israelites inherited the lands of Og, King of the Boshon, and Og, King of Mathnan, two Emorite kings located east of the Jordan River.

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| מֵעֲרֹעֵ֞ר אֲשֶׁ֨ר עַל־שְׂפַת־נַ֧חַל אַרְנֹ֛ן וְעַד־הַ֥ר שִׂיאֹ֖ן ה֥וּא חֶרְמֽוֹן׃ | 48 | from Aroer on the banks of the wadi Arnon, as far as Mount Sion, that is, Hermon; |

The conquests of Israel on the eastern side of the Jordan River extended from Aroer on the Arnon Ravine to Mount Hermon, also known as Sirion and Senir, with different nations assigning different names to the mountain. The city of Dvir had four names, symbolizing the contention over it by four kings and highlighting the significance of Eretz Yisrael. The Targumim describe the geographical boundaries from Aroer to Mount Sion, emphasizing the importance of these locations in the land of Israel.

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| וְכׇל־הָ֨עֲרָבָ֜ה עֵ֤בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן֙ מִזְרָ֔חָה וְעַ֖ד יָ֣ם הָעֲרָבָ֑ה תַּ֖חַת אַשְׁדֹּ֥ת הַפִּסְגָּֽה׃ | 49 | also the whole Arabah on the east side of the Jordan, as far as the Sea of the Arabah, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah. |

The verse in Deuteronomy 4:49 describes the land given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, including the Arava desert east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea up to Mount Hermon. Rashbam clarifies that the Sea of Reeds borders the Philistines and the Dead Sea, facing the Aravah of Moav. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan both describe the Arava region extending from the Jordan River to the east, with Onkelos mentioning Arava Lake and the Pisgah slopes, while Targum Jonathan refers to a sea in the plain under the spring of the heights.

## Deuteronomy 5

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| וַיִּקְרָ֣א מֹשֶׁה֮ אֶל־כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל֒ וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֲלֵהֶ֗ם שְׁמַ֤ע יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ אֶת־הַחֻקִּ֣ים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י דֹּבֵ֥ר בְּאׇזְנֵיכֶ֖ם הַיּ֑וֹם וּלְמַדְתֶּ֣ם אֹתָ֔ם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם לַעֲשֹׂתָֽם׃ | 1 | Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the laws and rules that I proclaim to you this day! Study them and observe them faithfully! |

Moses gathered all of Israel to review the Ten Commandments and ensure understanding of the laws for future generations, emphasizing Torah study as a foundational aspect of Jewish life and a mitzvah for all men. The importance of love, good deeds, and Torah study is stressed in Jewish thought, while the Midrash discusses adherence to commandments and the appointment of judges for justice in Jerusalem. Engaging in performing mitzvot is considered Torah study in the Talmud, and Targum emphasizes the importance of studying and fulfilling the statutes and laws.

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| יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֗ינוּ כָּרַ֥ת עִמָּ֛נוּ בְּרִ֖ית בְּחֹרֵֽב׃ | 2 | Our God יהוה made a covenant with us at Horeb. |

The covenant made at Horeb (Sinai) between God and the Israelites establishes an exclusive relationship, with judges and law officers enforcing justice, passing down secret knowledge through generations, culminating in Abraham’s circumcision. This covenant includes both Moses and Israel, with Moses singled out due to God’s favor, leading to specific wording in Exodus 34:27. The covenant with Abraham and his descendants requires male circumcision (Genesis 17:10). The Targum confirms the covenant at Mount Horeb (Deuteronomy 5:2).

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| לֹ֣א אֶת־אֲבֹתֵ֔ינוּ כָּרַ֥ת יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶת־הַבְּרִ֣ית הַזֹּ֑את כִּ֣י אִתָּ֔נוּ אֲנַ֨חְנוּ אֵ֥לֶּה פֹ֛ה הַיּ֖וֹם כֻּלָּ֥נוּ חַיִּֽים׃ | 3 | It was not with our ancestors that יהוה made this covenant, but with us, the living, every one of us who is here today. |

God desires that the request to serve Him should be among the living, with departed tzaddikim found more in all worlds after death. The covenant was not only with the fathers but also with the current generation, extending to those alive at the time and future generations. The revelation at Mount Sinai, not miracles, is the true proof of Moses’ prophecy. The Midrash discusses infants as guarantors for the Torah, emphasizing the importance of upholding it to avoid accountability and destruction. Adonoy made the covenant with all who are alive today.

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| פָּנִ֣ים ׀ בְּפָנִ֗ים דִּבֶּ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה עִמָּכֶ֛ם בָּהָ֖ר מִתּ֥וֹךְ הָאֵֽשׁ׃ | 4 | Face to face יהוה spoke to you on the mountain out of the fire— |

Chasidut discusses Avram’s faith and unique status as a Jewish convert, the 33rd day of the Omer representing a longing for Torah, and Hashem’s favoritism towards Bnei Yisrael. Halakhah emphasizes belief in Moses through the revelation at Mount Sinai. Jewish Thought explores the concept of direct communication with God, and Midrash delves into various teachings on angels at Sinai and the arrangement of tribes around the Tabernacle. Musar highlights sanctification, repentance, and the intimate relationship between the Jewish people and God. Quoting Commentary underscores the personal and direct communication between Hashem and the Jewish people, while Talmud discusses the oral teaching of ’aggadta. Tanakh prohibits worshiping other gods, and Targum describes the Lord’s direct communication with the Israelites at the mountain.

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| אָ֠נֹכִ֠י עֹמֵ֨ד בֵּין־יְהֹוָ֤ה וּבֵֽינֵיכֶם֙ בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֔וא לְהַגִּ֥יד לָכֶ֖ם אֶת־דְּבַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֑ה כִּ֤י יְרֵאתֶם֙ מִפְּנֵ֣י הָאֵ֔שׁ וְלֹֽא־עֲלִיתֶ֥ם בָּהָ֖ר לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 5 | I stood between יהוה and you at that time to convey יהוה’s words to you, for you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain—saying: |

Moses acted as an intermediary between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, relaying the commandments to them due to their fear of approaching the Divine Glory. Halakhah prohibits bowing to false gods and requires permission to read from the Torah. Jewish Thought emphasizes Moses’ unique relationship with God, showcasing G-d’s power through miracles. Kabbalah discusses Understanding-Binah as an essential Sefirah for accessing higher realms, akin to Moses as a Trusted Interpreter. Midrash highlights Moses dissolving God’s vow and risking his life for the Torah. Musar describes Moses reaching the fiftieth level of understanding, removing barriers between God and Israel. The Second Temple text portrays a sage as a mediator between God and humanity, ensuring peace and order. In the Talmud, Rebbi Samuel bar Rav Isaac stresses the importance of proper Torah translation protocol. Targum mentions Moses standing between God’s word and the people due to their fear of the Divine presence.

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| אָֽנֹכִ֖י֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑֔יךָ אֲשֶׁ֧ר הוֹצֵאתִ֛יךָ מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרַ֖יִם מִבֵּ֣֥ית עֲבָדִ֑͏ֽים׃ | 6 | I יהוה am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: |

Different commentaries interpret the division and numbering of the Commandments differently, with some emphasizing the importance of recognizing God as the one who delivered the Israelites from Egypt. The first positive commandment is to know that there is one God, while the first negative commandment is not to consider the thought of another divinity aside from God. The Torah commands man to understand his Creator according to his intellectual level, and the Midrash discusses various commandments and their implications, including the importance of monotheism. In the Mishnah, priests recited the Shema and the Ten Commandments, among other blessings, in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. The repetition of the Ten Commandments serves as a memorial to God’s wonders, demanding absolute allegiance to Him. In Exodus 20:1-2, God declares Himself as the one who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, as interpreted by both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan in Deuteronomy 5:6.

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| לֹ֣א־יִהְיֶ֥͏ֽה־לְךָ֛֩ אֱלֹהִ֥֨ים אֲחֵרִ֖֜ים עַל־פָּנָֽ͏ַ֗י׃ | 7 | You shall have no other gods beside Me. |

Rashi explains the eternal commandment for Jews to worship only God, while Gentiles are not forbidden to worship other deities. Rashbam emphasizes the prohibition of using tangible symbols to contact God, while Halakhah outlines the prohibition against making idols. Jewish Thought highlights the importance of love, fulfilling commandments, and understanding the names of God. The Midrash discusses the interconnectedness of commandments and the prohibition against graven images. Radak and Siftei Chakhamim provide interpretations of key verses, emphasizing judgment and the importance of communal matters. Tanakh reiterates the exclusive worship of the LORD, while Targum emphasizes the prohibition against worshiping other gods.

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| לֹֽ֣א־תַעֲשֶֽׂ֨ה־לְךָ֥֣ פֶ֣֙סֶל֙ ׀ כׇּל־תְּמוּנָ֔֡ה אֲשֶׁ֤֣ר בַּשָּׁמַ֣֙יִם֙ ׀ מִמַּ֔֡עַל וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר֩ בָּאָ֖֨רֶץ מִתָּ֑͏ַ֜חַת וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר בַּמַּ֖֣יִם ׀ מִתַּ֥֣חַת לָאָֽ֗רֶץ׃ | 8 | You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters below the earth. |

The prohibition against making idols or images for worship in Deuteronomy 5:8 is emphasized as important due to imminent exposure to polytheistic influences, encompassing all forms of idolatrous representations. The Mishneh Torah prohibits bowing down to false gods and worshiping them, with liability for those who commission or craft idols. The Shema Yisrael links the Oneness of God with His Majesty, serving as a reminder of the first two commandments. Fulfilling the reading of the Shema can prevent surrender to enemies, and idolatry is singled out as denying the Ten Commandments. The Targums emphasize the prohibition against creating images of celestial, earthly, or aquatic beings.

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| לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶ֥֣ה לָהֶ֖ם֮ וְלֹ֣א תׇעׇבְדֵ֑ם֒ כִּ֣י אָנֹכִ֞י יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֵ֣ל קַנָּ֔א פֹּ֠קֵ֠ד עֲוֺ֨ן אָב֧וֹת עַל־בָּנִ֛ים וְעַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁ֥ים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִ֖ים לְשֹׂנְאָֽ֑י׃ | 9 | You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I your God יהוה am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, |

Various commentaries, halakhic interpretations, Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud, and Targum emphasize God’s demand for exclusive worship and severe punishment for idolatry, including specific actions like bowing, slaughtering, offering burnt offerings, and pouring libations. The consequences of idol worship, adultery, and judgment of nations are discussed, with actions like hugging, kissing, cleaning idols being prohibited but not punishable by death. The importance of keeping God’s commandments, remembering the Sabbath, and interpreting the concept of God visiting the sins of the fathers on the children are highlighted in these texts.

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| וְעֹ֥֤שֶׂה חֶ֖֙סֶד֙ לַֽאֲלָפִ֑֔ים לְאֹהֲבַ֖י וּלְשֹׁמְרֵ֥י ׃ | 10 | but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments. |

God’s commandments are to be fulfilled as if they are the commands of a present being, showing exclusivity and great love for the faithful. The text prohibits taking an oath in vain, emphasizing the restriction on unnecessary swearing. In some cases, “the name of the Lord” represents the essence and reality of God or the word and command of God. Or HaChaim explains that God quantifies blessings more generously than curses, with Targum mentioning God’s kindness and mercy to those who love Him and follow His commandments.

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| לֹ֥א תִשָּׂ֛א אֶת־שֵֽׁם־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לַשָּׁ֑וְא כִּ֣י לֹ֤א יְנַקֶּה֙ יְהֹוָ֔ה אֵ֛ת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂ֥א אֶת־שְׁמ֖וֹ לַשָּֽׁוְא׃ | 11 | You shall not swear falsely by the name of your God יהוה; for יהוה will not clear one who swears falsely by God’s name. |

The commandment to not take the name of the Lord in vain encompasses using God’s name for no purpose, with severe consequences for false oaths. Violating an oath is considered serious, with atonement processes outlined for false oaths in the tractate. Taking an oath concerning an unfulfillable matter transgresses a negative commandment, leading to lashes, while the observance of the Sabbath involves Torah-based and Prophetic commandments. The Midrash emphasizes following all commandments and explores the consequences of violations, cautioning against breaking vows and oaths. Musar highlights the importance of returning borrowed items, charity, and truthfulness in testimony, linking the Sabbath commandment to the Exodus from Egypt. The Talmud discusses interpretations and applications of Shabbat-related mitzvot, exploring punishments for transgressions like false oaths. The Targum emphasizes the prohibition against swearing falsely by the Name of the Lord in Deuteronomy 5:11.

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| שָׁמ֛֣וֹר אֶת־י֥וֹם֩ הַשַּׁבָּ֖֨ת לְקַדְּשׁ֑֜וֹ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוְּךָ֖֣ ׀ יְהֹוָ֥֣ה אֱלֹהֶֽ֗יךָ׃ | 12 | Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as your God יהוה has commanded you. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of understanding the intention behind keeping the Sabbath holy, connecting it to God as the Creator and achieving the level of “zachor.” Commentary highlights that women are obligated to observe the Sabbath, while Halakhah discusses the dimensions of Sabbath observance and its connection to the Exodus from Egypt. Jewish Thought emphasizes the obligation for all Jews to relate the story of the Exodus, and Kabbalah discusses the significance of remembering and observing the Sabbath. Liturgy explains the discrepancy between the texts of the fourth commandment, while Midrash emphasizes the importance of the Sabbath and its connection to the Ten Commandments. Musar advises forgiveness and specific practices related to the Sabbath, while Talmud discusses various aspects of Sabbath observance and the giving of the Torah. Tanakh instructs individuals to remember and keep the Sabbath holy, while Targum emphasizes the importance of observing and sanctifying the Sabbath as commanded by God.

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| שֵׁ֤֣שֶׁת יָמִ֣ים֙ תַּֽעֲבֹ֔ד֮ וְעָשִׂ֖֣יתָ כׇּֿל־מְלַאכְתֶּֽךָ֒׃ | 13 | Six days you shall labor and do all your work, |

The Halakhah prohibits work on the Sabbath, including carrying certain objects and moving muktzeh items to ensure a true day of rest, as stated in Deuteronomy 5:14. Rashi explains that resting animals on the Sabbath applies to all cattle and beasts, while Ibn Ezra discusses the preservation of meanings in Scripture. The Talmud clarifies that the term “stranger” refers to a ger toshav, not a righteous convert, and that the fourfold and fivefold payment for theft applies to all animals, not just oxen and sheep. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 5:13 as emphasizing the command to work for six days.

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| וְי֨וֹם֙ הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔֜י שַׁבָּ֖֣ת ׀ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑֗יךָ לֹ֣א תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה כׇל־מְלָאכָ֡ה אַתָּ֣ה וּבִנְךָֽ־וּבִתֶּ֣ךָ וְעַבְדְּךָֽ־וַ֠אֲמָתֶ֠ךָ וְשׁוֹרְךָ֨ וַחֲמֹֽרְךָ֜ וְכׇל־בְּהֶמְתֶּ֗ךָ וְגֵֽרְךָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בִּשְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ לְמַ֗עַן יָנ֛וּחַ עַבְדְּךָ֥ וַאֲמָתְךָ֖ כָּמֽ֑וֹךָ׃ | 14 | but the seventh day is a sabbath of your God יהוה; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. |

Chasidut emphasizes the intention to cleave to God during Shabbat, with all commandments understood through the Oral Torah. The Sabbath rest reflects God’s kindness and past servitude, ensuring rest for all, including animals and servants. Observing Shabbat is a way to remember God’s creation and spiritual freedom, with prohibitions on activities to ensure rest for all household members. The Sabbath is a symbol of freedom and rest for the entire community, not limited to specific animals, as emphasized in various texts such as the Talmud and Tanakh.

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| וְזָכַרְתָּ֗֞ כִּ֣י־עֶ֤֥בֶד הָיִ֣֙יתָ֙ ׀ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔֗יִם וַיֹּצִ֨אֲךָ֜֩ יְהֹוָ֤֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֤֙יךָ֙ מִשָּׁ֔ם֙ בְּיָ֥֤ד חֲזָקָ֖ה֙ וּבִזְרֹ֣עַ נְטוּיָ֑֔ה עַל־כֵּ֗ן צִוְּךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לַעֲשׂ֖וֹת אֶת־י֥וֹם הַשַּׁבָּֽת׃ | 15 | Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and your God יהוה freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore your God יהוה has commanded you to observe the sabbath day. |

Chasidut emphasizes maintaining a proper perspective rooted in the fear of Hashem to transform distress into spiritual growth, as seen in the mitzvot to remember the exodus from Mitzrayim and observe Shabbos. Halakhah stresses the importance of resting on Shabbat to show spiritual freedom and connection to divine roots, while Jewish Thought highlights the significance of Passover, Shabbat, and other commandments as reminders of fundamental beliefs. The Talmud discusses the rewards and punishments for fulfilling or not following commandments, with Rabbi Ya’akov adding that belief in the resurrection of the dead is crucial for receiving rewards for mitzvot. The Targum explains the command to observe the Sabbath as a reminder of the Israelites’ deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

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| כַּבֵּ֤ד אֶת־אָבִ֙יךָ֙ וְאֶת־אִמֶּ֔ךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוְּךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לְמַ֣עַן ׀ יַאֲרִיכֻ֣ן יָמֶ֗יךָ וּלְמַ֙עַן֙ יִ֣יטַב לָ֔ךְ עַ֚ל הָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 16 | Honor your father and your mother, as your God יהוה has commanded you, that you may long endure, and that you may fare well, in the land that your God יהוה is assigning to you. |

The commandment to honor father and mother is given at Marah, ensuring good days in this life and further reward in the world to come. Halakhah prohibits kidnapping and killing innocent people, with murder resulting in execution. Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of love in completing life and becoming a blessing. Liturgy teaches that rewards for fulfilling mitzvot are bestowed in the World-to-Come. Midrash highlights the importance of fulfilling commandments, such as honoring parents. Mishnah states that men are obligated to perform all mitzvot regarding their fathers. Musar extends the duty to honor family members from the commandment to honor father and mother. Quoting Commentary discusses the importance of honoring parents and the promise of reward. Talmud emphasizes the reward for fulfilling mitzvot is dependent on the resurrection of the dead. Tanakh recounts Moses crying out to God at Marah and the command to honor parents. Targum stresses the importance of honoring parents for a long and prosperous life.

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| לֹ֥֖א תִּֿרְצָ֖͏ֽח׃ וְלֹ֣֖א תִּֿנְאָ֑͏ֽף׃ וְלֹ֣֖א תִּֿגְנֹֽ֔ב׃ וְלֹֽא־תַעֲנֶ֥ה בְרֵֽעֲךָ֖ עֵ֥ד שָֽׁוְא׃ | 17 | You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. |

The commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery” applies to married women, and bearing false witness includes submitting frivolous testimony that could harm a neighbor. The Torah emphasizes loyalty and honesty in testimony. Killing transgresses the commandment “Do not murder,” and giving false testimony is prohibited, with violators facing lashes and retribution. The Midrash discusses the importance of following God’s laws, resisting temptation, and ethical behavior. Ibn Ezra questions the wording of the Ten Commandments and emphasizes understanding the underlying meanings. The Targum expands on the commandments not to murder, commit adultery, kidnap, or bear false witness, emphasizing the importance of avoiding association with those who commit these sins.

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| וְלֹ֥א תַחְמֹ֖ד אֵ֣שֶׁת רֵעֶ֑ךָ וְלֹ֨א תִתְאַוֶּ֜ה בֵּ֣ית רֵעֶ֗ךָ שָׂדֵ֜הוּ וְעַבְדּ֤וֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ֙ שׁוֹר֣וֹ וַחֲמֹר֔וֹ וְכֹ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר לְרֵעֶֽךָ׃ | 18 | You [men] shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. Likewise, none of you shall crave your neighbor’s house, or field, or male or female slave, or ox, or ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s. |

The prohibition against coveting is a serious offense in Chasidut, Halakhah, Musar, and Tanakh, as it can lead to harmful actions and intentions towards others. Various commentaries, including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Tur HaArokh, and Ramban, emphasize the importance of refraining from coveting and desiring, with distinctions made between the two concepts. The Ten Commandments are organized on two tablets to show their relationship, with the first tablet containing commandments related to divinity and the second tablet containing commandments related to interpersonal relationships. The Targum commentary warns against covetousness and the negative consequences it can bring, emphasizing the importance of maintaining purity and integrity within the community of Israel.

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| אֶֽת־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֡לֶּה דִּבֶּר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֶל־כׇּל־קְהַלְכֶ֜ם בָּהָ֗ר מִתּ֤וֹךְ הָאֵשׁ֙ הֶֽעָנָ֣ן וְהָֽעֲרָפֶ֔ל ק֥וֹל גָּד֖וֹל וְלֹ֣א יָסָ֑ף וַֽיִּכְתְּבֵ֗ם עַל־שְׁנֵי֙ לֻחֹ֣ת אֲבָנִ֔ים וַֽיִּתְּנֵ֖ם אֵלָֽי׃ | 19 | יהוה spoke those words—those and no more—to your whole congregation at the mountain, with a mighty voice out of the fire and the dense clouds. [God] inscribed them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. |

Chasidut emphasizes the Torah’s guidance ingrained in every Jewish soul, requiring preparation and desire from Bnei Yisrael to fully embrace its teachings, with every word offering protection contingent on awareness and commitment. Various interpretations of “ולא יסף” in Deuteronomy 5:19 include God’s voice not pausing, the Ten Commandments heard to avoid distraction, and Moses being the intermediary between God and the Israelites. The Midrash discusses the story of Tamar, David, and the Torah at Sinai, highlighting modesty, humility, and the impact of observing commandments. Nachmanides explains the essence of the first two commandments heard directly from God, reconciling different views on the giving of the Torah. Shmuel the Elder interprets Judah’s actions with Tamar for the sake of Heaven, while the Gemara and Jerusalem Talmud emphasize the eternal nature of the Torah and certain practices. Men with certain physical conditions are restricted from the congregation of יהוה, with uncertainty about the inclusion of women. Adonoy spoke to the assembly at the mountain with a great voice, writing the words on two tablets given to Moses.

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| וַיְהִ֗י כְּשׇׁמְעֲכֶ֤ם אֶת־הַקּוֹל֙ מִתּ֣וֹךְ הַחֹ֔שֶׁךְ וְהָהָ֖ר בֹּעֵ֣ר בָּאֵ֑שׁ וַתִּקְרְב֣וּן אֵלַ֔י כׇּל־רָאשֵׁ֥י שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֖ם וְזִקְנֵיכֶֽם׃ | 20 | When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, you came up to me, all your tribal heads and elders, |

Chasidut explains that the Jewish people, due to their spiritual sensitivity, physically reacted to the thunder and lightning during G’d’s revelation at Mount Sinai. Jewish Thought highlights Moses’ unique experience of hearing and conveying the actual words of God, distinguishing him from the other Israelites. Kabbalah discusses the punishments for the wicked as described in the Zohar and the association of the splitting of the sea and the giving of the Torah with specific Sefirot. Midrash addresses various topics such as the building and destruction of the Holy Temple, prophets seeking God, Israel’s betrayal, and the request for God’s plan to be fulfilled. Musar delves into the mystical dimensions of fire and darkness, the symbolism of Cain and Abel, and the importance of unity and passing down tradition. Quoting Commentary provides insights from Ramban, Rashi, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Malbim on the events of the Revelation at Mount Sinai. Targum describes the leaders of the tribes and elders approaching God after hearing His voice and witnessing the burning mountain.

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| וַתֹּאמְר֗וּ הֵ֣ן הֶרְאָ֜נוּ יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֵ֙ינוּ֙ אֶת־כְּבֹד֣וֹ וְאֶת־גׇּדְל֔וֹ וְאֶת־קֹל֥וֹ שָׁמַ֖עְנוּ מִתּ֣וֹךְ הָאֵ֑שׁ הַיּ֤וֹם הַזֶּה֙ רָאִ֔ינוּ כִּֽי־יְדַבֵּ֧ר אֱלֹהִ֛ים אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֖ם וָחָֽי׃ | 21 | and said, “Our God יהוה has just shown us a majestic Presence, and we have heard God’s voice out of the fire; we have seen this day that humankind may live though addressed by God. |

In Halakhah, negative mitzvah 266 prohibits desiring one’s neighbor’s house. The uniqueness of Moses as a prophet and his role in delivering the Law is discussed in Jewish Thought, emphasizing the importance of Torah prophecy as being of divine origin. The Torah was given with Might-Gevurah in Kabbalah, while the Exodus from Egypt was with Understanding-Binah. In Midrash, Israel requested to see God’s glory and hear His voice, with their souls departing but later being restored. Rashi emphasizes the importance of humility in Musar, showing the significance of giving others the right of precedence. In Quoting Commentary, the vision of the Glory of the G-d of Israel was seen by the seventy elders due to the merit of Jacob, and the fiery law was interpreted as a law given with fire. In Tanakh, God tells Moses that no one can see His face and live. Targum highlights that the Israelites witnessed God’s glory, greatness, and voice speaking from within the fire.

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| וְעַתָּה֙ לָ֣מָּה נָמ֔וּת כִּ֣י תֹֽאכְלֵ֔נוּ הָאֵ֥שׁ הַגְּדֹלָ֖ה הַזֹּ֑את אִם־יֹסְפִ֣ים ׀ אֲנַ֗חְנוּ לִ֠שְׁמֹ֠עַ אֶת־ק֨וֹל יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵ֛ינוּ ע֖וֹד וָמָֽתְנוּ׃ | 22 | Let us not die, then, for this fearsome fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of our God יהוה any longer, we shall die. |

The Israelites feared death from hearing the voice of God due to its overwhelming nature and great fire, leading them to question the risk of continuing to listen. Fear of the Lord is essential for safeguarding actions in Torah and commandments, prioritizing fear over wisdom for lasting Torah study. Buber’s interpretation of the Sinai encounter emphasizes the need to endure overwhelming divine revelation and be responsible for every moment. In Kabbalah, God tests individuals to see their strength in facing His greatness, ultimately leading to spiritual growth and the ability to behold His sweetness. Prophets are seen as angels, Torah study is emphasized, and Israel is symbolized as a veil in the Temple in Midrash. Moses received the best portions of gifts from God, ascending to higher regions after death. Moses acted as an intermediary between God and the people, relaying all commandments received near thick darkness, as discussed by Ramban and Rabbeinu Bahya. Sacrifice offerings reinforce God’s unity and draw closer to Him in a kabbalistic interpretation, as explained by Rashbam. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize the fear of death if the people continue to hear the voice of God.

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| כִּ֣י מִ֣י כׇל־בָּשָׂ֡ר אֲשֶׁ֣ר שָׁמַ֣ע קוֹל֩ אֱלֹהִ֨ים חַיִּ֜ים מְדַבֵּ֧ר מִתּוֹךְ־הָאֵ֛שׁ כָּמֹ֖נוּ וַיֶּֽחִי׃ | 23 | For what mortal ever heard the voice of the living God speak out of the fire, as we did, and lived? |

Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Rabbeinu Bahya emphasize that God is distinct from the heavenly host and is the source of life. Jewish Thought discusses the importance of politeness, divine intervention, and the quality of the Jewish people over quantity. The Midrash describes the powerful nature of God’s voice at Sinai and its effects on different people. Quoting Commentary provides explanations of biblical passages related to being a wanderer, cleaving to God, and the destructive power of God’s voice. Targum highlights the unique relationship between God and the Israelites in hearing His voice and surviving.

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| קְרַ֤ב אַתָּה֙ וּֽשְׁמָ֔ע אֵ֛ת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר יֹאמַ֖ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ וְאַ֣תְּ ׀ תְּדַבֵּ֣ר אֵלֵ֗ינוּ אֵת֩ כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְדַבֵּ֜ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵ֛ינוּ אֵלֶ֖יךָ וְשָׁמַ֥עְנוּ וְעָשִֽׂינוּ׃ | 24 | You go closer and hear all that our God יהוה says, and then you tell us everything that our God יהוה tells you, and we will willingly do it.” |

The Kedushat Levi commentary discusses the addition of “Lord, open my lips” to the Amidah prayer due to the decline in the spiritual level of the Jewish people, while the Sefat Emet commentary emphasizes expanding the Written Torah through deeds. Moses was reassured by God that the people’s fear was reverence, leading them to prefer prophets over direct revelations. The Law promotes politeness, obedience, and good deeds, with slander and the punishment of the exodus generation discussed. In Kabbalah, “my sister” refers to the Shechinah, and in the Midrash, God responds to both affirmative and negative responses. Musar speaks of the ideal world when all of God’s potential in man is realized, and Ramban explains the communication between Moses and God using the Proper Name. The text refutes claims alluding to Mohammed in Scripture and emphasizes the covenant with the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. The Israelites asked Moses to speak on behalf of God out of fear of direct communication.

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| וַיִּשְׁמַ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ אֶת־ק֣וֹל דִּבְרֵיכֶ֔ם בְּדַבֶּרְכֶ֖ם אֵלָ֑י וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י שָׁ֠מַ֠עְתִּי אֶת־ק֨וֹל דִּבְרֵ֜י הָעָ֤ם הַזֶּה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר דִּבְּר֣וּ אֵלֶ֔יךָ הֵיטִ֖יבוּ כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֵּֽרוּ׃ | 25 | יהוה heard the plea that you made to me, and יהוה said to me, “I have heard the plea that this people made to you; they did well to speak thus. |

Chasidut explains the unique intellectual approach of the children of Israel in uncovering hidden truths within the Torah, while Halakhah emphasizes instilling fear of God in children and praying with reverence. Jewish Thought discusses God’s will and the spiritual significance of the shofar, Kabbalah highlights the power of spoken words reaching the divine realm, Midrash emphasizes respect for powerful individuals and the giving of the Torah, Musar explores the fear of dying when close to God, Quoting Commentary recounts the agreement of the people to follow God’s commandments through Moses, Talmud discusses the Jewish people’s sin despite fearing God, Tanakh explains the origin of daily sacrifices, and Targum emphasizes God’s approval of the words spoken by the people.

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| מִֽי־יִתֵּ֡ן וְהָיָה֩ לְבָבָ֨ם זֶ֜ה לָהֶ֗ם לְיִרְאָ֥ה אֹתִ֛י וְלִשְׁמֹ֥ר אֶת־כׇּל־מִצְוֺתַ֖י כׇּל־הַיָּמִ֑ים לְמַ֨עַן יִיטַ֥ב לָהֶ֛ם וְלִבְנֵיהֶ֖ם לְעֹלָֽם׃ | 26 | May they always be of such mind, to revere Me and follow all My commandments, that it may go well with them and with their children forever! |

Chasidut interprets Parshah Vaetchanan as highlighting the need for Divine assistance in prayer and the importance of consulting God in all actions. Commentary emphasizes the influence of heavenly bodies on earthly matters and the concept of free will granted by God. Halakhah underscores the principle of free will in Torah and mitzvot, while Jewish Thought explores fear of God, adherence to divine laws, and the complexities of human behavior. Midrash discusses the prophets of Israel, repentance after the golden calf incident, and blessings from Zion. Quoting Commentary emphasizes diligence, freedom of choice, and the mystical aspect of divine presence. Talmud delves into Moses’ separation from his wife after the revelation at Sinai, the lifting of the prohibition on conjugal relations, and the lesson of forgiveness through repentance from the Golden Calf incident. Targum expresses a desire for the people to continue fearing God and keeping His commandments for eternal blessings, while Tosefta lists forms of theft including misrepresentation.

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| לֵ֖ךְ אֱמֹ֣ר לָהֶ֑ם שׁ֥וּבוּ לָכֶ֖ם לְאׇהֳלֵיכֶֽם׃ | 27 | Go, say to them, ‘Return to your tents.’ |

Chasidut emphasizes the mutual benefit between hasidim and their rebbe, leading to a lasting connection through shared ideas and influence. Moses’ return to the people after receiving the law on Mount Sinai signifies the need for explicit revocation of decisions made by competent authority. The mitzva of ona in marriage is seen as a joyful commandment symbolizing the joy of marriage. Prophecy in Jewish thought involves mental understanding due to the incorporeal nature of the Almighty. Moses’ actions, such as breaking the Tablets and separating from his wife, were based on his own reasoning in accordance with God’s will. The commandment to procreate is reiterated to the Jewish people after the revelation at Mount Sinai. Moses separated from his wife after the revelation based on an a fortiori inference and God’s command, while a leper is prohibited from marital relations based on the term “his tent” referring to his wife after the giving of the Torah. God rebukes Miriam and Aaron for speaking against Moses in Numbers 12:8.

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| וְאַתָּ֗ה פֹּה֮ עֲמֹ֣ד עִמָּדִי֒ וַאֲדַבְּרָ֣ה אֵלֶ֗יךָ אֵ֧ת כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֛ה וְהַחֻקִּ֥ים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר תְּלַמְּדֵ֑ם וְעָשׂ֣וּ בָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י נֹתֵ֥ן לָהֶ֖ם לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 28 | But you remain here with Me, and I will give you the whole Instruction—the laws and the rules—that you shall impart to them, for them to observe in the land that I am giving them to possess.” |

Chasidut emphasizes the ascetic and holy nature of Moses as a leader, highlighting his close relationship with God. Halakhah discusses the seating arrangements in Torah study, while Jewish Thought contrasts Moses’ prophetic abilities with those of Bileam. Midrash explores Moses’ obedience to God and his unique qualities as a prophet. Musar reflects on Moses’ humility and his escape from Pharaoh. Quoting Commentary delves into various interpretations of Moses’ actions and God’s commands. Second Temple literature discusses Noah’s virtue and the flood narrative, while Talmud addresses standing for reading the Torah and Moses’ actions with the Golden Calf. Targum explains God’s instructions to Moses to separate from his wife to teach the Israelites the commandments.

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| וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֛ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֖ם אֶתְכֶ֑ם לֹ֥א תָסֻ֖רוּ יָמִ֥ין וּשְׂמֹֽאל׃ | 29 | Be careful, then, to do as your God יהוה has commanded you. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left: |

The text stresses the importance of observing God’s commandments, particularly the Ten Commandments, without adding or subtracting from them to ensure a prosperous life in the promised land. The principle of free will in Torah and mitzvot highlights individuals’ choice to do good or evil, as the Creator does not compel or decree actions. In the Midrash, various interpretations are given regarding God’s actions with the Israelites, while Philo discusses sacrifices offered by Abel and Cain. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan underscore the significance of following God’s commandments without deviation.

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| בְּכׇל־הַדֶּ֗רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֨ר צִוָּ֜ה יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֛ם אֶתְכֶ֖ם תֵּלֵ֑כוּ לְמַ֤עַן תִּֽחְיוּן֙ וְט֣וֹב לָכֶ֔ם וְהַאֲרַכְתֶּ֣ם יָמִ֔ים בָּאָ֖רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּֽירָשֽׁוּן׃ | 30 | follow only the path that your God יהוה has enjoined upon you, so that you may thrive and that it may go well with you, and that you may long endure in the land you are to possess. |

The commandments and statutes aim to instill fear of the Lord, leading to a fulfilling life on earth and in the afterlife, with righteousness potentially leading to rewards even in this life. Moses’ prophecy differed from other prophets in that he prophesied while awake and without metaphor, separating himself from worldly distractions to be ready for prophecy at all times. Halachah and Aggadah in the Talmud are derived from substantive contexts, with Halachah referring to God’s commanded path and Aggadah emphasizing passing down historical knowledge. The Midrash discusses the burnt offering atoning for Israel’s iniquities, compares Shmuel to Moshe, and explains the significance of the Israelites’ route in the desert. The concept of choosing life in Sefer HaYashar 5:24 refers to the life after death for the righteous. The Talmud discusses prohibitions related to lepers engaging in sexual relations and Moses separating from his wife after the revelation at Sinai. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize the importance of following God’s commandments for a good and long life in the promised land.

## Deuteronomy 6

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| וְזֹ֣את הַמִּצְוָ֗ה הַֽחֻקִּים֙ וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֛ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֖ם לְלַמֵּ֣ד אֶתְכֶ֑ם לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת בָּאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם עֹבְרִ֥ים שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 1 | And this is the Instruction—the laws and the rules—that your God יהוה has commanded [me] to impart to you, to be observed in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, |

The Midrash discusses exemptions from positive commandments for certain individuals and connects transgression to consequences in the story of a defiant son and David’s actions. The Netziv emphasizes the importance of understanding Torah study to avoid destruction, while Ramban stresses the benefits of obedience to God’s commandments for a prosperous life and inheritance in Israel. The Talmud discusses exemptions for blind individuals from compensation and mitzvot based on civil laws, and the Targum emphasizes God’s command to follow laws and commandments in the land of inheritance.

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| לְמַ֨עַן תִּירָ֜א אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ לִ֠שְׁמֹ֠ר אֶת־כׇּל־חֻקֹּתָ֣יו וּמִצְוֺתָיו֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָנֹכִ֣י מְצַוֶּ֒ךָ֒ אַתָּה֙ וּבִנְךָ֣ וּבֶן־בִּנְךָ֔ כֹּ֖ל יְמֵ֣י חַיֶּ֑יךָ וּלְמַ֖עַן יַאֲרִכֻ֥ן יָמֶֽיךָ׃ | 2 | so that you, your children, and your children’s children may revere your God יהוה and follow, as long as you live, all the divine laws and commandments that I enjoin upon you, to the end that you may long endure. |

The commandments aim to instill fear of God, leading to righteousness and blessings for the nation of Israel. Moral conduct stresses the importance of balancing divine service with worldly affairs for the continuity of future generations. The Midrash discusses the link between fulfilling commandments and lengthening life, as well as the consequences of neglecting just actions. Moses emphasized the importance of Israel passing over the Jordan to possess the land for their benefit and to honor God. Targum texts highlight the significance of fearing and obeying God’s commandments for a long life and passing down traditions to future generations.

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| וְשָׁמַעְתָּ֤ יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֣ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֲשֶׁר֙ יִיטַ֣ב לְךָ֔ וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּרְבּ֖וּן מְאֹ֑ד כַּאֲשֶׁר֩ דִּבֶּ֨ר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֱלֹהֵ֤י אֲבֹתֶ֙יךָ֙ לָ֔ךְ אֶ֛רֶץ זָבַ֥ת חָלָ֖ב וּדְבָֽשׁ׃ | 3 | Obey, O Israel, willingly and faithfully, that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly [in] a land flowing with milk and honey, as יהוה, the God of your ancestors, spoke to you. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of morning prayer as a time for strengthening and seeking the Lord with all one’s heart and soul. Commentary connects observing commandments to experiencing goodness and prosperity in the promised land. Halakhah stresses the positive mitzvah of unifying God, while Jewish Thought encourages drawing nearer to God and fulfilling one’s sacred mission on earth. Midrash emphasizes diligently keeping God’s commandments to safeguard one’s soul and ensure peace for future generations. Quoting Commentary explains the implications of oaths made to the patriarchs. Talmud discusses loving and honoring the Torah through heart and deeds, while Targum emphasizes the importance of listening, obeying, and acting upon God’s commandments for prosperity in a land flowing with milk and honey.

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| שְׁמַ֖ע יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ יְהֹוָ֥ה ׀ אֶחָֽד׃ | 4 | Hear, O Israel! יהוה is our God, יהוה alone. |

Chasidut explains the difference between “מלוכה” and “ממשלה” in reference to God’s rule, emphasizing the future willingness of gentile nations to appoint God as their king. The Tanya views the Shema prayer as a declaration of faith and surrender to God’s sovereignty. The Mishnah details the breaks in the paragraphs of Shema and the recitation by priests in the Temple. The Musar teachings focus on perfecting the soul, body, and property through Torah study and commandments. The Talmud discusses the recitation of Shema, emphasizing the importance of understanding and audible recitation. Tanakh and Targum highlight God’s sovereignty and unity, while the Tosefta discusses the importance of certain verses and portions in Jewish practice.

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| וְאָ֣הַבְתָּ֔ אֵ֖ת יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֥ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשְׁךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־מְאֹדֶֽךָ׃ | 5 | You shall love your God יהוה with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. |

The text explores different aspects of love and reverence for God, highlighting the importance of loving God with all one’s heart, soul, and might. Various figures in Jewish tradition exemplify different aspects of love and devotion to God, emphasizing the need to dedicate all thoughts, desires, and possessions to achieving closeness with God. The ultimate goal is to serve God constantly and have all deeds be for the sake of Heaven, with love for God and others being central to Jewish thought and practice. The Kabbalah stresses the importance of fulfilling commandments such as love and fear of God, while the Mishnah outlines rules of reverence and proper etiquette in relation to God. The highest service to the Creator is seen as coming out of love rather than fear, with love for God involving forsaking worldly desires and constantly seeking to do good. Love is a central theme in Jewish ethics, defining the moral life and serving as a foundational principle of the faith.

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| וְהָי֞וּ הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֗לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ הַיּ֖וֹם עַל־לְבָבֶֽךָ׃ | 6 | Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. |

Chasidic commentaries stress spiritual preparation before encountering God, renewing commitment to Torah study daily, cultivating love for God and the Holy Land through understanding and connection to spiritual practices. Halakhah emphasizes loving God by contemplating His commands, studying Torah with precision, and engaging in calculations related to astronomy. Mishnah discusses opinions on reciting Shema audibly and in order, while Musar highlights the importance of meditating on Torah teachings for soul purification and developing good qualities. Talmud debates language requirements for phylacteries, mezuzot, and Torah scrolls, emphasizing the permanence of the original language of the Torah. Tosefta allows reciting blessings in any language except for the Shema, which must be in the Holy tongue.

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| וְשִׁנַּנְתָּ֣ם לְבָנֶ֔יךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ֖ בָּ֑ם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ֤ בְּבֵיתֶ֙ךָ֙ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ֣ בַדֶּ֔רֶךְ וּֽבְשׇׁכְבְּךָ֖ וּבְקוּמֶֽךָ׃ | 7 | Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. |

The text emphasizes the importance of speech and Torah study, the significance of teaching children diligently, the proper recitation of the Shema, the obligation to teach Torah to children, the value of Torah study, the importance of constant meditation on God’s teachings, the avoidance of idle chatter, the significance of studying Torah with grandchildren, the importance of consistent Torah study, and the ongoing obligation to observe commandments even in exile. Specifics include the importance of teaching children the Torah, the need for an easily understood version of the Torah, the disagreement between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel on reciting Shema, the obligation to teach Torah to children and grandchildren, and the importance of family in passing on traditions.

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| וּקְשַׁרְתָּ֥ם לְא֖וֹת עַל־יָדֶ֑ךָ וְהָי֥וּ לְטֹטָפֹ֖ת בֵּ֥ין עֵינֶֽיךָ׃ | 8 | Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; |

Chasidut explains that when wearing tefillin, one should intend for their wisdom and understanding to be absorbed into the En Sof, in line with the Shulchan Aruch. Commentary highlights the specifics of wearing tefillin on the arm and head, emphasizing their visibility and placement. Halakhah discusses the customs on the Eve of Yom Kippur and the writing and placement of tefillin. Jewish Thought stresses the importance of Torah study and physical reminders like Tzitzit and Totafot. Kabbalah states that on Shabbat and holidays, wearing tefillin is not necessary, as they are considered sufficient signs themselves. Liturgy emphasizes the importance of wearing tefillin as a commandment symbolizing unity with God. Midrash discusses the protection provided by wearing tefillin and the importance of various mitzvot. Mishnah explains the requirements for the components of tefillin and other mitzvot. Musar highlights the importance of fulfilling mitzvot immediately and the connection between memory and mitzvot. Quoting Commentary discusses the requirements for the placement and content of the Mesusa and Tefillin. Talmud delves into the placement and tying of phylacteries, the order of donning them, and the requirements for writing and tying them. Tanakh references the symbolism of tefillin in various verses. Targum translations emphasize the importance of binding signs on the hand and forehead to remember and follow the commandments.

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| וּכְתַבְתָּ֛ם עַל־מְזֻז֥וֹת בֵּיתֶ֖ךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 9 | inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. |

The text discusses the importance of faith and attachment to God through Torah study, prayer, and observance of mitzvot, emphasizing the significance of the Land of Israel in spiritual growth. It highlights the obligations of reciting the Shema twice daily, affixing a mezuzah on doorposts and gates, and fulfilling the commandments with meticulous attention. The text also explores the symbolic meanings of physical actions such as wearing tefillin and fringes on garments, connecting them to the remembrance and performance of God’s commandments. Additionally, it delves into the mystical aspects of spiritual inheritance and protection represented by the mezuzah in Kabbalistic teachings. Rabbi Jochanan’s teachings in the Midrash emphasize the importance of Torah study, prayer, and observance of commandments, while also discussing the exemption of women from certain time-bound mitzvot. The Talmud provides detailed explanations on the requirements and significance of the mitzvot of mezuzah, tefillin, and ritual fringes, emphasizing the meticulous fulfillment of each component for the mitzvah’s completion. Moshe’s reminders in Tanakh stress the centrality of God in the lives of the Israelites, to be expressed through love, remembrance, and physical manifestations of faith. The Targum Jonathan and Tafsir Rasag expand on the command to inscribe God’s words in visible places as a constant reminder of faith and devotion.

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| וְהָיָ֞ה כִּ֥י יְבִיאֲךָ֣ ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אֶל־הָאָ֜רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֧ע לַאֲבֹתֶ֛יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֛ם לְיִצְחָ֥ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹ֖ב לָ֣תֶת לָ֑ךְ עָרִ֛ים גְּדֹלֹ֥ת וְטֹבֹ֖ת אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־בָנִֽיתָ׃ | 10 | When your God יהוה brings you into the land that was sworn to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be assigned to you—great and flourishing cities that you did not build, |

The text emphasizes the importance of remembering past hardships and God’s mercy, allowing Israelites to use spoils of war containing only forbidden items related to idolatry, and the need to fear and serve God. Rambam limits the Halachah on kashrut in combat to front line soldiers in enemy territory who are very hungry, emphasizing the principle of Pikuach Nefesh. The Midrash discusses the punishment of Amalek, the different interpretations of those discarded by the cloud, and the contrasting behaviors of Esau and Joseph. Or HaChaim and Rabbeinu Bahya provide interpretations of Moses’ questions to the spies and the phylacteries, while Everett Fox highlights the integration of matzot in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The text from the Second Temple period discusses how individuals were given cities and resources they did not build, as an example of finding without seeking. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Tafsir Rasag all mention God bringing the people into a promised land with great cities they did not build.

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| וּבָ֨תִּ֜ים מְלֵאִ֣ים כׇּל־טוּב֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־מִלֵּ֒אתָ֒ וּבֹרֹ֤ת חֲצוּבִים֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־חָצַ֔בְתָּ כְּרָמִ֥ים וְזֵיתִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־נָטָ֑עְתָּ וְאָכַלְתָּ֖ וְשָׂבָֽעְתָּ׃ | 11 | houses full of all good things that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant—and you eat your fill, |

The Halakhah permits soldiers to eat forbidden foods and drink idolatrous wine when entering the territory of gentiles, based on interpretations of Deuteronomy 6:10-11. Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah have differing views on the benefits of wine, while the men of the great assembly emphasized justice, Torah education, and respect for Torah “fences.” The Midrash discusses the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, blessings found, destruction of idolatry, and importance of following God’s commandments. Radak explains that the Canaanites settled in the land of Israel before the Israelites, Ibn Ezra clarifies the meaning of “grave” in Isaiah 22:16, and Rashi explains the term “vat” in Isaiah 5:2. A unique status for beautiful captive women during conquests does not apply to a woman who converts to Judaism after being taken captive. Rabbi Yirmeya raises a dilemma regarding the permissibility of meat from a kosher animal during the conquering of the land, noting that pig meat was permitted during that time. The Israelites captured fortified cities, houses, cisterns, vineyards, and enjoyed abundance from God’s bounty. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 6:11 emphasizes the inheritance of houses, cisterns, vineyards, and olive stands without the need for labor.

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֔ פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּ֖ח אֶת־יְהֹוָ֑ה אֲשֶׁ֧ר הוֹצִֽיאֲךָ֛ מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרַ֖יִם מִבֵּ֥ית עֲבָדִֽים׃ | 12 | take heed that you do not forget יהוה who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. |

The commentators stress the importance of remembering the hardships of slavery in Egypt and God’s role in delivering the Israelites, warning against becoming consumed by material wealth. Fulfilling the mitzvot brings benefits in this world, with the ultimate reward in the world to come, while abandoning the Torah leads to retribution and loss of that reward. Memory is crucial in Jewish theology, with the injunction to remember being a religious imperative for the Jewish people. Pride is condemned in the Torah, emphasizing the importance of humility and not forgetting one’s Maker. The Targum warns against forgetting the Lord who delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

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| אֶת־יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ תִּירָ֖א וְאֹת֣וֹ תַעֲבֹ֑ד וּבִשְׁמ֖וֹ תִּשָּׁבֵֽעַ׃ | 13 | Revere only your God יהוה and worship [God] alone, and swear only by God’s name. |

Chasidut discusses the permissibility of fearing God but not anyone else, while love allows for loving those smaller than oneself. Halakhah emphasizes the mitzvah to love and fear God, swearing in His name, honoring parents, and not mentioning God’s name in vain. Jewish Thought highlights the importance of noble character, swearing by God’s name, and understanding the nature of God. Kabbalah explains that knowledge of Torah and Kabbalah is necessary to fulfill the commandments of love and fear of God. Midrash equates honoring parents with honoring God and emphasizes the importance of taking oaths in God’s name. Musar stresses the obligation to serve and fear God, while the Talmud discusses interpretations of fearing God and the importance of love and fear in serving Him. Tanakh and Targum emphasize revering and worshiping God and swearing by His name.

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| לֹ֣א תֵֽלְכ֔וּן אַחֲרֵ֖י אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֑ים מֵאֱלֹהֵי֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר סְבִיבוֹתֵיכֶֽם׃ | 14 | Do not follow other gods, any gods of the peoples about you— |

The importance of staying true to the worship of the one true God is emphasized in Jewish thought, with the completion and perfection of life coming from fulfilling commandments with love, honoring parents, and seeking good while avoiding evil. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 6:14 warns against pursuing other deities among the gods of surrounding peoples. In the Tosefta, Rabbi Meir prohibits going to idolatrous marketplaces, while the sages allow it in some cases. Priests can contract impurity for certain reasons, and it is recommended to travel with righteous individuals and avoid accompanying evil people on journeys.

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| כִּ֣י אֵ֥ל קַנָּ֛א יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בְּקִרְבֶּ֑ךָ פֶּן־יֶ֠חֱרֶ֠ה אַף־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בָּ֔ךְ וְהִשְׁמִ֣ידְךָ֔ מֵעַ֖ל פְּנֵ֥י הָאֲדָמָֽה׃ | 15 | for your God יהוה in your midst is an impassioned God—lest the anger of your God יהוה blaze forth against you, wiping you off the face of the earth. |

In Deuteronomy 6:15, God is described as zealous, demanding exclusive worship to avoid wrath and destruction. Kabbalah explores the relationship between God and Israel, Midrash discusses the downfall of Amalek and Moses advocating for the Israelites, while Radak emphasizes the importance of precautions while traveling and Or HaChaim discusses the covenant with Pinchas. Targum translations emphasize God’s jealousy and presence among the people, warning against disobedience.

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| לֹ֣א תְנַסּ֔וּ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר נִסִּיתֶ֖ם בַּמַּסָּֽה׃ | 16 | Do not try your God יהוה, as you did at Massah. |

The text emphasizes the prohibition of testing God’s promises, particularly regarding tithing, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:16 and Malachi 3:10. It is important to have faith in God’s Torah and prophets without seeking proof or miracles, as true service to God should not be conditional on receiving benefits. Trusting in God’s providence and following His commandments without doubt is crucial, while seeking forgiveness and atonement in dangerous situations can lead to divine favor. Additionally, the importance of tithing as a safeguard for wealth and prosperity is highlighted throughout various commentaries and texts.

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| שָׁמ֣וֹר תִּשְׁמְר֔וּן אֶת־מִצְוֺ֖ת יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם וְעֵדֹתָ֥יו וְחֻקָּ֖יו אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּֽךְ׃ | 17 | Be sure to keep the commandments, decrees, and laws that your God יהוה has enjoined upon you. |

Chasidut discusses the individual connection to fulfilling mitzvot, stressing the importance of not judging others’ practices. The commandments in Deuteronomy 6:17 are meant to perpetuate God’s miracles and benefit society, with the commandment not to test God applying to all laws. Targum highlights the significance of guarding and keeping God’s commandments.

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| וְעָשִׂ֛יתָ הַיָּשָׁ֥ר וְהַטּ֖וֹב בְּעֵינֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֑ה לְמַ֙עַן֙ יִ֣יטַב לָ֔ךְ וּבָ֗אתָ וְיָֽרַשְׁתָּ֙ אֶת־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטֹּבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֥ע יְהֹוָ֖ה לַאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 18 | Do what is right and good in the sight of יהוה, that it may go well with you and that you may be able to possess the good land that your God יהוה promised on oath to your fathers, |

The verse in Deuteronomy 6:18 instructs individuals to do what is right and good in the eyes of God, emphasizing the importance of following His commandments and acting with kindness, fairness, and goodwill towards others. This principle of doing good beyond the requirements of the law is seen as key in interpersonal relationships, with practical solutions established by the Sages in the Talmud based on principles of not stealing, deceiving, or causing harm to others. The Torah commands observance of laws and statutes, while also encouraging acts of kindness and fairness beyond what is explicitly commanded, complementing the specific laws given in the Torah and providing a framework for moral behavior in complex situations.

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| לַהֲדֹ֥ף אֶת־כׇּל־אֹיְבֶ֖יךָ מִפָּנֶ֑יךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּ֥ר יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 19 | and that all your enemies may be driven out before you, as יהוה has spoken. |

God promises to protect Israelites from their enemies if they follow His commandments, as stated in Exodus 23:27 and reiterated in Deuteronomy 6:19. The liturgy in Siddur Edot HaMizrach expresses the intention to fulfill the commandment of affixing a mezuzah in the name of all Israel, acknowledging God as King of the Universe. In the Tanakh, God promises to send terror before the Israelites, causing their enemies to panic and flee, demonstrating His power and protection. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 6:19 emphasize the idea that God will defeat or drive out the enemies of the Israelites as promised.

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| כִּֽי־יִשְׁאָלְךָ֥ בִנְךָ֛ מָחָ֖ר לֵאמֹ֑ר מָ֣ה הָעֵדֹ֗ת וְהַֽחֻקִּים֙ וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֛ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 20 | When, in time to come, your children ask you, “What mean the decrees, laws, and rules that our God יהוה has enjoined upon you?” |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of understanding the reasons behind the Torah’s laws, with God dwelling with the downtrodden and infusing life force through Torah (Psalms 39:5, Deuteronomy 6:20, Likutei Moharan 56:3:10). The commentary provides explanations about the significance of commandments in relation to the Exodus from Egypt and the importance of recognizing God’s power and mercy. The Halakhah discusses the wise child’s detailed questions about God’s commandments, emphasizing the importance of adhering to them. Jewish Thought highlights the obligation to tell the story of the Exodus on Passover eve, with the Haggadah featuring four questions asked by four children. Liturgy mentions the promise of God protecting ancestors and the wise son asking about the laws of Pesach. Midrash explains the concept of “tomorrow” in the Torah and the responses to the four types of sons during the Passover Seder. Quoting Commentary distinguishes between the wise and wicked child’s questions based on their inclusivity and respect. Talmud discusses the timing of the omer reaping and offering, while also providing responses for the Four Children. Tanakh instructs parents to explain the Passover tradition to their children in Exodus 12:26. Targum discusses a scenario where a son asks about God’s commandments in the future.

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| וְאָמַרְתָּ֣ לְבִנְךָ֔ עֲבָדִ֛ים הָיִ֥ינוּ לְפַרְעֹ֖ה בְּמִצְרָ֑יִם וַיֹּצִיאֵ֧נוּ יְהֹוָ֛ה מִמִּצְרַ֖יִם בְּיָ֥ד חֲזָקָֽה׃ | 21 | you shall say to your children, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and יהוה freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand. |

The Israelites were state-owned slaves in Egypt, liberated by God through miracles to achieve perfection. The Exodus from Egypt is compared to a fetus being taken from its mother, highlighting the severity of Egyptian rule and Israel’s dependency. The Zohar discusses how those who do not follow Torah and mitzvot become enslaved by other nations. The importance of telling the story of the Exodus is emphasized in liturgy and the Haggadah, with different responses given to the four sons. The Talmud teaches that the Passover Seder should begin with disgrace and end with glory, with different approaches suggested by Rav and Shmuel. The Targum translations emphasize that the Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, delivered by God with a strong hand.

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| וַיִּתֵּ֣ן יְהֹוָ֡ה אוֹתֹ֣ת וּ֠מֹפְתִ֠ים גְּדֹלִ֨ים וְרָעִ֧ים ׀ בְּמִצְרַ֛יִם בְּפַרְעֹ֥ה וּבְכׇל־בֵּית֖וֹ לְעֵינֵֽינוּ׃ | 22 | יהוה wrought before our eyes marvelous and destructive signs and portents in Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household; |

The generation telling the story of the Exodus witnessed signs and wonders against Egypt, Pharaoh, and his household, acknowledging God’s presence and laws in all aspects of life. There is a mitzva to pass down the story of the Exodus to future generations through question and answer. Disobedience towards the prophet Elijah led to death penalties, emphasizing the importance of entrusting oneself to the Almighty. The Exodus from Egypt serves as a reminder of God’s ability to save and the coming of the Messiah, with symbols of freedom and the Passover offering connected to celebrating redemption by God. Adonoy performed great signs and wonders against Egypt, Pharaoh, and his household, bringing the Israelites out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

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| וְאוֹתָ֖נוּ הוֹצִ֣יא מִשָּׁ֑ם לְמַ֙עַן֙ הָבִ֣יא אֹתָ֔נוּ לָ֤תֶת לָ֙נוּ֙ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לַאֲבֹתֵֽינוּ׃ | 23 | and us [God] freed from there, in order to take us and give us the land promised on oath to our fathers. |

Rav Hirsch and Steinsaltz discuss the purpose of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt to reach the Promised Land, emphasizing God’s covenant with their forefathers. Mishneh Torah outlines guidelines for the Passover Seder, including mixing the four cups of wine with water and the importance of personal connection to the Exodus. Jewish Thought explores the mysterious nature of Torah narratives, motivations for slander, and consequences of the spies’ actions. Liturgy emphasizes the personal connection to the Exodus in every generation. Various commentators highlight the command for strangers to bring the Passover-offering, continuity of redemption, sanctity of promised lands, symbolic significance of Passover elements, and potential impurity if Israelites had remained in Egypt longer. Targum versions of Deuteronomy 6:23 emphasize God leading the Israelites out of Egypt to bring them to the promised land.

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| וַיְצַוֵּ֣נוּ יְהֹוָ֗ה לַעֲשׂוֹת֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הַחֻקִּ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה לְיִרְאָ֖ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ לְט֥וֹב לָ֙נוּ֙ כׇּל־הַיָּמִ֔ים לְחַיֹּתֵ֖נוּ כְּהַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 24 | Then יהוה commanded us to observe all these laws, to revere our God יהוה, for our lasting good and for our survival, as is now the case. |

The commandments and statutes of the Torah are meant to instill fear of God, guide all aspects of life within His boundaries, benefit the soul, lead to goodness and eternal life, and ultimately bring blessings in this world and the opportunity to merit the world to come. The Torah emphasizes the importance of following its commandments and prohibitions for the well-being of individuals and society, highlighting the concept of repentance, the righteousness of God’s judgments, and the purity and significance of the Torah. The ultimate goal is to instill reverence for God, refine the soul, and lead to spiritual growth and immortality.

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| וּצְדָקָ֖ה תִּֽהְיֶה־לָּ֑נוּ כִּֽי־נִשְׁמֹ֨ר לַעֲשׂ֜וֹת אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֣ה הַזֹּ֗את לִפְנֵ֛י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵ֖ינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּֽנוּ׃ | 25 | It will be therefore to our merit before our God יהוה to observe faithfully this whole Instruction, as [God] has commanded us.” |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of pure intentions in actions for righteousness, while Halakhah stresses the benefits of observing Torah laws for both this world and the afterlife. Jewish Thought distinguishes between ḥesed and ẓedakah, highlighting the importance of kindness and fulfilling moral duties, while Midrash and Mishnah discuss the significance of teaching Torah and the Passover seder. Musar praises charity as a quality exemplified by biblical figures and emphasizes its positive outcomes. Quoting Commentary and Targum underscore the importance of transmitting and obeying God’s commandments for merit and rewards in the world to come.

## Deuteronomy 7

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| כִּ֤י יְבִֽיאֲךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּ֑הּ וְנָשַׁ֣ל גּֽוֹיִם־רַבִּ֣ים ׀ מִפָּנֶ֡יךָ הַֽחִתִּי֩ וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁ֨י וְהָאֱמֹרִ֜י וְהַכְּנַעֲנִ֣י וְהַפְּרִזִּ֗י וְהַֽחִוִּי֙ וְהַיְבוּסִ֔י שִׁבְעָ֣ה גוֹיִ֔ם רַבִּ֥ים וַעֲצוּמִ֖ים מִמֶּֽךָּ׃ | 1 | When your God יהוה brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess, and [God] dislodges many nations before you—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations much larger than you— |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, and Rav Hirsch offer interpretations of the word “ונשל” in Deuteronomy. Kabbalistic teachings discuss the role of the Evil Inclination in joy and corruption. Midrash highlights the covenant with Aaron and the downfall of Avshalom and Samson. Ramban challenges Rashi’s interpretation of the Avim and Philistines. Responsa discusses the vocalization of ‘from you’ in Deuteronomy 7:1. Talmud contrasts views on accepting obligations and discusses future inheritances. Tanakh praises Israel’s resilience and success. Targum lists the seven nations God will drive out for the Israelites.

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| וּנְתָנָ֞ם יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ לְפָנֶ֖יךָ וְהִכִּיתָ֑ם הַחֲרֵ֤ם תַּחֲרִים֙ אֹתָ֔ם לֹא־תִכְרֹ֥ת לָהֶ֛ם בְּרִ֖ית וְלֹ֥א תְחׇנֵּֽם׃ | 2 | and your God יהוה delivers them to you and you defeat them, you must doom them to destruction: grant them no terms and give them no quarter. |

Rashi explains that “ולא תחנם” prohibits admiration of non-Israelites, Rabbeinu Bahya adds not showing compassion, and Siftei Chakhamim suggests no settlement in Israel for them. Early rabbinic authorities decreed total destruction of the seven nations in Israel, with a ban on covenants or mercy. Meir Kahane highlighted tensions between Israel’s religious nationalism and democratic principles. The Midrash emphasizes kindness towards non-converts and maintaining faith amidst persecution. Mishnah details prohibitions on selling to gentiles in Israel, while Musar discusses the economic impact of lending money without interest. Bartenura explains not selling trees to non-Jews while attached to the ground, citing Deuteronomy 7:2. The Talmud recounts Rabban Gamliel’s benediction on a beautiful Gentile woman and interpretations of not showing mercy to non-Jews. Tanakh references the Israelites questioning the Hivites before making a pact, and Targum emphasizes annihilation of enemies without mercy or treaties. Tosefta discusses circumcision practices and prohibitions on giving gifts to idolators.

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| וְלֹ֥א תִתְחַתֵּ֖ן בָּ֑ם בִּתְּךָ֙ לֹא־תִתֵּ֣ן לִבְנ֔וֹ וּבִתּ֖וֹ לֹא־תִקַּ֥ח לִבְנֶֽךָ׃ | 3 | You shall not intermarry with them: do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. |

Various commentaries emphasize the severity of intermarriage with idolaters, the need to distance Jews from idol worship, and the legal consequences of engaging in sexual relations with non-Jews. The Midrash highlights the downfall of individuals who exalted themselves as deities, emphasizing the consequences of arrogance. The Mishnah outlines fines and prohibitions related to sexual transgressions, forbidden marriages, and relationships, including restrictions on Ammonite, Moabite, Egyptian, and Edomite converts. Talmudic discussions address the ineffectiveness of betrothal with gentile women and the importance of prohibiting intermarriage with non-Jews. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy underscores the prohibition against intermarrying with idolatrous nations.

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| כִּֽי־יָסִ֤יר אֶת־בִּנְךָ֙ מֵֽאַחֲרַ֔י וְעָבְד֖וּ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֑ים וְחָרָ֤ה אַף־יְהֹוָה֙ בָּכֶ֔ם וְהִשְׁמִידְךָ֖ מַהֵֽר׃ | 4 | For they will turn your children away from Me to worship other gods, and יהוה’s anger will blaze forth against you, promptly wiping you out. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 7:4 discusses the impact of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews on future generations, with various scholars emphasizing the negative influence and consequences of such unions. The text warns against intermarriage with those who worship other gods, as it may lead one away from serving the Lord and result in destruction. Children born from a Jewish woman are obligated in levirate marriage, while children born from a gentile woman do not exempt the deceased man’s wife from these obligations. The Midrash discusses the consequences of following or not following God’s will, highlighting the importance of wisdom and adherence to Torah laws. The Talmudic texts emphasize that children born to Jewish fathers and Gentile mothers are not considered the fathers’ sons according to Jewish law, with concerns that such marriages may lead to turning children away from following God. Solomon’s disobedience to God’s command not to intermarry with foreign nations led to idolatry, resulting in the Jewish people remaining small due to not seeking conversions.

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| כִּֽי־אִם־כֹּ֤ה תַעֲשׂוּ֙ לָהֶ֔ם מִזְבְּחֹתֵיהֶ֣ם תִּתֹּ֔צוּ וּמַצֵּבֹתָ֖ם תְּשַׁבֵּ֑רוּ וַאֲשֵֽׁירֵהֶם֙ תְּגַדֵּע֔וּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶ֖ם תִּשְׂרְפ֥וּן בָּאֵֽשׁ׃ | 5 | Instead, this is what you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, smash their pillars, cut down their sacred posts, and consign their images to the fire. |

Chasidut emphasizes that pride diminishes effective communication, while the commentary discusses the destruction of idols and pagan influences to maintain holiness. Halakhah addresses the concept of Ḥerem and the prohibition of selling land to non-Jews in Erez Yisra’el. Jewish Thought recounts the story of Tammuz and emphasizes the eradication of idolatry. The Midrash warns against haughtiness and idolatry, while quoting commentary praises humility and condemns pride. The Talmud compares arrogance to idolatrous trees and discusses the impurity of leprous stones. Targum instructs the destruction of idols and worship symbols.

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| כִּ֣י עַ֤ם קָדוֹשׁ֙ אַתָּ֔ה לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ בְּךָ֞ בָּחַ֣ר ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ לִהְי֥וֹת לוֹ֙ לְעַ֣ם סְגֻלָּ֔ה מִכֹּל֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־פְּנֵ֥י הָאֲדָמָֽה׃ | 6 | For you are a people consecrated to your God יהוה: of all the peoples on earth your God יהוה chose you to be God’s treasured people. |

The Jewish people are considered God’s treasured and chosen nation, with a unique soul and covenant that is not dependent on their deeds but on God’s protection and guidance. They are called to maintain holiness and sanctity, as revealed through God’s actions and the acceptance of the Torah. The importance of faithfulness, righteousness, and following God’s will is emphasized, with examples from biblical history and interpretations provided. The Israelites are consecrated to God as His treasured possession and chosen people above all others on earth.

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| לֹ֣א מֵֽרֻבְּכֶ֞ם מִכׇּל־הָֽעַמִּ֗ים חָשַׁ֧ק יְהֹוָ֛ה בָּכֶ֖ם וַיִּבְחַ֣ר בָּכֶ֑ם כִּֽי־אַתֶּ֥ם הַמְעַ֖ט מִכׇּל־הָעַמִּֽים׃ | 7 | It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that יהוה grew attached to you and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of humility and self-negation in rectifying haughtiness and idolatry, as seen in Deuteronomy 7:7. The Jewish people were chosen by God not for their numerical strength, but for their moral worthiness and endurance in trials. The Midrash and Musar also stress the significance of humility in God’s eyes, contrasting with the pride of other nations. Rabbi Yoḥanan advises listening to Rabbi Eliezer’s interpretation that God chose the Jewish people for their humility even in greatness, as highlighted in Devarim 7:7 and Targum translations. The Jewish faith is rooted in a unique relationship with God, emphasizing humility, compassion, and devotion to God’s commandments despite persecution and challenges faced throughout history.

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| כִּי֩ מֵאַֽהֲבַ֨ת יְהֹוָ֜ה אֶתְכֶ֗ם וּמִשׇּׁמְר֤וֹ אֶת־הַשְּׁבֻעָה֙ אֲשֶׁ֤ר נִשְׁבַּע֙ לַאֲבֹ֣תֵיכֶ֔ם הוֹצִ֧יא יְהֹוָ֛ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם בְּיָ֣ד חֲזָקָ֑ה וַֽיִּפְדְּךָ֙ מִבֵּ֣ית עֲבָדִ֔ים מִיַּ֖ד פַּרְעֹ֥ה מֶֽלֶךְ־מִצְרָֽיִם׃ | 8 | but it was because יהוה favored you and kept the oath made to your fathers that יהוה freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. |

God’s love for the Jewish people is unconditional, based on His choice and commitment to their forefathers, leading to their redemption from Egypt. Abraham’s teachings on monotheism were preserved by the tribe of Levi and passed down to Moses, ensuring the faith in one God among the Israelites. Rebellion against God results in consequences such as physical ailments and punishments corresponding to the elements of the earth. The Midrash emphasizes the blessings and prayers related to entering the Land of Israel, highlighting God’s love for Israel and the significance of the land. Rashi, Rashbam, and Chizkuni discuss the reasons for God’s choice of the Israelites and the warning against self-righteousness. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize God’s fulfillment of His promise to free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

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| וְיָ֣דַעְתָּ֔ כִּֽי־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ ה֣וּא הָֽאֱלֹהִ֑ים הָאֵל֙ הַֽנֶּאֱמָ֔ן שֹׁמֵ֧ר הַבְּרִ֣ית וְהַחֶ֗סֶד לְאֹהֲבָ֛יו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵ֥י מִצְוֺתָ֖ו לְאֶ֥לֶף דּֽוֹר׃ | 9 | Know, therefore, that only your God יהוה is God, the steadfast God who keeps the divine covenant faithfully to the thousandth generation of those who love [God] and keep the divine commandments, |

The text emphasizes God’s faithfulness to His covenant and mercy for those who love Him and keep His commandments for up to a thousand generations, contrasting with the retribution for those who hate Him. Serving God out of love is highlighted as more lasting than serving out of fear, with rewards extending for generations. The importance of trust, truth, and self-sacrifice in serving God is also emphasized, with examples from various figures in Jewish thought and teachings. Additionally, the Talmud discusses the lasting merits for those who act out of love compared to fear, and the Tanakh and Targum reinforce God’s faithful and kind nature towards those who follow His commandments.

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| וּמְשַׁלֵּ֧ם לְשֹׂנְאָ֛יו אֶל־פָּנָ֖יו לְהַאֲבִיד֑וֹ לֹ֤א יְאַחֵר֙ לְשֹׂ֣נְא֔וֹ אֶל־פָּנָ֖יו יְשַׁלֶּם־לֽוֹ׃ | 10 | but who instantly requites with destruction those who reject [God]—never slow with those who reject, but requiting them instantly. |

Chasidut teaches that God’s largesse benefits the Jewish people but may ultimately harm gentiles, with rewards for the wicked in this world and the righteous in the afterlife. Commentary emphasizes God’s immediate repayment for those who hate Him to prevent future wickedness. Halakhah discusses the mitzvah to destroy the Canaanite nations even at personal risk. Jewish Thought explains how God’s actions are based on deeds and may trouble individuals with good fortune. Kabbalah discusses the punishment of the Nefilim and the balance of judgment and kindness in the world’s conduct. Liturgy promises triumph for the upright and repayment for foes. Midrash explores punishment and reward, emphasizing the role of faith and merit in salvation. Musar discusses predetermined livelihood, using wealth for good, and the punishment of evildoers. Quoting Commentary contrasts rewarding the righteous out of kindness with the immediate repayment for the wicked. Talmud explains God’s swift punishment of the wicked and advises downplaying good deeds for others and magnifying wrongs done to them. Targum states that God repays His enemies for their good deeds in this world to destroy them in the next.

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| וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֨ אֶת־הַמִּצְוָ֜ה וְאֶת־הַֽחֻקִּ֣ים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ הַיּ֖וֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָֽם׃ | 11 | Therefore, observe faithfully the Instruction—the laws and the rules—with which I charge you today. |

Chasidut discusses reincarnation and the importance of fulfilling commandments in life, emphasizing the significance of hands in spiritual practices. Commentary on Deuteronomy 7:11:1 stresses the need to observe commandments now for future rewards and cautions against assuming which actions will be more rewarded. Halakhah explains the importance of not doing commandments for reward and the exception of tithes. Jewish Thought discusses the concept of time, judgment on Rosh Hashanah, and the status of individuals on Yom Kippur. Kabbalah explains God’s oneness through evil reverting to good. Midrash emphasizes how commandments testify for Israel in the world to come. Musar highlights the importance of contemplating one’s actions and not wasting time. Quoting Commentary focuses on performing commandments for rewards in the afterlife. Talmud emphasizes the importance of performing mitzvot in this world for rewards in the future. Targum interprets Deuteronomy 7:11 as a directive to follow God’s commandments.

# **46**: עקב|Eikev (Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25)

## Deuteronomy 7

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| וְהָיָ֣ה ׀ עֵ֣קֶב תִּשְׁמְע֗וּן אֵ֤ת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֥ם וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֖ם אֹתָ֑ם וְשָׁמַר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ לְךָ֗ אֶֽת־הַבְּרִית֙ וְאֶת־הַחֶ֔סֶד אֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לַאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 12 | And if you do obey these rules and observe them carefully, your God יהוה will maintain faithfully for you the covenant made on oath with your fathers: |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of showing mercy and kindness to God’s creatures, finding joy in performing commandments to please the Creator and understanding the depth of mitzvot for spiritual growth. Commentary highlights the significance of observing all commandments, regardless of perceived importance, to receive great rewards. Kabbalah advises against accepting gifts and emphasizes trust in God to avoid transgressions. Liturgy in Siddur Ashkenaz and Siddur Sefard invokes the covenant of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Midrash discusses the observance of Shabbat, rewards for mitzvot, and the importance of repentance. Mishnah permits the use of mountains and hills worshipped by gentiles for planting, but forbids what is upon them. Musar stresses humility, resisting sin, and addressing minor sins promptly. Quoting commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Siftei Chakhamim, Zevach Pesach, Ramban, Da’at Zekenim emphasizes God’s promises and consequences for disobedience. Talmud discusses the exclusion of dedicated ones by Joshua, David, Ezra, and God due to sins and refusal to accept offerings. Tanakh and Targum emphasize the importance of following God’s laws to receive His covenant and kindness.

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| וַאֲהֵ֣בְךָ֔ וּבֵרַכְךָ֖ וְהִרְבֶּ֑ךָ וּבֵרַ֣ךְ פְּרִֽי־בִטְנְךָ֣ וּפְרִֽי־אַ֠דְמָתֶ֠ךָ דְּגָ֨נְךָ֜ וְתִירֹֽשְׁךָ֣ וְיִצְהָרֶ֗ךָ שְׁגַר־אֲלָפֶ֙יךָ֙ וְעַשְׁתְּרֹ֣ת צֹאנֶ֔ךָ עַ֚ל הָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֥ע לַאֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ לָ֥תֶת לָֽךְ׃ | 13 | [God] will favor you and bless you and multiply you—blessing your issue from the womb and your produce from the soil, your new grain and wine and oil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock, in the land sworn to your fathers to be assigned to you. |

The text discusses the concept of “sheger,” a positive action agreed upon by the Holy One, as a result of observing ordinances out of love for God, leading to blessings, protection, and material wealth. Repentance begins with Adam and Eve’s sin, and G-d accepts their repentance by providing protection and the light of Torah. The Shabbat Siddur Sefard Linear discusses blessings for those who love God and follow His commandments. Devarim Rabbah 3:5 emphasizes adherence to laws of family purity, while Musar highlights the love of the Creator as the ultimate reward. Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rav Ḥisda discuss blessings and wealth in relation to Deuteronomy 7:13. Ecclesiastes 3:8 highlights the inevitability of experiencing both positive and negative emotions in life, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 7:13 mentions blessings for the people of Israel.

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| בָּר֥וּךְ תִּֽהְיֶ֖ה מִכׇּל־הָעַמִּ֑ים לֹא־יִהְיֶ֥ה בְךָ֛ עָקָ֥ר וַֽעֲקָרָ֖ה וּבִבְהֶמְתֶּֽךָ׃ | 14 | You shall be blessed above all other peoples: there shall be no sterile male or female among you or among your livestock. |

Rashi explains that “עקר” refers to a man who cannot procreate, while Or HaChaim states that the Jewish nation will enjoy blessings such as no genetic barrenness. Halakhah advises regular bowel movements for vitality, Jewish Thought discusses rewards for good deeds within the family and society, Midrash emphasizes blessings of fertility and protection for the Israelites, Musar connects barrenness to the interchanging of male and female souls, and Talmud discusses answering Amen to Gentile blessings. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight the blessings of fertility for the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7:14.

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| וְהֵסִ֧יר יְהֹוָ֛ה מִמְּךָ֖ כׇּל־חֹ֑לִי וְכׇל־מַדְוֵי֩ מִצְרַ֨יִם הָרָעִ֜ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר יָדַ֗עְתָּ לֹ֤א יְשִׂימָם֙ בָּ֔ךְ וּנְתָנָ֖ם בְּכׇל־שֹׂנְאֶֽיךָ׃ | 15 | יהוה will ward off from you all sickness; [God] will not bring upon you any of the dreadful diseases of Egypt, about which you know, but will inflict them upon all your enemies. |

The text discusses how God will reward the Israelites for observing ordinances by removing sickness, including those common in Egypt, from them while afflicting their enemies with these diseases. Halakhah addresses the prohibition of benefiting from idols, sight damage as a form of damage, and burden of proof in extracting possessions. Jewish Thought emphasizes seeking forgiveness for sins and recognizing God’s protection, while Liturgy expresses gratitude and requests peace from God. The Midrash explores causes of illnesses and redemption events, and Musar emphasizes remembering God’s kindness and seeking protection. Sforno, Ibn Ezra, and Rambam provide explanations on afflictions, while Talmud discusses sickness removal methods and causes. God promises to protect the Israelites from diseases if they obey His laws in the Tanakh, and Targum states that Adonoy will remove illnesses from the Israelites and send them to their enemies.

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| וְאָכַלְתָּ֣ אֶת־כׇּל־הָֽעַמִּ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֔ךְ לֹא־תָח֥וֹס עֵֽינְךָ֖ עֲלֵיהֶ֑ם וְלֹ֤א תַעֲבֹד֙ אֶת־אֱלֹ֣הֵיהֶ֔ם כִּֽי־מוֹקֵ֥שׁ ה֖וּא לָֽךְ׃ | 16 | You shall destroy all the peoples that your God יהוה delivers to you, showing them no pity. And you shall not worship their gods, for that would be a snare to you. |

The Torah commands the Jewish people to consume nations without pity to avoid being led into sin by their gods, warning against misplaced compassion leading to destruction. In Mishneh Torah, bathing with an idol for aesthetic purposes is permitted. Jewish Thought explores the concept of nourishment in relation to different levels of existence, suggesting that the Jewish people, having reached a high spiritual level, are permitted to consume nations that worship idols. The Midrash highlights the symbolism of Israel absorbing the property of other nations and emphasizes unity among the Israelites. In Musar, the promise of the land from the Lord is contingent on not rebelling against Him, with giants in the land to be consumed like bread. Rav Beivai bar Giddel states it is prohibited to rob a gentile, but permitted to retain his lost item without returning it. David spares Saul’s life, showing mercy despite having the opportunity to kill him, emphasizing the importance of not showing pity to those whom God wants to destroy.

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| כִּ֤י תֹאמַר֙ בִּלְבָ֣בְךָ֔ רַבִּ֛ים הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֖לֶּה מִמֶּ֑נִּי אֵיכָ֥ה אוּכַ֖ל לְהוֹרִישָֽׁם׃ | 17 | Should you say to yourselves, “These nations are more numerous than we; how can we dispossess them?” |

In Deuteronomy 7:17, fear is highlighted as the main obstacle to serving God wholeheartedly, with Rashi warning against being afraid of the nations due to their numbers, Sforno emphasizing that overcoming the Canaanites is possible with God’s help, and Siftei Chakhamim clarifying the meaning of the word “כי.” Akeidat Yitzchak discusses individual heresy, Moses is reminded not to fear overwhelming odds in battle, and Ma’asseh Hashem explains that relying on God brings fearlessness. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan stress the importance of faith and trust in God’s power in facing challenges.

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| לֹ֥א תִירָ֖א מֵהֶ֑ם זָכֹ֣ר תִּזְכֹּ֗ר אֵ֤ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לְפַרְעֹ֖ה וּלְכׇל־מִצְרָֽיִם׃ | 18 | You need have no fear of them. You have but to bear in mind what your God יהוה did to Pharaoh and all the Egyptians: |

The text emphasizes the importance of not fearing enemies but remembering God’s power in defeating Pharaoh and Egypt as a reminder of His protection. Memory is crucial in performing mitzvot, with every commandment having significance. Moses is reminded not to fear overwhelming odds in battle, and the message warns against attributing success to one’s own strength rather than divine assistance. The text stresses the importance of placing trust in God rather than mortal men, as seen in the downfall of King Saul.

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| הַמַּסֹּ֨ת הַגְּדֹלֹ֜ת אֲשֶׁר־רָא֣וּ עֵינֶ֗יךָ וְהָאֹתֹ֤ת וְהַמֹּֽפְתִים֙ וְהַיָּ֤ד הַחֲזָקָה֙ וְהַזְּרֹ֣עַ הַנְּטוּיָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר הוֹצִֽאֲךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ כֵּֽן־יַעֲשֶׂ֞ה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ לְכׇל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה יָרֵ֖א מִפְּנֵיהֶֽם׃ | 19 | the wondrous acts that you saw with your own eyes, the signs and the portents, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm by which your God יהוה liberated you. Thus will your God יהוה do to all the peoples you now fear. |

Rashi explains that המסות refers to trials, והאתת and והמפתים refer to signs and wonders, והיה החזקה refers to the pestilence, and והזרע הנטיה refers to the outstretched arm. Siftei Chakhamim states that המסות refers to the pestilence, while הזרע הנטיה refers to the sword for smiting the firstborn. Rav Hirsch interprets these terms as representing tests, signs, wonders, strong hand, and outstretched arm as demonstrations of God’s power and might. Steinsaltz emphasizes that these events were witnessed by the Israelites and were a display of God’s power and ability to protect them. Chizkuni compares “and with awesome power” to Deuteronomy 7:19. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the tests, signs, wonders, strong hand, and extended arm in relation to God’s actions in Egypt and against the enemies of the Israelites. These events aim to ennoble one’s character by promoting purity, humility, empathy, and love for all beings as children of God, based on principles demonstrated in God’s actions and commandments.

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| וְגַם֙ אֶת־הַצִּרְעָ֔ה יְשַׁלַּ֛ח יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בָּ֑ם עַד־אֲבֹ֗ד הַנִּשְׁאָרִ֛ים וְהַנִּסְתָּרִ֖ים מִפָּנֶֽיךָ׃ | 20 | Your God יהוה will also send a plague against them, until those who are left in hiding perish before you. |

Various commentators interpret the hornet mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:20 as a natural force that disabled enemies of the Israelites, either through injecting poison or causing illness. Midrash provides insights on different animals and events from scripture, including Solomon facing challenges from demons, the defeat of Sihon with the help of hornets, and David praising God for victory. Ramban discusses the use of hornets as a plague to drive out enemies, contrasting it with the use of an angel in the future world. The Talmud explains the anointing of kings at a spring and the permanent kingdom. Plagues were sent ahead to drive out enemies from the land without Israelites needing to use weapons, as seen in Exodus and Joshua. Targum elaborates on God sending hornets to plague enemies until they perish. Rabbi Yosei bar Rabbi Yehuda in Tosefta highlights the gifts given to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and the hornet promised to help expel the Canaanites.

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| לֹ֥א תַעֲרֹ֖ץ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם כִּֽי־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בְּקִרְבֶּ֔ךָ אֵ֥ל גָּד֖וֹל וְנוֹרָֽא׃ | 21 | Do not stand in dread of them, for your God יהוה is in your midst, a great and awesome God. |

The text emphasizes the importance of fearing the Lord, not enemies, soldiers are prohibited from fearing the enemy during war, memory joggers are crucial for reinforcing character traits and fulfilling commandments, Miriam and her seven sons remained steadfast in their faith despite persecution, and the Shechinah of the Lord is with believers to instill courage (Deuteronomy 7:21; Deuteronomy 3:22; Psalms; Midrash).

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| וְנָשַׁל֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֛ל מִפָּנֶ֖יךָ מְעַ֣ט מְעָ֑ט לֹ֤א תוּכַל֙ כַּלֹּתָ֣ם מַהֵ֔ר פֶּן־תִּרְבֶּ֥ה עָלֶ֖יךָ חַיַּ֥ת הַשָּׂדֶֽה׃ | 22 | Your God יהוה will dislodge those peoples before you little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them at once, else the wild beasts would multiply to your hurt. |

God’s plan to gradually drive out the nations in the land of Israel is to prevent the land from becoming desolate and overrun by wild beasts, ensuring the safety of the Israelites. This process of gradual expulsion is necessary to avoid creating a vacuum that could lead to chaos and danger. (Commentary, Talmud, Tanakh, Targum)

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| וּנְתָנָ֛ם יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לְפָנֶ֑יךָ וְהָמָם֙ מְהוּמָ֣ה גְדֹלָ֔ה עַ֖ד הִשָּׁמְדָֽם׃ | 23 | Your God יהוה will deliver them up to you, throwing them into utter panic until they are wiped out. |

Rashi explains the word “והמם” in Deuteronomy 7:23 is vowelled with Kametz because the final ם is not part of the root, while Rashbam interprets it as G’d causing noise to contribute to the destruction of the people. Tur HaArokh reassures that although the Canaanites will not be wiped out immediately, G’d will confuse them enough so that they will not pose a threat, allowing the Israelites to grow in numbers. Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Simon discuss instances of confusion in wars promised to Israel by the Lord, with the Holy One Blessed be He using clouds and pillars of fire to exile, gather, and confound nations. Rashbam explains the term “תורש” in Genesis 45:11 refers to being driven from the land due to famine, while the Talmud discusses how God used natural elements to defeat enemies of the Jewish people. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem on Deuteronomy 7:23 all affirm that Adonoy will defeat and confuse the enemies of the Israelites until they are destroyed.

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| וְנָתַ֤ן מַלְכֵיהֶם֙ בְּיָדֶ֔ךָ וְהַאֲבַדְתָּ֣ אֶת־שְׁמָ֔ם מִתַּ֖חַת הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם לֹֽא־יִתְיַצֵּ֥ב אִישׁ֙ בְּפָנֶ֔יךָ עַ֥ד הִשְׁמִֽדְךָ֖ אֹתָֽם׃ | 24 | [God] will deliver their kings into your hand, and you shall obliterate their name from under the heavens; no one shall stand up to you, until you have wiped them out. |

Various commentators, including Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, Sforno, Tur HaArokh, Ramban, and Steinsaltz, emphasize the importance of completely destroying the Canaanites to prevent future opposition and eradicate idol worship. The Akeidat Yitzchak commentary raises questions about Jacob’s blessings to his sons, while the Midrash explains that even powerful figures like Og cannot stand against the Israelites. Rabbeinu Bahya discusses God’s sword symbolizing Justice, Rashbam compares expressions of risking one’s life, and Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight God granting victory over enemies in Deuteronomy 7:24.

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| פְּסִילֵ֥י אֱלֹהֵיהֶ֖ם תִּשְׂרְפ֣וּן בָּאֵ֑שׁ לֹֽא־תַחְמֹד֩ כֶּ֨סֶף וְזָהָ֤ב עֲלֵיהֶם֙ וְלָקַחְתָּ֣ לָ֔ךְ פֶּ֚ן תִּוָּקֵ֣שׁ בּ֔וֹ כִּ֧י תוֹעֲבַ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ הֽוּא׃ | 25 | You shall consign the images of their gods to the fire; you shall not covet the silver and gold on them and keep it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared thereby; for that is abhorrent to your God יהוה. |

The texts emphasize the prohibition of benefiting from idol worship, including not coveting or taking silver or gold from idols, burning idolatrous images, and the consequences of keeping such items. Destroying idols completely is crucial to avoid spiritual contamination. The Mishnah discusses the permissibility of benefiting from mountains and hills worshipped by gentiles, while the Talmud debates the immediate prohibition of a Jew’s idol versus a Gentile’s idol. The Zohar explains the ritual of acquiring and executing the Egyptian deity during the plagues, and the Targum warns against coveting silver and gold from idols. The Tosefta discusses nullifying idols in a Jew’s domain and the prohibition of selling idols for worship.

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| וְלֹא־תָבִ֤יא תֽוֹעֵבָה֙ אֶל־בֵּיתֶ֔ךָ וְהָיִ֥יתָ חֵ֖רֶם כָּמֹ֑הוּ שַׁקֵּ֧ץ ׀ תְּשַׁקְּצֶ֛נּוּ וְתַעֵ֥ב ׀ תְּֽתַעֲבֶ֖נּוּ כִּי־חֵ֥רֶם הֽוּא׃ | 26 | You must not bring an abhorrent thing into your house, or you will be proscribed like it; you must reject it as abominable and abhorrent, for it is proscribed. |

The text emphasizes the prohibition of bringing idols or idolatrous items into one’s home, renting to pagans, and benefiting from false gods, with punishments for transgressions including lashes. It also discusses the consequences of idol worship, the impurity associated with idols, and the importance of detesting idolatry. The comparison of arrogance to idol worship, the condemnation of pride, and the emphasis on avoiding idol worship and haughtiness are highlighted, with specific examples from biblical stories and commentary. The Torah is stricter with idolatry, with decrees by sages equivalent to core biblical commandments, and the commandments around chametz are guarded with meticulous observance. The Talmud delves into laws regarding idol worship, impurity, and the prohibition of idolatrous objects in one’s home, emphasizing the severity of idol worship and the consequences of interacting with idolatrous items.

## Deuteronomy 8

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| כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ הַיּ֖וֹם תִּשְׁמְר֣וּן לַעֲשׂ֑וֹת לְמַ֨עַן תִּֽחְי֜וּן וּרְבִיתֶ֗ם וּבָאתֶם֙ וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֣ם אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֥ע יְהֹוָ֖ה לַאֲבֹתֵיכֶֽם׃ | 1 | You shall faithfully observe all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you today, that you may thrive and increase and be able to possess the land that יהוה promised on oath to your fathers. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of yearning to fulfill all Torah commandments to access their life force in the Holy Land. Halakhah details the blessings for Eretz Yisrael and weddings, stressing the need for specific elements to avoid repetition. Midrash and Musar highlight the significance of completing commandments once started, with consequences for not doing so. Talmud discusses anointing kings and consecrated property, while Targum emphasizes the importance of observing all commandments to inherit the land promised to the forefathers.

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| וְזָכַרְתָּ֣ אֶת־כׇּל־הַדֶּ֗רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֨ר הוֹלִֽיכְךָ֜ יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ זֶ֛ה אַרְבָּעִ֥ים שָׁנָ֖ה בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר לְמַ֨עַן עַנֹּֽתְךָ֜ לְנַסֹּֽתְךָ֗ לָדַ֜עַת אֶת־אֲשֶׁ֧ר בִּֽלְבָבְךָ֛ הֲתִשְׁמֹ֥ר מִצְוֺתָ֖ו אִם־לֹֽא׃ | 2 | Remember the long way that your God יהוה has made you travel in the wilderness these past forty years, in order to test you by hardships to learn what was in your hearts: whether you would keep the divine commandments or not. |

Man’s purpose in this world is to be tested by trials to determine if he will turn towards the passions of the body or towards living a true life from G-d. The Israelites were led through the wilderness by God to test their faith and obedience, with trials meant to strengthen their commitment to following His will. Torah study is essential, neglecting it is scornful, and dedication to learning is advised even at night. Trials in Scripture serve as tests of faith and devotion, such as the sacrifice of Isaac, and individuals are equal before God. Positive commandments hold virtues like free choice, Torah study, and fear of God, with man created for these virtues. The purpose of God’s tests, such as the binding of Isaac, is to establish truth, prove capabilities, and demonstrate qualities to outsiders. The Israelites’ time in Egypt, celebration of festivals, and history are highlighted as important for maintaining a relationship with God.

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| וַֽיְעַנְּךָ֮ וַיַּרְעִבֶ֒ךָ֒ וַיַּאֲכִֽלְךָ֤ אֶת־הַמָּן֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־יָדַ֔עְתָּ וְלֹ֥א יָדְע֖וּן אֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ לְמַ֣עַן הוֹדִֽיעֲךָ֗ כִּ֠י לֹ֣א עַל־הַלֶּ֤חֶם לְבַדּוֹ֙ יִחְיֶ֣ה הָֽאָדָ֔ם כִּ֛י עַל־כׇּל־מוֹצָ֥א פִֽי־יְהֹוָ֖ה יִחְיֶ֥ה הָאָדָֽם׃ | 3 | [God] subjected you to the hardship of hunger and then gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your ancestors had ever known, in order to teach you that a human being does not live on bread alone, but that one may live on anything that יהוה decrees. |

The text emphasizes the importance of studying and contemplating the Torah deeply, connecting the spiritual and physical realms through commandments, and exploring the symbolic meaning of Tu BiShevat. Various commentators discuss the significance of manna as divine sustenance, the prohibition against eating on Yom Kippur, the principle of man’s free will, and the rectification of the soul through blessings before eating in Kabbalah. The spiritual significance of food and offerings, the importance of spiritual nourishment, and the connection between body and soul are highlighted in Musar teachings. In Second Temple literature, manna symbolizes the importance of every word from God, while the Talmud discusses the concept of affliction on Yom Kippur. In Tanakh and Targum texts, manna is described as divine sustenance provided by God.

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| שִׂמְלָ֨תְךָ֜ לֹ֤א בָֽלְתָה֙ מֵֽעָלֶ֔יךָ וְרַגְלְךָ֖ לֹ֣א בָצֵ֑קָה זֶ֖ה אַרְבָּעִ֥ים שָׁנָֽה׃ | 4 | The clothes upon you did not wear out, nor did your feet swell these forty years. |

The Israelites were miraculously provided with durable and clean clothing by ministering angels in the wilderness, as well as fragrant herbs and water from a well, showcasing God’s care for their needs. In Mishnah Yevamot 9:3, specific rules are outlined regarding the marriage of secondary relatives. The text discusses how the body will serve as distinguished clothing for the soul in the future, drawing parallels to Israel’s experience in the desert where their clothing did not wear out. Both Targums agree that the Israelites’ garments remained intact and their feet did not swell during their time in the desert, highlighting God’s provision and protection.

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| וְיָדַעְתָּ֖ עִם־לְבָבֶ֑ךָ כִּ֗י כַּאֲשֶׁ֨ר יְיַסֵּ֥ר אִישׁ֙ אֶת־בְּנ֔וֹ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ מְיַסְּרֶֽךָּ׃ | 5 | Bear in mind that your God יהוה disciplines you just as a householder disciplines his son. |

The text uses parables to illustrate God’s discipline and guidance towards the Jewish people, akin to a father teaching his son for their benefit and moral improvement. Afflictions and suffering are seen as a form of divine rebuke to bring about repentance and purification, leading to redemption and blessings, with the ultimate goal of refining the righteous and bringing them closer to God (Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Or HaChaim, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Rav Hirsch, Steinsaltz, Mishnah Berakhot 6:4). God’s providence is based on righteous law and justice, discipline stems from love, and mercy can go beyond the letter of the law, with kindness and judgment intertwined in divine conduct (Kabbalah, Talmud, Musar).

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| וְשָׁ֣מַרְתָּ֔ אֶת־מִצְוֺ֖ת יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לָלֶ֥כֶת בִּדְרָכָ֖יו וּלְיִרְאָ֥ה אֹתֽוֹ׃ | 6 | Therefore keep the commandments of your God יהוה: walk in God’s ways and show reverence. |

Observing God’s commandments and walking in His ways, while fearing Him, is key to moral perfection and shaping our destiny as intended by God. The Midrash highlights that God’s ways are guided by mercy and truth, even if they may seem mysterious. The Musar commentary emphasizes the virtues of free choice, Torah study, and worship as the purpose for which man was created. Both Targums stress the importance of keeping God’s commandments, walking in His ways, and fearing Him.

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| כִּ֚י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ מְבִֽיאֲךָ֖ אֶל־אֶ֣רֶץ טוֹבָ֑ה אֶ֚רֶץ נַ֣חֲלֵי מָ֔יִם עֲיָנֹת֙ וּתְהֹמֹ֔ת יֹצְאִ֥ים בַּבִּקְעָ֖ה וּבָהָֽר׃ | 7 | For your God יהוה is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; |

The text describes the promised land as abundant in water sources, crops, and resources like iron and copper, ensuring that the people lack nothing and can eat and be satisfied. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing divine providence in achieving prosperity and warns against forgetting the source of wealth. The land is depicted as a place of rivers full of water, providing essential products fit for royalty and abundant resources, symbolizing God’s provision for His people. Moses beseeches the Lord to acknowledge that everything appears equal before Him, as seen in the destruction of both the innocent and the wicked, emphasizing the importance of relying on God rather than man. The Jewish people received three gifts: Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come, associated with both manifest and hidden aspects of good, given through suffering as a sign of God’s love.

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| אֶ֤רֶץ חִטָּה֙ וּשְׂעֹרָ֔ה וְגֶ֥פֶן וּתְאֵנָ֖ה וְרִמּ֑וֹן אֶֽרֶץ־זֵ֥ית שֶׁ֖מֶן וּדְבָֽשׁ׃ | 8 | a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; |

Various commentators provide insights into the types of food mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:8, with interpretations ranging from symbolic meanings to connections with mitzvot. The Sefer HaChinukh and Mishneh Torah detail the obligation to bless God after eating food, emphasizing specific foods and the order of blessings. Moses contrasts the Israelites’ desire for root vegetables with the promise of lasting fruit in the Promised Land, highlighting the importance of stewardship and patience. Bikkurim are only brought from the seven species mentioned in the Torah, with specific rules outlined in the Mishnah. The Talmud discusses measures of food and the significance of different fruits in blessings based on Deuteronomy 8:8. The importance of fulfilling commandments related to the seven species and blessings in the context of entering and settling in the land of Israel is emphasized in various texts.

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| אֶ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹ֤א בְמִסְכֵּנֻת֙ תֹּֽאכַל־בָּ֣הּ לֶ֔חֶם לֹֽא־תֶחְסַ֥ר כֹּ֖ל בָּ֑הּ אֶ֚רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אֲבָנֶ֣יהָ בַרְזֶ֔ל וּמֵהֲרָרֶ֖יהָ תַּחְצֹ֥ב נְחֹֽשֶׁת׃ | 9 | a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. |

Chasidut highlights the Land of Israel’s ability to eliminate desire for other foods through wealth from tefilin/Yaakov/truth, leading to eating only bread out of detachment from other delicacies. Commentary praises the land’s abundance of resources, comparing Torah scholars to iron builders and emphasizing the air’s enhancement of intelligence. Halakhah debates the obligation of blessings after eating nourishing foods versus other species, while Jewish Thought warns against neglecting Torah study for material wealth. Kabbalah discusses the connection between HaShem’s qualities and the significance of Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. Midrash emphasizes growth in knowledge and Eretz Yisrael’s completeness, while Musar stresses the importance of eating to sustain oneself. Quoting Commentary includes explanations from Sforno, Rabbeinu Bahya, Or HaChaim, Simchat HaRegel, Bartenura, and Derekh Chayyim. The Talmud debates suitable fruits for first fruits offerings and the significance of Eretz Yisrael’s abundance. Targum describes the Land of Israel as a place lacking nothing with resources like iron and copper, where sages enact strong decrees and disciples ask weighty questions.

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| וְאָכַלְתָּ֖ וְשָׂבָ֑עְתָּ וּבֵֽרַכְתָּ֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ עַל־הָאָ֥רֶץ הַטֹּבָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָֽתַן־לָֽךְ׃ | 10 | When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to your God יהוה for the good land given to you. |

The text highlights the importance of blessing God after eating, as commanded in Deuteronomy 8:10, with the obligation to bless God for sustenance being applicable everywhere. The act of blessing God is seen as a way to accumulate merit and ensure continued favor from Him, with the blessings after meals consisting of four parts. The Mishnah discusses the obligations of women, slaves, and minors in reciting Grace after Meals, while the Talmud explains the interpretations of verses regarding zimmun and eating satisfaction. The Lord provides abundant resources in the land, and the Targum emphasizes the act of blessing and giving thanks for all the fruit of the land.

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֔ פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּ֖ח אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לְבִלְתִּ֨י שְׁמֹ֤ר מִצְוֺתָיו֙ וּמִשְׁפָּטָ֣יו וְחֻקֹּתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 11 | Take care lest you forget your God יהוה and fail to keep the divine commandments, rules, and laws which I enjoin upon you today. |

The texts emphasize the importance of remembering God and following His commandments to receive blessings and avoid consequences such as arrogance and being cut off from the world to come. They highlight the need for humility, gratitude, and remembrance of God in all actions to maintain a connection with Him and receive goodness. The consequences of forgetting God are discussed in various commentaries, halakhic texts, and moral teachings, with a focus on the negative impact of pride and arrogance. The Talmud, Midrash, Mishnah, and Jewish thought all stress the significance of remembering God and following His laws to lead a righteous and fulfilling life.

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| פֶּן־תֹּאכַ֖ל וְשָׂבָ֑עְתָּ וּבָתִּ֥ים טֹבִ֛ים תִּבְנֶ֖ה וְיָשָֽׁבְתָּ׃ | 12 | When you have eaten your fill, and have built fine houses to live in, |

Chasidut emphasizes the transition from impurity to holiness through immersing vessels in a ritual bath and eating with sanctity to avoid attributing sustenance to one’s own power. The Gate of Unity stresses the importance of genuine wisdom over falsehood and wickedness. Commentary highlights the danger of becoming complacent with economic success and the decline in intellect due to pursuing material pleasures. Musar emphasizes the necessity of humility for spiritual growth and warns against arrogance and pride. Quoting Commentary warns against rebelling against God out of satiety, and Targum emphasizes the importance of not becoming complacent after achieving material success.

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| וּבְקָֽרְךָ֤ וְצֹֽאנְךָ֙ יִרְבְּיֻ֔ן וְכֶ֥סֶף וְזָהָ֖ב יִרְבֶּה־לָּ֑ךְ וְכֹ֥ל אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ֖ יִרְבֶּֽה׃ | 13 | and your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold have increased, and everything you own has prospered, |

Ibn Ezra and Rabbi Mosheh Ha-Kohen disagree on the interpretation of “yirbeyun,” with Steinsaltz describing the increase in wealth that will come from settling the land. The Midrash warns against rebellion towards God due to prosperity leading to complacency and idolatry. Rashi explains redundancy in Biblical Hebrew, while Siftei Chakhamim links cedarwood in purification rituals to the sin of lashon hara. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 8:13 as a promise of abundance and multiplication of possessions.

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| וְרָ֖ם לְבָבֶ֑ךָ וְשָֽׁכַחְתָּ֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ֛ מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרַ֖יִם מִבֵּ֥ית עֲבָדִֽים׃ | 14 | beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget your God יהוה —who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; |

Various Jewish commentaries, including Chasidut, Halakhah, and Musar, warn against the dangers of pride and haughtiness, linking them to forgetting God and leading to various transgressions. The importance of humility, remembering God, and avoiding arrogance is emphasized to maintain a spiritual connection and prevent negative consequences. These teachings are reflected in biblical verses, stories, and interpretations, highlighting the need for spiritual renewal, repentance, and alignment with divine will.

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| הַמּוֹלִ֨יכְךָ֜ בַּמִּדְבָּ֣ר ׀ הַגָּדֹ֣ל וְהַנּוֹרָ֗א נָחָ֤שׁ ׀ שָׂרָף֙ וְעַקְרָ֔ב וְצִמָּא֖וֹן אֲשֶׁ֣ר אֵֽין־מָ֑יִם הַמּוֹצִ֤יא לְךָ֙ מַ֔יִם מִצּ֖וּר הַֽחַלָּמִֽישׁ׃ | 15 | who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its seraph serpents and scorpions, a parched land with no water in it, who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock; |

Chasidut discusses openly displayed versus concealed love in the relationship between the Jewish people and God, while emphasizing the need for clarification to overcome negative influences. Ibn Ezra, Sforno, and Steinsaltz highlight God’s provision and guidance in the wilderness, including water from a rock. Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of meaningful activities and moral imperatives for true happiness, contrasting with material pursuits. Liturgy describes the Israelites’ journey through dangerous places, and Midrash connects the wilderness to various historical and symbolic elements. Musar delves into Divine Providence and the consequences of actions, while Quoting Commentary discusses Moses and Aaron’s sin in striking the rock. Second Temple and Talmud texts explore the unchangeable nature of God and different interpretations of blessings over bread. Tanakh references instances of serpents, rocks providing water, and consequences of actions. Targum depicts God leading the Israelites through a dangerous wilderness and providing water from a rock.

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| הַמַּֽאֲכִ֨לְךָ֥ מָן֙ בַּמִּדְבָּ֔ר אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־יָדְע֖וּן אֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ לְמַ֣עַן עַנֹּֽתְךָ֗ וּלְמַ֙עַן֙ נַסֹּתֶ֔ךָ לְהֵיטִֽבְךָ֖ בְּאַחֲרִיתֶֽךָ׃ | 16 | who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your ancestors had never known, in order to test you by hardships only to benefit you in the end— |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of satiation on Shabbat through enhancing vision, while the Commentary, Halakhah, Jewish Thought, Midrash, Musar, and Quoting Commentary all discuss how trials, afflictions, and tests were meant to instill faith, reliance on God, and ultimately benefit the Israelites. The Talmud debates whether the affliction of eating manna was due to lack of leftovers or inability to see the food, while the Tanakh recounts the Israelites’ grumbling in the wilderness and God’s provision of manna as a test of obedience. Targum texts also mention God feeding the Israelites with manna in the wilderness for their benefit.

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| וְאָמַרְתָּ֖ בִּלְבָבֶ֑ךָ כֹּחִי֙ וְעֹ֣צֶם יָדִ֔י עָ֥שָׂה לִ֖י אֶת־הַחַ֥יִל הַזֶּֽה׃ | 17 | and you say to yourselves, “My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.” |

The text discusses the importance of recognizing everything as part of G-d’s providence, separating good from evil through G-d’s role in creation, conducting actions in line with G-d’s words, and recognizing G-d’s role in creation even in times of exile. It also emphasizes the need for faith in God as the source of success in business, the danger of arrogance in attributing wealth to personal power alone, and the importance of humility over pride. The people in the desert rejected divinely provided manna due to dissatisfaction stemming from their attitude, and success is seen as achieved through partnership with God rather than individual effort alone. Abel’s sacrifice was accepted because he believed in the power of God, not his own strength, and God’s word is compared to rain in a dry land, emphasizing the importance of recognizing blessings as coming from God and not solely from personal power.

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| וְזָֽכַרְתָּ֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ כִּ֣י ה֗וּא הַנֹּתֵ֥ן לְךָ֛ כֹּ֖חַ לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת חָ֑יִל לְמַ֨עַן הָקִ֧ים אֶת־בְּרִית֛וֹ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֥ע לַאֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 18 | Remember that it is your God יהוה who gives you the power to get wealth, in fulfillment of the covenant made on oath with your fathers, as is still the case. |

Various commentaries and texts across Chasidut, Jewish Thought, Kabbalah, Musar, Second Temple, Tanakh, and Targum emphasize the importance of recognizing that success and wealth come from God, not individual efforts, and warn against forgetting this to avoid idolatry and destruction. They stress the need for humility, trust in God, and diligence in achieving prosperity, while also warning against pride and arrogance that lead to forgetting God’s role in sustenance and success. Moses in Deuteronomy warns the Israelites not to forget God when prosperous, emphasizing that wealth comes from God and confirming the covenant with their forefathers.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־שָׁכֹ֤חַ תִּשְׁכַּח֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְהָֽלַכְתָּ֗ אַחֲרֵי֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים וַעֲבַדְתָּ֖ם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִ֣יתָ לָהֶ֑ם הַעִדֹ֤תִי בָכֶם֙ הַיּ֔וֹם כִּ֥י אָבֹ֖ד תֹּאבֵדֽוּן׃ | 19 | If you do forget your God יהוה and follow other gods to serve them or bow down to them, I warn you this day that you shall certainly perish; |

The text discusses the spiritual significance of dates and olives, linking them to traits of the spirit and foundation and kingship, emphasizing the importance of measurements and cleanliness in accessing God (Chasidut). Sforno, Or HaChaim, and Rav Hirsch warn about the consequences of attributing success to personal efforts, failing to teach Torah and turning to idolatry, and forgetting God, respectively (Commentary). Halakhah emphasizes God’s choice of Israel, their duty to uphold the Torah, and the divine in all areas of life. Jewish Thought warns against forgetting God, while Midrash highlights the importance of heeding God’s commandments. Musar discusses the concept of blessings and curses related to performing or forgetting commandments, and quoting commentary explains the importance of studying and following the Torah. Targum warns about the consequences of forgetting the fear of God and following other gods.

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| כַּגּוֹיִ֗ם אֲשֶׁ֤ר יְהֹוָה֙ מַאֲבִ֣יד מִפְּנֵיכֶ֔ם כֵּ֖ן תֹּאבֵד֑וּן עֵ֚קֶב לֹ֣א תִשְׁמְע֔וּן בְּק֖וֹל יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 20 | like the nations that יהוה will cause to perish before you, so shall you perish—because you did not heed your God יהוה. |

Chasidut discusses Moses ascending to receive a message from God, highlighting the awe felt by prophets. Commentary on Deuteronomy 8:20 emphasizes obedience leading to blessings and disobedience to destruction. Midrash compares the exile of Israel to the elimination of Canaanite nations, focusing on terror and destruction. Quoting Commentary emphasizes God’s care for Israel in the wilderness and warns against attributing success to their own prowess. Targum warns that disobedience will lead to destruction like other nations.

## Deuteronomy 9

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| שְׁמַ֣ע יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל אַתָּ֨ה עֹבֵ֤ר הַיּוֹם֙ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן לָבֹא֙ לָרֶ֣שֶׁת גּוֹיִ֔ם גְּדֹלִ֥ים וַעֲצֻמִ֖ים מִמֶּ֑ךָּ עָרִ֛ים גְּדֹלֹ֥ת וּבְצֻרֹ֖ת בַּשָּׁמָֽיִם׃ | 1 | Hear, O Israel! You are about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and more populous than you: great cities with walls sky-high; |

Chasidut discusses the ability of the righteous to cancel Divine decrees before they are written down, with Moses exemplifying this by attempting to void a prophecy about his death. Halakhah explains the order of mentioning darkness before light in Hebrew language. Jewish Thought connects the dispersal of peoples to the division caused by defective beliefs, with the moon symbolizing the sacrifice of worldly success for spiritual success. Midrash highlights the miracles through water performed for Israel and Moses’ pleas for mercy and warnings. Mishnah details the division of Eretz Yisrael for marriage purposes. Musar discusses the dispatching of spies to strengthen belief and the sin of causing fear. Quoting Commentary explains the spies’ sin in discouraging the people from entering the Land. Talmud clarifies the use of exaggerated language in the Torah and Prophets. Targum emphasizes the strength of the nations and cities the Israelites are about to face.

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| עַֽם־גָּד֥וֹל וָרָ֖ם בְּנֵ֣י עֲנָקִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתָּ֤ה יָדַ֙עְתָּ֙ וְאַתָּ֣ה שָׁמַ֔עְתָּ מִ֣י יִתְיַצֵּ֔ב לִפְנֵ֖י בְּנֵ֥י עֲנָֽק׃ | 2 | a people great and tall, the Anakites, of whom you have knowledge; for you have heard it said, “Who can stand up to the children of Anak?” |

Moses warned the Israelites about the formidable giants in Canaan, specifically the Anakites, who were described as tall and strong like Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai. The spies’ negative report led to harsh consequences, with the Israelites condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering the promised land. Despite questioning the severity of the spies’ sin, Nachmanides highlights the fear instilled by the giants in Canaan, emphasizing the challenge faced by the Israelites.

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| וְיָדַעְתָּ֣ הַיּ֗וֹם כִּי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ הֽוּא־הָעֹבֵ֤ר לְפָנֶ֙יךָ֙ אֵ֣שׁ אֹֽכְלָ֔ה ה֧וּא יַשְׁמִידֵ֛ם וְה֥וּא יַכְנִיעֵ֖ם לְפָנֶ֑יךָ וְהֽוֹרַשְׁתָּ֤ם וְהַֽאֲבַדְתָּם֙ מַהֵ֔ר כַּאֲשֶׁ֛ר דִּבֶּ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה לָֽךְ׃ | 3 | Know then this day that none other than your God יהוה is crossing at your head, a devouring fire; it is [God] who will wipe them out—subduing them before you, that you may quickly dispossess and destroy them, as יהוה promised you. |

The text emphasizes God’s swift destruction of Israel’s enemies as a consuming fire, leading to rapid victories with the people warned not to drive out all inhabitants at once. Memory joggers are discussed as important for reinforcing character traits and fulfilling commandments, with the keriyat shema highlighted. HaShem is described as a Consuming Fire in Kabbalah, associated with the concept of terror. The tribe of Levi’s hope for God’s kindness and Moses’ remedy to prevent conflict over bearing the Ark are highlighted in Midrash. The transformation of Chanoch into Metatron, the connection between the soul and body, and the fiery coin representing contributions to G-d are discussed in Musar. Ramban, Rashi, Rashbam, and Targum interpretations on various verses are also mentioned.

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| אַל־תֹּאמַ֣ר בִּלְבָבְךָ֗ בַּהֲדֹ֣ף יְהֹוָה֩ אֱלֹהֶ֨יךָ אֹתָ֥ם ׀ מִלְּפָנֶ֘יךָ֮ לֵאמֹר֒ בְּצִדְקָתִי֙ הֱבִיאַ֣נִי יְהֹוָ֔ה לָרֶ֖שֶׁת אֶת־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַזֹּ֑את וּבְרִשְׁעַת֙ הַגּוֹיִ֣ם הָאֵ֔לֶּה יְהֹוָ֖ה מוֹרִישָׁ֥ם מִפָּנֶֽיךָ׃ | 4 | And when your God יהוה has thrust them from your path, say not to yourselves, “יהוה has enabled us to possess this land because of our virtues”; it is rather because of the wickedness of those nations that יהוה is dispossessing them before you. |

The possession of the land by Israel was not due to their righteousness but because of the wickedness of the nations and God’s oath to their forefathers. God’s actions are for His own glory, not based on the righteousness of the people. Success should be attributed to the kindness of God, not personal virtues. The Israelites were forbidden to dwell in the land opposite Beis-peor to avoid temptation to sin. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan caution against attributing the inheritance of the land to Israel’s righteousness.

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| לֹ֣א בְצִדְקָתְךָ֗ וּבְיֹ֙שֶׁר֙ לְבָ֣בְךָ֔ אַתָּ֥ה בָ֖א לָרֶ֣שֶׁת אֶת־אַרְצָ֑ם כִּ֞י בְּרִשְׁעַ֣ת ׀ הַגּוֹיִ֣ם הָאֵ֗לֶּה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ מוֹרִישָׁ֣ם מִפָּנֶ֔יךָ וּלְמַ֜עַן הָקִ֣ים אֶת־הַדָּבָ֗ר אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ לַאֲבֹתֶ֔יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֥ם לְיִצְחָ֖ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹֽב׃ | 5 | It is not because of your virtues and your rectitude that you will be able to possess their country; but it is because of their wickedness that your God יהוה is dispossessing those nations before you, and in order to fulfill the oath that יהוה made to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. |

Chasidut emphasizes that God chose Israel as His portion, regardless of their righteousness, reflecting His unwavering love for them. Jewish Thought contrasts s’daqah with wickedness, warning against attributing success to personal virtues and emphasizing the importance of ethical and moral goodness. The Midrash and Musar warn against pride and highlight that victory comes from God’s goodness, not human righteousness. Quoting Commentary reinforces the idea that Israel’s conquest of Canaan was not due to their righteousness but to God’s promise and justice. Second Temple texts stress the importance of virtue in the eyes of God, while Targum explains that the Israelites will inherit the land to fulfill the promise to their forefathers, not because of their righteousness.

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| וְיָדַעְתָּ֗ כִּ֠י לֹ֤א בְצִדְקָֽתְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱ֠לֹהֶ֠יךָ נֹתֵ֨ן לְךָ֜ אֶת־הָאָ֧רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֛ה הַזֹּ֖את לְרִשְׁתָּ֑הּ כִּ֥י עַם־קְשֵׁה־עֹ֖רֶף אָֽתָּה׃ | 6 | Know, then, that it is not for any virtue of yours that your God יהוה is giving you this good land to possess; for you are a stiffnecked people. |

Sforno explains that being stiff-necked and righteous are incompatible qualities, as a stiff-necked person follows their own opinions instead of God’s commandments. Or HaChaim suggests that Moses warned the Israelites about their past rebelliousness to emphasize that their own righteousness, not just God’s promise to the patriarchs, was necessary for inheriting the land. Rav Hirsch emphasizes the contrast between a stiff-necked character and righteousness. Steinsaltz reiterates that the Israelites are described as stiff-necked and stubborn, implying that their righteousness alone did not merit them the land. The Torah describes the people as ערב רב, suggesting that “sparks” of purity were mixed in their personalities, with the term ערב קטן referring to those with a lower spiritual point of departure. Moses teaches in Deuteronomy that it is not the people who are special, but the Torah they follow, with the laws given by God lifting them to greatness and inspiring others to seek freedom. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 9:6 emphasize that the Israelites are not receiving the land of Canaan due to their righteousness, but rather because of God’s grace, despite their stubbornness and stiff-necked nature.

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| זְכֹר֙ אַל־תִּשְׁכַּ֔ח אֵ֧ת אֲשֶׁר־הִקְצַ֛פְתָּ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר לְמִן־הַיּ֞וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יָצָ֣אתָ ׀ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֗יִם עַד־בֹּֽאֲכֶם֙ עַד־הַמָּק֣וֹם הַזֶּ֔ה מַמְרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם עִם־יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 7 | Remember, never forget, how you provoked your God יהוה to anger in the wilderness: from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you reached this place, you have continued defiant toward יהוה. |

Chasidut emphasizes the struggles against demonic forces that lead to sin, with settlement only coming after the formation of humanity. Commentary highlights the consequences of disobedience and the need for obedience to God’s laws. Halakhah discusses actions that can impede repentance, emphasizing the importance of admonishment. Kabbalah outlines specific actions to demonstrate commitment to God and the Torah. Liturgy includes a verse about not forgetting Israel’s provocations in the desert. Midrash stresses the importance of remembering key events and instructions. Musar discusses actions that impede repentance and the necessity of rebuke. Quoting Commentary explains the timing of Moses’ prayers and clarifies certain commandments. Targum emphasizes the importance of remembering Israel’s defiance towards God.

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| וּבְחֹרֵ֥ב הִקְצַפְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־יְהֹוָ֑ה וַיִּתְאַנַּ֧ף יְהֹוָ֛ה בָּכֶ֖ם לְהַשְׁמִ֥יד אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 8 | At Horeb you so provoked יהוה that יהוה was angry enough with you to have destroyed you. |

Moses reproved Israelites for their sins at Horeb, warning against idolatry and emphasizing the seriousness of disobedience. The Midrash discusses Israel’s commitment to Torah study, sins at Horev and the sea, and the consequences of their actions. The Targum highlights how the Israelites angered the Lord at Horeb, leading to potential destruction.

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| בַּעֲלֹתִ֣י הָהָ֗רָה לָקַ֜חַת לוּחֹ֤ת הָֽאֲבָנִים֙ לוּחֹ֣ת הַבְּרִ֔ית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַ֥ת יְהֹוָ֖ה עִמָּכֶ֑ם וָאֵשֵׁ֣ב בָּהָ֗ר אַרְבָּעִ֥ים יוֹם֙ וְאַרְבָּעִ֣ים לַ֔יְלָה לֶ֚חֶם לֹ֣א אָכַ֔לְתִּי וּמַ֖יִם לֹ֥א שָׁתִֽיתִי׃ | 9 | I had ascended the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the Tablets of the Covenant that יהוה had made with you, and I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights, eating no bread and drinking no water. |

Chasidut criticizes Moses for making high-handed decisions without consulting God, based on his flawed logic and unique spiritual experiences. Halakhah discusses the practice of Nefillas Apayim and prostration in prayer, while Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of Sabbath observance and the severity of the sin of the golden calf. Midrash highlights Moses’s dedication to Torah and his actions to save Israel, and Musar stresses the sanctity of the sukkah and the concept of Moses standing between God and the people. The Talmud discusses Moses’s actions on the mountain and the manna as a miraculous sustenance provided by God.

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| וַיִּתֵּ֨ן יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י אֶת־שְׁנֵי֙ לוּחֹ֣ת הָֽאֲבָנִ֔ים כְּתֻבִ֖ים בְּאֶצְבַּ֣ע אֱלֹהִ֑ים וַעֲלֵיהֶ֗ם כְּֽכׇל־הַדְּבָרִ֡ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר דִּבֶּר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה עִמָּכֶ֥ם בָּהָ֛ר מִתּ֥וֹךְ הָאֵ֖שׁ בְּי֥וֹם הַקָּהָֽל׃ | 10 | And יהוה gave me the two tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God, with the exact words that יהוה had addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly. |

Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, Rashi, and Rav Hirsch offer interpretations of the phrase “written with the finger of God” in the Torah. Halakhah explains the use of anthropomorphic language to describe God and the significance of Yom Ha-kahal. Jewish Thought discusses the transmission of all Torah to Moses at Sinai, emphasizing the importance of consensus among sages. Midrash highlights the importance of charity, righteousness, Torah study, and adherence to God’s laws. Quoting Commentary explains the unique transmission of Torah knowledge to Israel through Moses. Responsa provides measurements for halla and the establishment of measurements by sages. In Talmud, Rabbi Yoḥanan, Rebbi Ḥaggai, and Rebbi Joshua ben Levi discuss the revelation of inferences, oral traditions, and divisions of oral law to Moses on Sinai. Tanakh mentions Pharaoh’s refusal to acknowledge God’s power. Targum describes the giving of stone tablets to Moses inscribed by God’s finger on the day of assembly.

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| וַיְהִ֗י מִקֵּץ֙ אַרְבָּעִ֣ים י֔וֹם וְאַרְבָּעִ֖ים לָ֑יְלָה נָתַ֨ן יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י אֶת־שְׁנֵ֛י לֻחֹ֥ת הָאֲבָנִ֖ים לֻח֥וֹת הַבְּרִֽית׃ | 11 | At the end of those forty days and forty nights, יהוה gave me the two tablets of stone, the Tablets of the Covenant. |

The golden calf was made on the same day Moses received the tablets from God, leading him to break them to lessen the severity of the Israelites’ sin. Rabbi Shimon stresses the importance of reciting the Shema and prayer correctly, approaching prayer with genuine compassion, and maintaining a balanced perspective to motivate good deeds and positive self-image. Adonoy gave Moses two stone tablets at the end of forty days and nights, made of marble according to Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 9:11.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י ק֣וּם רֵ֤ד מַהֵר֙ מִזֶּ֔ה כִּ֚י שִׁחֵ֣ת עַמְּךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֥ר הוֹצֵ֖אתָ מִמִּצְרָ֑יִם סָ֣רוּ מַהֵ֗ר מִן־הַדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר צִוִּיתִ֔ם עָשׂ֥וּ לָהֶ֖ם מַסֵּכָֽה׃ | 12 | And יהוה said to me, “Hurry, go down from here at once, for the people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted wickedly; they have been quick to stray from the path that I enjoined upon them; they have made themselves a molten image.” |

God instructs Moses to descend quickly from the mountain as the Israelites have turned to idolatry by making a cast figure, deviating from His commandments. Animals that have been involved in certain acts or worshipped are unacceptable for sacrifices on the altar, based on Leviticus 22:25, Genesis 6:12, and Exodus 32:7. The Midrash discusses Moses bringing the Torah to earth despite the Israelites’ deviant behavior, emphasizing his sacrifices for the laws and Israel. Ramban explains that God wanted to emphasize His power in delivering the Israelites from Egypt and clarifies their sins of corruption and idol worship. Tur HaArokh suggests that God’s reference to the people as “Moses’ people” was a response to Moses leading them into the desert without consulting God. Adonoy tells Moses to descend quickly as the Israelites have turned away from the commandments given at Sinai and made a molten image despite warnings not to do so.

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| וַיֹּ֥אמֶר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלַ֣י לֵאמֹ֑ר רָאִ֙יתִי֙ אֶת־הָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה וְהִנֵּ֥ה עַם־קְשֵׁה־עֹ֖רֶף הֽוּא׃ | 13 | יהוה further said to me, “I see that this is a stiffnecked people. |

The Torah was given to Moses on Sinai, including decisions made by consensus of sages (Derashot HaRan 3:25). The Midrash in Bamidbar Rabbah 9:45 interprets Israel’s idolatry as straying from God, with Moses interceding on their behalf. Adonoy sees the stubbornness of the people in Deuteronomy 9:13 (Targum).

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| הֶ֤רֶף מִמֶּ֙נִּי֙ וְאַשְׁמִידֵ֔ם וְאֶמְחֶ֣ה אֶת־שְׁמָ֔ם מִתַּ֖חַת הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם וְאֶֽעֱשֶׂה֙ אֽוֹתְךָ֔ לְגוֹי־עָצ֥וּם וָרָ֖ב מִמֶּֽנּוּ׃ | 14 | Let Me alone and I will destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven, and I will make you a nation far more numerous than they.” |

Chasidut emphasizes that God’s promises are firm and will be kept, even when conditional. In Jewish Thought, the Scholars of Greece and Romans had different beliefs about the Israelites and their relationship with God. The Midrash discusses the Israelites defiling themselves with idol worship. In Musar, examples are given of how man can influence the world by doing God’s will. Quoting various commentators, Moses’ prayer saved the Israelites from destruction after the sin of the Golden Calf, emphasizing the importance of mercy over justice. The Talmud highlights how Moses’ prayer nullified God’s decree to destroy the Israelites, showing the fulfillment of God’s promises. Targum interprets God telling Moses to leave Him alone to destroy the Israelites and make Moses into a more powerful nation.

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| וָאֵ֗פֶן וָֽאֵרֵד֙ מִן־הָהָ֔ר וְהָהָ֖ר בֹּעֵ֣ר בָּאֵ֑שׁ וּשְׁנֵי֙ לוּחֹ֣ת הַבְּרִ֔ית עַ֖ל שְׁתֵּ֥י יָדָֽי׃ | 15 | I started down the mountain, a mountain ablaze with fire, the two Tablets of the Covenant in my two hands. |

Moses hid the Tablets in the Holy Ark symbolizing space, time, and the spiritual dimension. Washing hands in the morning is crucial for banishing impurity and disorder, representing Torah and holiness. Moses prayed for the people after their sin with the golden calf, leading God to reconsider destroying them, descending with the second set of Tablets. Moses used the rays of glory from the tablets to show he was G-d’s partner, veiling himself only during mundane tasks. Rabbeinu Chananel explains Moses descended facing the cloud, emphasizing always keeping Hashem in front. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe Moses descending the mountain holding the Tablets.

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| וָאֵ֗רֶא וְהִנֵּ֤ה חֲטָאתֶם֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם עֲשִׂיתֶ֣ם לָכֶ֔ם עֵ֖גֶל מַסֵּכָ֑ה סַרְתֶּ֣ם מַהֵ֔ר מִן־הַדֶּ֕רֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 16 | I saw how you had sinned against your God יהוה: you had made yourselves a molten calf; you had been quick to stray from the path that יהוה had enjoined upon you. |

Moses smashed the Tablets as a symbolic gesture to show alignment with the sinning Israelites and offer selfless empathy, emphasizing the severity of their transgression against God. The breaking of the tablets is explored in various Midrashim as a response to the people’s sin, highlighting the connection between Moses and the fate of the Israelites. The Talmud discusses Moses adding an extra day of purification before receiving the Torah to ensure ritual purity, breaking the tablets when he saw the Israelites worshiping the Golden Calf. The Targumim mention the sin of the Israelites in making a molten calf and deviating from God’s command.

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| וָאֶתְפֹּשׂ֙ בִּשְׁנֵ֣י הַלֻּחֹ֔ת וָֽאַשְׁלִכֵ֔ם מֵעַ֖ל שְׁתֵּ֣י יָדָ֑י וָאֲשַׁבְּרֵ֖ם לְעֵינֵיכֶֽם׃ | 17 | Thereupon I gripped the two tablets and flung them away with both my hands, smashing them before your eyes. |

Moses broke the Tablets in anger to prevent severe punishment for the people and maintain their status as not yet fully married to God, exemplifying the abrogation of the covenant. A prophet must possess wisdom, humility, strength, and wealth to be suitable for prophecy. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yishmael disagreed on whether Moses was right to break the tablets, with the breaking likened to a royal edict being destroyed. Moses was instructed to make a wooden ark for the second set of Tablets, emphasizing his ownership of them. The tablets were broken on the 17th of Tammuz because of the people’s worship of the Golden Calf, with Moses staying apart from his wife and outside the Tent of Meeting.

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| וָֽאֶתְנַפַּל֩ לִפְנֵ֨י יְהֹוָ֜ה כָּרִאשֹׁנָ֗ה אַרְבָּעִ֥ים יוֹם֙ וְאַרְבָּעִ֣ים לַ֔יְלָה לֶ֚חֶם לֹ֣א אָכַ֔לְתִּי וּמַ֖יִם לֹ֣א שָׁתִ֑יתִי עַ֤ל כׇּל־חַטַּאתְכֶם֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר חֲטָאתֶ֔ם לַעֲשׂ֥וֹת הָרַ֛ע בְּעֵינֵ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה לְהַכְעִיסֽוֹ׃ | 18 | I threw myself down before יהוה —eating no bread and drinking no water forty days and forty nights, as before—because of the great wrong you had committed, doing what displeased and vexed יהוה. |

Moses prayed for forty days and nights twice, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God after the sin of the golden calf and before receiving the second tablets, ultimately leading to complete reconciliation with Israel on Yom Kippur. On the Eve of Yom Kippur, certain prayers are omitted, such as taḥanun, Psalm 19, and Psalm 100, with disagreements on reciting the “Avinu Malkenu” prayer. The worshipper recites Tachanun in a sitting position, symbolizing submission to God, with specific exceptions. Prayer is emphasized as powerful and more important than good deeds or sacrifices, exemplified by Moses and other righteous individuals in the Midrash texts. Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Da’at Zekenim, Chizkuni, Onkelos, and Targum Jonathan provide insights into Moses’s actions, forgiveness, the significance of Yom Kippur, and Moses’s prayers for reconciliation with God.

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| כִּ֣י יָגֹ֗רְתִּי מִפְּנֵ֤י הָאַף֙ וְהַ֣חֵמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר קָצַ֧ף יְהֹוָ֛ה עֲלֵיכֶ֖ם לְהַשְׁמִ֣יד אֶתְכֶ֑ם וַיִּשְׁמַ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ אֵלַ֔י גַּ֖ם בַּפַּ֥עַם הַהִֽוא׃ | 19 | For I was in dread of the fierce anger against you which moved יהוה to wipe you out. And that time, too, יהוה gave heed to me.— |

Moses prayed fervently for Israel after the golden calf incident, preventing their destruction through his prayers for forty days and nights, even though God had repented of destroying them. Giving charity in secret is deemed greater than Moses’ actions by R. Eleazar, as it subdues anger. Moses was nearly punished for delaying his son’s circumcision, emphasizing the importance of the practice. The commentary on Vayikra 16:1:7 highlights how Moses’ prayers saved two of Aaron’s sons from death. In Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 9:19, Moses calls upon the names of the patriarchs to restrain and bury the destroying angels sent to punish Israel.

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| וּֽבְאַהֲרֹ֗ן הִתְאַנַּ֧ף יְהֹוָ֛ה מְאֹ֖ד לְהַשְׁמִיד֑וֹ וָֽאֶתְפַּלֵּ֛ל גַּם־בְּעַ֥ד אַהֲרֹ֖ן בָּעֵ֥ת הַהִֽוא׃ | 20 | Moreover, יהוה was angry enough with Aaron to have destroyed him; so I also interceded for Aaron at that time.— |

Aaron’s involvement in the making of the Golden Calf led to the death of two of his sons, but Moses’ prayer spared the other two, highlighting Aaron’s failure in responsibility and the severity of his punishment. Despite his good intentions, Aaron’s actions resulted in a public desecration of God’s name, emphasizing the high standards expected of righteous individuals. Moses pleads for forgiveness for Aaron after the incident, showing mercy and pursuit of peace, contrasting with his more critical nature. The Midrash discusses instances of repentance and prayer reversing harsh decrees, such as Cain’s repentance and Hezekiah’s prayer, highlighting the concept of chosen individuals brought near by God like Aaron and Levi. Aaron’s punishment for the Golden Calf incident is also mentioned, with two of his sons dying while two are saved through Moses’ prayer.

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| וְֽאֶת־חַטַּאתְכֶ֞ם אֲשֶׁר־עֲשִׂיתֶ֣ם אֶת־הָעֵ֗גֶל לָקַ֘חְתִּי֮ וָאֶשְׂרֹ֣ף אֹת֣וֹ ׀ בָּאֵשׁ֒ וָאֶכֹּ֨ת אֹת֤וֹ טָחוֹן֙ הֵיטֵ֔ב עַ֥ד אֲשֶׁר־דַּ֖ק לְעָפָ֑ר וָֽאַשְׁלִךְ֙ אֶת־עֲפָר֔וֹ אֶל־הַנַּ֖חַל הַיֹּרֵ֥ד מִן־הָהָֽר׃ | 21 | As for that sinful thing you had made, the calf, I took it and put it to the fire; I broke it to bits and ground it thoroughly until it was fine as dust, and I threw its dust into the brook that comes down from the mountain. |

Moses intercedes for forgiveness after the golden calf incident, demonstrating his commitment to the Jewish people despite God’s initial anger. He destroyed the calf completely and purified the Israelites with gold dust. The ritual of burning the red heifer symbolizes purification and humility before God. The Mishnah details how to revoke the idolatrous status of an ashera, while the Talmud debates disposal methods for idols. Moses’ actions are interpreted in various commentaries and texts, emphasizing the consequences of idolatry and the necessity of purification rituals.

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| וּבְתַבְעֵרָה֙ וּבְמַסָּ֔ה וּבְקִבְרֹ֖ת הַֽתַּאֲוָ֑ה מַקְצִפִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם אֶת־יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 22 | Again you provoked יהוה at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah. |

Ibn Ezra and Sforno explain that Taberah and Massah represent Israel testing God through complaints and challenges, with Tur HaArokh adding dissatisfaction and doubt. Rav Hirsch notes internal spiritual failings at both locations, with Da’at Zekenim and Chizkuni highlighting sins of grumbling, testing God, and lusting for meat. The Midrash emphasizes repentance for transgressions, while Ramban discusses Abraham’s origins and the challenge of interpreting biblical omissions. The Talmud lists ten trials faced by the Israelites, including Tav’erah, Masah, and Kivrot HaTa’avah, with Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov underscoring the severity of punishment. In Tanakh, the Israelites complain about meat, leading to quail and a plague, while Eldad and Medad prophesy outside the Tent of Meeting. The Targum mentions the Israelites angering God at Tav’eiroh, Massoh, Kivros Hata’voh, and the Graves of Desire.

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| וּבִשְׁלֹ֨חַ יְהֹוָ֜ה אֶתְכֶ֗ם מִקָּדֵ֤שׁ בַּרְנֵ֙עַ֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר עֲלוּ֙ וּרְשׁ֣וּ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖תִּי לָכֶ֑ם וַתַּמְר֗וּ אֶת־פִּ֤י יְהֹוָה֙ אֱלֹ֣הֵיכֶ֔ם וְלֹ֤א הֶֽאֱמַנְתֶּם֙ ל֔וֹ וְלֹ֥א שְׁמַעְתֶּ֖ם בְּקֹלֽוֹ׃ | 23 | And when יהוה sent you on from Kadesh-barnea, saying, “Go up and take possession of the land that I am giving you,” you flouted the command of your God יהוה —whom you did not put your trust in nor obey. |

The Israelites did not believe or listen to God when they were sent to spy out the land, leading to disobedience and a lack of trust and obedience that ultimately prevented them from entering the promised land despite God’s instructions (Targum).

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| מַמְרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם עִם־יְהֹוָ֑ה מִיּ֖וֹם דַּעְתִּ֥י אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 24 | As long as I have known you, you have been defiant toward יהוה. |

Rav Hirsch and Steinsaltz comment on the Israelites’ past defiance of the Lord. Halakhah states that five deeds can hinder repentance, including hating admonishment. Ramban, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, Tur HaArokh, Ibn Ezra, and Rashi discuss Moses’ actions and character in various situations. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey the people’s disobedience towards God.

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| וָֽאֶתְנַפַּ֞ל לִפְנֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֗ה אֵ֣ת אַרְבָּעִ֥ים הַיּ֛וֹם וְאֶת־אַרְבָּעִ֥ים הַלַּ֖יְלָה אֲשֶׁ֣ר הִתְנַפָּ֑לְתִּי כִּֽי־אָמַ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה לְהַשְׁמִ֥יד אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 25 | When I lay prostrate before יהוה those forty days and forty nights, because יהוה was determined to destroy you, |

Moses prayed for forty days and nights after the sin of the Golden Calf to prevent God from destroying the people, emphasizing the importance of upholding the covenant and the consequences of disobedience. Prostration is a proper form of repentance and confession before God, as exemplified by Moses and the Kohen Gadol during Yom Kippur. The value of prayer is revealed through both lengthy and brief prayers in Jewish thought, while praying quickly is akin to Moshe’s prayer in Kabbalah. The Midrash discusses the importance of moderation in prayer, citing examples of Moses praying both long and short prayers, with Ramban, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Chizkuni providing additional insights on Moses’ prayer. The Talmud teaches that there is no set limit to the duration of a prayer, as exemplified by Moses praying for forty days and nights without limit. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention Moses prostrating himself before the Lord for forty days and nights to prevent the destruction of the people.

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| וָאֶתְפַּלֵּ֣ל אֶל־יְהֹוָה֮ וָאֹמַר֒ אֲדֹנָ֣י יֱהֹוִ֗ה אַל־תַּשְׁחֵ֤ת עַמְּךָ֙ וְנַחֲלָ֣תְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֥ר פָּדִ֖יתָ בְּגׇדְלֶ֑ךָ אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵ֥אתָ מִמִּצְרַ֖יִם בְּיָ֥ד חֲזָקָֽה׃ | 26 | I prayed to יהוה and said, “O Lord יהוה, do not annihilate Your very own people, whom You redeemed in Your majesty and whom You freed from Egypt with a mighty hand. |

Moses prayed for God’s mercy on the Israelites, emphasizing their unique relationship and redemption from Egypt. Prolonged prayer without intellectual analysis is powerful, like Moshe’s prayer preceded by Torah study. The name Adona”y HaShem signifies the ascent of the Sefirot. The liturgy on Yom Kippur draws on biblical examples to show God’s responsiveness to prayer. Moses and Jacob’s prayers in the Midrash demonstrate the power of prayer to change God’s decree. Nachmanides explains Moses’ plea for mercy over justice in praying for the Israelites. Rabbi Ḥanin and Rabbi Ḥanina teach that prolonged prayer is accepted, as seen in Moses’ forty-day prayer. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also mention a prayer for mercy on the Israelites.

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| זְכֹר֙ לַעֲבָדֶ֔יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֥ם לְיִצְחָ֖ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹ֑ב אַל־תֵּ֗פֶן אֶל־קְשִׁי֙ הָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה וְאֶל־רִשְׁע֖וֹ וְאֶל־חַטָּאתֽוֹ׃ | 27 | Give thought to Your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and pay no heed to the stubbornness of this people, its wickedness, and its sinfulness. |

The Haamek Davar commentary explains that the generation involved in the Golden Calf incident were punished for intentional idol worship and unintentional sin. Liturgy prayers ask for God’s mercy and protection, emphasizing repentance and submission. In the Midrash, Moses pleads with God to spare the Israelites by reminding Him of His mercy. In Musar, performing a mitzvah brings goodness, and repentance removes sins from God’s sight. The Talmud states that prolonged prayer is accepted, using Moses’ example. The Targums on Deuteronomy 9:27 mention pleading for God to remember the patriarchs and overlook the people’s stubbornness and sin.

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| פֶּן־יֹאמְר֗וּ הָאָ֘רֶץ֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר הוֹצֵאתָ֣נוּ מִשָּׁם֒ מִבְּלִי֙ יְכֹ֣לֶת יְהֹוָ֔ה לַהֲבִיאָ֕ם אֶל־הָאָ֖רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּ֣ר לָהֶ֑ם וּמִשִּׂנְאָת֣וֹ אוֹתָ֔ם הוֹצִיאָ֖ם לַהֲמִתָ֥ם בַּמִּדְבָּֽר׃ | 28 | Else the country from which You freed us will say, ‘It was because יהוה was powerless to bring them into the land promised to them, and because of having rejected them, that [their god] brought them out to have them die in the wilderness.’ |

Moses prayed to God to prevent the nations from thinking He was unable to bring the Israelites to the Promised Land and had brought them out of Egypt to kill them in the wilderness. The concern was that the Egyptians would doubt God’s power and intentions if the Israelites perished quickly after leaving Egypt. Rashbam explains God’s anger towards the Israelites in Deuteronomy 29:24, Ramban discusses Korach’s rebellion in Numbers 16, Rashi explains Job 13:7, and Chizkuni emphasizes maintaining a good relationship with God in Deuteronomy 10:10. Tanakh highlights Moses pleading with God not to destroy the Israelites, reminding Him of His presence with the people. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also emphasize the fear of the inhabitants of the land thinking God brought the Israelites out of Egypt to kill them.

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| וְהֵ֥ם עַמְּךָ֖ וְנַחֲלָתֶ֑ךָ אֲשֶׁ֤ר הוֹצֵ֙אתָ֙ בְּכֹחֲךָ֣ הַגָּדֹ֔ל וּבִֽזְרֹעֲךָ֖ הַנְּטוּיָֽה׃ | 29 | Yet they are Your very own people, whom You freed with Your great might and Your outstretched arm.” |

Moses pleads for God’s mercy on the Jewish people, emphasizing their status as His chosen people and inheritance. Liturgy during Sukkot includes prayers for salvation and protection, invoking righteous individuals and emphasizing faithfulness and humility. In the Midrash, Moses prays for the people of Israel and their relationship with God, highlighting their status as His people and inheritance. Ramban and Ibn Ezra provide insights into Moses’ prayers and the meaning of certain phrases in Scripture. Targum interpretations emphasize the Israelites as God’s people and territory, brought out with His great power.

## Deuteronomy 10

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| בָּעֵ֨ת הַהִ֜וא אָמַ֧ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֵלַ֗י פְּסׇל־לְךָ֞ שְׁנֵֽי־לוּחֹ֤ת אֲבָנִים֙ כָּרִ֣אשֹׁנִ֔ים וַעֲלֵ֥ה אֵלַ֖י הָהָ֑רָה וְעָשִׂ֥יתָ לְּךָ֖ אֲר֥וֹן עֵֽץ׃ | 1 | Thereupon יהוה said to me, “Carve out two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain; and make an ark of wood. |

G-d instructed Moses to carve two sets of stone tablets, with the first set being the work of G-d and the second set made by Moses, housed in two separate arks. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Chodesh Elul serves as a call to repentance, drawing parallels to Moses being called up the mountain after the sin of the Golden Calf. Moses’s partnership with God in creating the tablets highlights the interrelationship between man and God, with divine influence seen in the radiance on Moses’s face. The breaking and renewal of the tablets symbolized forgiveness and restoration of the covenant. The Talmud discusses the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and the placement of the broken tablets, with differing opinions on its construction and significance for future generations.

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| וְאֶכְתֹּב֙ עַל־הַלֻּחֹ֔ת אֶ֨ת־הַדְּבָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר הָי֛וּ עַל־הַלֻּחֹ֥ת הָרִאשֹׁנִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר שִׁבַּ֑רְתָּ וְשַׂמְתָּ֖ם בָּאָרֽוֹן׃ | 2 | I will inscribe on the tablets the commandments that were on the first tablets that you smashed, and you shall deposit them in the ark.” |

God does not change His law for human errors, only offering the choice to abandon or return to it, with the new tablets containing the same law. The broken and restored tablets in the ark serve as a reminder of the consequences of straying from the law and the importance of returning to it. The Tablets of the Covenant were placed in the Ark, emphasizing the importance of the Oral Torah in expounding upon the written Torah. The Talmud discusses the sanctity of Torah scholars and the measurements of the Ark, with differing opinions on the size and placement of the tablets within it. Moses smashing the Tablets was later praised by G’d for breaking the spell of idol worship.

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| וָאַ֤עַשׂ אֲרוֹן֙ עֲצֵ֣י שִׁטִּ֔ים וָאֶפְסֹ֛ל שְׁנֵי־לֻחֹ֥ת אֲבָנִ֖ים כָּרִאשֹׁנִ֑ים וָאַ֣עַל הָהָ֔רָה וּשְׁנֵ֥י הַלֻּחֹ֖ת בְּיָדִֽי׃ | 3 | I made an ark of acacia wood and carved out two tablets of stone like the first; I took the two tablets with me and went up the mountain. |

Ibn Ezra interprets a perfect as a pluperfect to explain Moses assembling the people to make the ark, which is identified as the same one made by Bezalel, not contradicting Rabbinic tradition. Tur HaArokh and Steinsaltz describe Moses constructing the ark of acacia wood and carving two stone tablets, with Chizkuni specifying that Moses ascended the mountain on a Thursday. Kabbalah emphasizes the connection between the written Torah and the Oral Torah by placing the Tablets of the Covenant in the Ark. Ramban clarifies that G-d, not Moses, wrote on the Tablets, while Or HaChaim discusses the distinction between the temporary ark Moses made and the permanent one by Betzalel. Chizkuni explains the timeline of the Tablets being placed in the ark Moses made before being transferred to the Holy Ark. Tanakh describes Moses carving two stone tablets and going up Mount Sinai in the morning, as commanded by יהוה. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe Moses making a case and an ark of shittim wood and carrying two stone tablets up the mountain.

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| וַיִּכְתֹּ֨ב עַֽל־הַלֻּחֹ֜ת כַּמִּכְתָּ֣ב הָרִאשׁ֗וֹן אֵ֚ת עֲשֶׂ֣רֶת הַדְּבָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר דִּבֶּר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֲלֵיכֶ֥ם בָּהָ֛ר מִתּ֥וֹךְ הָאֵ֖שׁ בְּי֣וֹם הַקָּהָ֑ל וַיִּתְּנֵ֥ם יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלָֽי׃ | 4 | After inscribing on the tablets the same text as on the first—the Ten Commandments that יהוה addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the Assembly— יהוה gave them to me. |

Rabbi Berekhya explained that the prince of Gad’s offerings symbolized significant events related to the exodus from Egypt and the leaders of Israel, while the Targum and Onkelos state that Moses wrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets according to God’s original words, which were then given to Moses. G’d Himself inscribed the Tablets with the same words as the first set, as confirmed by Moses in Deuteronomy 10:4, with Hashem addressing the Israelites differently regarding the first and second sets in Deuteronomy 4:12. Chizkuni also confirms that G’d wrote on the Tablets.

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| וָאֵ֗פֶן וָֽאֵרֵד֙ מִן־הָהָ֔ר וָֽאָשִׂם֙ אֶת־הַלֻּחֹ֔ת בָּאָר֖וֹן אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשִׂ֑יתִי וַיִּ֣הְיוּ שָׁ֔ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוַּ֖נִי יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 5 | Then I left and went down from the mountain, and I deposited the tablets in the ark that I had made, where they still are, as יהוה had commanded me. |

Moses placed the Tablets in the ark after descending from Mount Sinai, following God’s command for His glory to be among the Children of Israel. The Talmud discusses Moses adding a day of purity before giving the Torah, breaking the tablets to prevent death, and staying apart based on his own reasoning and God’s will. The Targum confirms Moses placing the tablets in the ark he made, as commanded by the Lord.

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| וּבְנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל נָ֥סְע֛וּ מִבְּאֵרֹ֥ת בְּנֵי־יַעֲקָ֖ן מוֹסֵרָ֑ה שָׁ֣ם מֵ֤ת אַהֲרֹן֙ וַיִּקָּבֵ֣ר שָׁ֔ם וַיְכַהֵ֛ן אֶלְעָזָ֥ר בְּנ֖וֹ תַּחְתָּֽיו׃ | 6 | From Beeroth-bene-jaakan the Israelites marched to Moserah. Aaron died there and was buried there; and his son Eleazar became priest in his stead. |

Moses rebukes Israelites for fearing war and appointing a leader to return to Egypt, while various commentaries discuss Aaron’s death, the Israelites’ movements, mourning, and the significance of his passing. The Talmud and Tanakh mention the consequences of Aaron’s death, including attacks by Canaanites and Amalek, while the Targum describes the mourning period and Elazar’s succession. The importance of emulating God’s virtues, acts of kindness, and justice are emphasized in the Musar commentary.

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| מִשָּׁ֥ם נָסְע֖וּ הַגֻּדְגֹּ֑דָה וּמִן־הַגֻּדְגֹּ֣דָה יׇטְבָ֔תָה אֶ֖רֶץ נַ֥חֲלֵי מָֽיִם׃ | 7 | From there they marched to Gudgod, and from Gudgod to Jotbath, a region of running brooks. |

Rashi explains the Israelites mourned Aaron’s death at Mosera, emphasizing the death of the righteous. Ibn Ezra clarifies Gudgod is a general term for Zalmonah, Punon, and Oboth, not Hor-haggidgad, and discusses Eleazar’s ministry in Gudgod and Jotbah. Midrash mentions conflicts with Moses and Aaron in the wilderness of Tzin, Aaron’s death at 123 causing the clouds of glory to disappear, and battles with Sihon. In Tanakh, Aaron dies on Mount Hor, leading to mourning and battles with the Canaanites. Targum mentions the Israelites traveling from Goodgode to Yotvos with abundant water sources.

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| בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֗וא הִבְדִּ֤יל יְהֹוָה֙ אֶת־שֵׁ֣בֶט הַלֵּוִ֔י לָשֵׂ֖את אֶת־אֲר֣וֹן בְּרִית־יְהֹוָ֑ה לַעֲמֹד֩ לִפְנֵ֨י יְהֹוָ֤ה לְשָֽׁרְתוֹ֙ וּלְבָרֵ֣ךְ בִּשְׁמ֔וֹ עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 8 | At that time יהוה set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of יהוה’s Covenant, to stand in attendance upon יהוה, and to bless in God’s name, as is still the case. |

The tribe of Levi was separated by God to serve as priests and Levites, with the priests being permitted to carry the Ark. Levites are designated for service in the Sanctuary, priests must recite blessings standing, and the Priestly Benediction is recited in specific services. The hierarchy within the Jewish community places priests above Levites, Levites above Israelites, and so on based on genealogy and societal status. In terms of precedence, a Torah scholar mamzer takes precedence over an ignorant High Priest. Serving God is seen as a privilege that surpasses all worldly pleasures, with the honor of being chosen for service far surpassing earthly recognition. The distinction between priests, Levites, and Israelites is based on the separation of Levites to bear the Ark and priests for sanctification, with the Priestly Benediction performed standing and with lifted hands.

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| עַל־כֵּ֞ן לֹֽא־הָיָ֧ה לְלֵוִ֛י חֵ֥לֶק וְנַחֲלָ֖ה עִם־אֶחָ֑יו יְהֹוָה֙ ה֣וּא נַחֲלָת֔וֹ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֶּ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לֽוֹ׃ | 9 | That is why Levi has received no hereditary portion along with its kin: יהוה is its portion, as your God יהוה spoke concerning it. |

The Levites did not receive a portion of land because they were dedicated to serving at the altar and receiving sustenance from the Temple, as explained by various commentators. The Negative Mitzvah 114 prohibits shearing consecrated animals and the tribe of Levi is commanded against receiving an inheritance in the land of Canaan. The land of Israel was divided amongst the twelve tribes, with Levi not receiving land and Joseph being counted as two separate tribes. The Levites were set apart by the Lord and did not receive land as their portion, with God being their inheritance.

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| וְאָנֹכִ֞י עָמַ֣דְתִּי בָהָ֗ר כַּיָּמִים֙ הָרִ֣אשֹׁנִ֔ים אַרְבָּעִ֣ים י֔וֹם וְאַרְבָּעִ֖ים לָ֑יְלָה וַיִּשְׁמַ֨ע יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלַ֗י גַּ֚ם בַּפַּ֣עַם הַהִ֔וא לֹא־אָבָ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה הַשְׁחִיתֶֽךָ׃ | 10 | I had stayed on the mountain, as I did the first time, forty days and forty nights; and יהוה heeded me once again: יהוה agreed not to destroy you. |

Moses spent a total of 120 days on the mountain, with the last forty days focused on seeking forgiveness for the people’s sins, which was granted on Yom Kippur. Prostration in prayer, based on Moses’s actions, symbolizes returning one’s soul to God. Prolonged prayer rooted in deep spiritual feeling, exemplified by Moses, is powerful and effective, while mixing intellectual functions into prayer can lead to disappointment. Moses dissolved God’s vow regarding Israel’s sin by referencing nullification of vows and restrained angels from harming Israel. The Gemara discusses Moses sitting and standing on the mount, with resolutions provided by different rabbis, and cites Moses’s forty days of prayer as evidence of the acceptance of prolonged prayer.

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| וַיֹּ֤אמֶר יְהֹוָה֙ אֵלַ֔י ק֛וּם לֵ֥ךְ לְמַסַּ֖ע לִפְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם וְיָבֹ֙אוּ֙ וְיִֽירְשׁ֣וּ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֥עְתִּי לַאֲבֹתָ֖ם לָתֵ֥ת לָהֶֽם׃ | 11 | And יהוה said to me, “Up, resume the march at the head of the people, that they may go in and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.” |

The Chasidut text discusses the recital of a specific verse following the Shema based on biblical references. The Commentary emphasizes God’s instruction to Moses despite the Israelites’ sin. The Midrash highlights the importance of Torah, consequences of sin, and the relationship between justice and mercy in relation to entering the Land. The Tanakh mentions God’s instructions to Moses to lead the people to the promised land, with accountability for their sins. The Targum states that Adonoy instructs Moses to lead the people to inherit the land promised to their forefathers.

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| וְעַתָּה֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל מָ֚ה יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ שֹׁאֵ֖ל מֵעִמָּ֑ךְ כִּ֣י אִם־לְ֠יִרְאָ֠ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ לָלֶ֤כֶת בְּכׇל־דְּרָכָיו֙ וּלְאַהֲבָ֣ה אֹת֔וֹ וְלַֽעֲבֹד֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 12 | And now, O Israel, what does your God יהוה demand of you? Only this: to revere your God יהוה, to walk only in divine paths, to love and to serve your God יהוה with all your heart and soul, |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of serving the Lord with awe and reverence while rejoicing greatly, highlighting the fear of God as a key aspect of spiritual growth and humility. Halakhah stresses that following God’s commandments is beneficial for individuals, encouraging walking in His path and reciting 100 blessings daily. Jewish Thought discusses the importance of balancing physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth, adherence to commandments, and maintaining a close relationship with God. Kabbalah emphasizes serving God with fear and joy, with fear being a key aspect of service. Midrash highlights the fear of Heaven as the most important treasure and the foundation of all commandments. Musar underscores the fear of God as crucial for righteousness and as the basis for all other commandments. The Talmud and Targum also emphasize the importance of fear of God and free will in serving Him.

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| לִשְׁמֹ֞ר אֶת־מִצְוֺ֤ת יְהֹוָה֙ וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם לְט֖וֹב לָֽךְ׃ | 13 | keeping יהוה’s commandments and laws, which I enjoin upon you today, for your good. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of waking up with strength to serve the Creator, while Rashi, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz highlight the value of faithful observance of God’s laws for the Jewish people’s benefit. Halakhah underscores that the commandments are meant to refine souls and guide towards good character traits, fostering a close relationship with God. Jewish Thought discusses the fear of God, the purpose of fulfilling mitzvot, and the importance of observing commandments for personal and national well-being. Quoting Commentary offers various perspectives on the reasons behind commandments, emphasizing compassion, prevention of cruelty, and the benefits they bring to those who follow them. Targum emphasizes following God’s commandments and statutes for personal well-being.

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| הֵ֚ן לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וּשְׁמֵ֣י הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם הָאָ֖רֶץ וְכׇל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּֽהּ׃ | 14 | Mark, the heavens to their uttermost reaches belong to your God יהוה, the earth and all that is on it! |

Chasidut explains that the vowels in the names of Hashem and Elokim represent God’s essence and self-imposed restrictions for blessing the Jewish people. Commentary highlights God’s favoritism towards the forefathers of Israel and the universe’s creation for humanity’s sake. Jewish Thought emphasizes the need for confirmation from God for reliable conclusions, while Midrash recounts Moses’ acceptance of death after pleading for mercy. Musar discusses G-d’s exception to Moses’ disbelief and the importance of humility and vowel patterns. Quoting Commentary delves into the creation of the universe, zodiac signs, and the role of prayer in influencing life decrees. Talmud mentions Rabbi Yehuda’s belief in two firmaments, and Targum states that everything belongs to God.

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| רַ֧ק בַּאֲבֹתֶ֛יךָ חָשַׁ֥ק יְהֹוָ֖ה לְאַהֲבָ֣ה אוֹתָ֑ם וַיִּבְחַ֞ר בְּזַרְעָ֣ם אַחֲרֵיהֶ֗ם בָּכֶ֛ם מִכׇּל־הָעַמִּ֖ים כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 15 | Yet it was to your ancestors that יהוה was drawn out of love for them, so that you, their lineal descendants, were chosen from among all peoples—as is now the case. |

Chasidut emphasizes Moses’ efforts to instill love for God through understanding and meditation, while Jewish Thought discusses the factors influencing human actions and God’s love for the Jewish people. Kabbalah delves into the divine Name of Tiferet and the symbolism of the forefathers, while Musar warns of negative consequences for those who do not adopt a righteous lifestyle. The Commentary and Quoting Commentary highlight God’s choice of the Jewish people, the significance of the Sabbath, and the obligation to discuss the Exodus on Passover. Lastly, Responsa addresses false Messiahs, the uniqueness of the Jewish religion, and the importance of maintaining faith and observance.

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| וּמַלְתֶּ֕ם אֵ֖ת עׇרְלַ֣ת לְבַבְכֶ֑ם וְעׇ֨רְפְּכֶ֔ם לֹ֥א תַקְשׁ֖וּ עֽוֹד׃ | 16 | Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more. |

Chasidut discusses the metaphorical significance of circumcising the heart to remove evil impulses and draw closer to God, especially during the month of Elul. Halakhah debates the proper method of circumcision, with some requiring complete removal of the foreskin. Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of studying the Torah and interpreting commandments based on traditions. Kabbalah outlines specific actions to promote spiritual growth and connection to God. Midrash highlights the removal of obstacles to serving God through circumcision of the heart. Quoting Commentary discusses different interpretations of circumcision in Jewish texts. Second Temple discusses twofold circumcision of the flesh and the heart for purity and obedience. Talmud explains the specific place for circumcision and the evil inclination’s various names. Tanakh and Targum emphasize opening the heart to love God completely and removing obstacles to avoid His wrath.

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| כִּ֚י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם ה֚וּא אֱלֹהֵ֣י הָֽאֱלֹהִ֔ים וַאֲדֹנֵ֖י הָאֲדֹנִ֑ים הָאֵ֨ל הַגָּדֹ֤ל הַגִּבֹּר֙ וְהַנּוֹרָ֔א אֲשֶׁר֙ לֹא־יִשָּׂ֣א פָנִ֔ים וְלֹ֥א יִקַּ֖ח שֹֽׁחַד׃ | 17 | For your God יהוה is God supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, |

Chasidut emphasizes prayer directed towards God through the name YHVH, rooted in Zeir Anpin and Tiferet, leading to favor and grace through recognizing the divine life force within us. Halakhah discusses guidelines for prayers, forbidding comparisons of God’s decrees, and taking security by force from debtors. Jewish Thought discourages excessive praise of God, focusing on developing reverence and fear of Him. Kabbalah relates understanding-Binah to the Name HaShem and the judgment of the seventy nations. Liturgy expresses prayers for love, fear, blessings, and unity towards God. Midrash highlights God’s favor towards Israel. Mishnah traces the transmission of Torah through generations. Musar emphasizes kindness, truth, humility, and supporting Torah scholars in repentance and serving God. Quoting Commentary condemns idol worship of celestial bodies. Second Temple discusses deification of the sun, moon, and sky. Talmud criticizes excessive praise of God and discusses God’s favor and judgment. Tanakh acknowledges God’s kindness, justice, faithfulness, and greatness. Targum describes God as Almighty, Great, Powerful, and Awesome, impartial and just.

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| עֹשֶׂ֛ה מִשְׁפַּ֥ט יָת֖וֹם וְאַלְמָנָ֑ה וְאֹהֵ֣ב גֵּ֔ר לָ֥תֶת ל֖וֹ לֶ֥חֶם וְשִׂמְלָֽה׃ | 18 | but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing food and clothing.— |

The text emphasizes the importance of loving and caring for converts to Judaism, showing kindness and respect as they are considered precious before God. The construction details of the menorah symbolize enlightenment and wisdom, representing man’s attempt to perfect himself and attain wisdom. The passage calls for love and obedience to God, highlighting His greatness, justice, and care for the vulnerable in society. The Midrash discusses the significance of proselytes and their acceptance into the community, emphasizing their value and potential contributions. Jacob’s mention of bread and clothing from God underscores the practical purpose of these gifts, showing God’s love for the stranger through provision. Moses is praised for his extreme humility, serving as an example of closeness with God and contrasting with the sin of pride condemned by the sages. The Talmud discusses God’s care for the weakest members of society, highlighting the importance of proselytes and the Land of Israel in atoning for sins. Jacob’s vow in Genesis 28:20 asks for protection, sustenance, and clothing during his journey, reflecting the importance of providing for the vulnerable in society as emphasized by Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 10:18.

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| וַאֲהַבְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־הַגֵּ֑ר כִּֽי־גֵרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם בְּאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם׃ | 19 | You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. |

The importance of loving and showing kindness to strangers is emphasized in various commentaries, halakhic texts, Jewish thought, Midrashim, and Tanakh passages, highlighting the shared experience of being strangers in Egypt and the command to treat converts with love and compassion. The duty to love strangers is rooted in the belief that God upholds justice and compassion for the vulnerable, and reflects the values of justice and compassion central to Judaism. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 10:19 also stresses the importance of showing compassion to strangers based on the Israelites’ own history as strangers in Egypt.

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| אֶת־יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ תִּירָ֖א אֹת֣וֹ תַעֲבֹ֑ד וּב֣וֹ תִדְבָּ֔ק וּבִשְׁמ֖וֹ תִּשָּׁבֵֽעַ׃ | 20 | You must revere יהוה: only your God shall you worship, to [God] shall you hold fast, and by God’s name shall you swear. |

Chasidut emphasizes the power of tzaddikim to settle God’s anger and sweeten judgments, contrasting them with the wicked who distance themselves from God despite the world being created for their benefit. The Torah commands individuals to fear, serve, and cleave to the Lord, allowing them to swear by His Name once these attributes are acquired. Halakhah outlines the commandments to cling to God, fear Him, pray to Him, and swear in His name truthfully, with additional emphasis on associating with Torah scholars, praying daily, and avoiding negative speech. Jewish Thought highlights the importance of fear of God before love of Him, with mitzvot of the body focusing on the mitzvot of the heart and mind. Kabbalah discusses prophecy, Torah study, fear of God, and adherence to His titles and oaths. Midrash emphasizes the importance of fearing God, serving Him, and holding fast to Him, with examples of Abraham, Job, and Joseph as models. Musar stresses the importance of clinging to God, serving Him, and fulfilling positive commandments beyond the letter of the law. Quoting Commentary provides insights from Meshekh Chokhmah, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Haamek Sheilah, and Rambam on clinging to Hashem, emulating G’d’s characteristics, making oaths, serving G’d, and avoiding deviating beliefs. Second Temple texts urge Abraham to cleave to God through piety and faith. Talmudic discussions cover the permissibility of benefiting from sacrificial blood, interpretations of Torah scholars, the permissibility of taking oaths to fulfill mitzvot, and methods of Torah interpretation. Tanakh and Targum emphasize the importance of fearing, revering, serving, and swearing by God.

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| ה֥וּא תְהִלָּתְךָ֖ וְה֣וּא אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֣ה אִתְּךָ֗ אֶת־הַגְּדֹלֹ֤ת וְאֶת־הַנּֽוֹרָאֹת֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֥ר רָא֖וּ עֵינֶֽיךָ׃ | 21 | [ יהוה ] is your glory and your God, who wrought for you those marvelous, awesome deeds that you saw with your own eyes. |

Chasidut emphasizes prayer as a means to be encompassed in God’s Oneness, while the commentary on Deuteronomy highlights the reciprocal relationship between God and Israel. Jewish Thought stresses the importance of tradition in interpreting commandments, Kabbalah discusses the significance of the word “He-Hoo” in the Torah, Liturgy calls Israel to fear, love, and serve God, Midrash explains the covenant with Israel at Horeb, Musar emphasizes focusing solely on serving God and avoiding pride, and Quoting Commentary provides interpretations of specific verses. Targum emphasizes God’s worthiness of praise for His deeds.

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| בְּשִׁבְעִ֣ים נֶ֔פֶשׁ יָרְד֥וּ אֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ מִצְרָ֑יְמָה וְעַתָּ֗ה שָֽׂמְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ כְּכוֹכְבֵ֥י הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם לָרֹֽב׃ | 22 | Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now your God יהוה has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven. |

Chasidut explains that the spread of prophecy comes from the root souls of Israel symbolized by the seventy souls descending to Egypt, emphasizing the essential role of glory. Halakhah commands individuals to learn from wise individuals to establish a bond with God, while Jewish Thought challenges previous explanations for Jewish suffering in Egypt. Liturgy stresses the importance of fearing and loving God, keeping His commandments, and remembering miracles, while Midrash explores the significance of counting the Israelites and the tribe of Levi. Musar views the Jewish nation as part of God Himself, distinct from the 70 nations, ensuring an eternal future. Quoting Commentary clarifies the count of seventy people, the isolation of Jacob’s family in Goshen, and the symbolic inclusion of God in the count. Second Temple and Tanakh highlight the significance of the number seventy in the context of Israel’s history and promises. Targum emphasizes God’s fulfillment of the promise to make the descendants of the seventy forefathers numerous.

## Deuteronomy 11

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| וְאָ֣הַבְתָּ֔ אֵ֖ת יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֣ מִשְׁמַרְתּ֗וֹ וְחֻקֹּתָ֧יו וּמִשְׁפָּטָ֛יו וּמִצְוֺתָ֖יו כׇּל־הַיָּמִֽים׃ | 1 | Love, therefore, your God יהוה, and always keep God’s charge, God’s laws, God’s rules, and God’s commandments. |

Chasidut focuses on instilling love for God through understanding and meditation on commandments, contrasting with Korach’s self-serving intentions. Halakhah emphasizes the positive commandment to love God and love for converts. Kabbalah discusses the importance of loving others and fulfilling mitzvot. Liturgy highlights the requirements of fearing, loving, and serving God. Midrash explains the uniqueness of Moses’ blessings. Musar emphasizes embracing wisdom and service with love and devotion. Quoting Commentary discusses Job’s questioning of suffering and the interpretation of “halacha le-Moshe mi-Sinai.” Targum stresses the importance of loving and observing God’s word consistently.

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| וִֽידַעְתֶּם֮ הַיּוֹם֒ כִּ֣י ׀ לֹ֣א אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶ֗ם אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־יָדְעוּ֙ וַאֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־רָא֔וּ אֶת־מוּסַ֖ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם אֶת־גׇּדְל֕וֹ אֶת־יָדוֹ֙ הַחֲזָקָ֔ה וּזְרֹע֖וֹ הַנְּטוּיָֽה׃ | 2 | Take thought this day that it was not your children, who neither experienced nor witnessed the lesson of your God יהוה —God’s majesty, mighty hand, and outstretched arm; |

Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Or HaChaim, Rashbam, Da’at Zekenim, and various commentaries emphasize different aspects of God’s greatness, miracles, discipline, and punishment in the Exodus story. Jewish thought highlights the importance of self-accounting, fulfilling commandments on behalf of the public, and serving God with wisdom and wholeheartedness. The liturgy in Deuteronomy emphasizes fearing and loving God, keeping His commandments, and caring for strangers. Resh Laqish compares Moses carrying out God’s orders to a wife obeying her husband, while Musar discusses Moses’ doubt in his prophecy leading to opposition from Korach. Sforno and Rabbeinu Bahya provide insights on the tetragrammaton sequences in the Torah, indicating justice and mercy. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Tafsir Rasag stress the importance of knowing and recognizing God’s teachings and actions.

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| וְאֶת־אֹֽתֹתָיו֙ וְאֶֽת־מַעֲשָׂ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשָׂ֖ה בְּת֣וֹךְ מִצְרָ֑יִם לְפַרְעֹ֥ה מֶֽלֶךְ־מִצְרַ֖יִם וּלְכׇל־אַרְצֽוֹ׃ | 3 | the signs and the deeds that [God] performed in Egypt against Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his land; |

Ibn Ezra explains Pharaoh’s significance in Deuteronomy 11:3:1, while Rav Hirsch interprets “His signs and His works” as miracles in Egypt. Destroying a holy name of God violates a Torah prohibition, subjecting one to lashes. In Midrash, Moses blesses Israel before the Angel of Death, God measures the earth before giving the Torah, and certain things are permitted for gentiles but not for Israel. The brothers thought the caravan was Ishmaelites but were merchants who bought Joseph from the Midianites. Targum references God’s signs and deeds in Egypt towards Pharaoh.

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| וַאֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂה֩ לְחֵ֨יל מִצְרַ֜יִם לְסוּסָ֣יו וּלְרִכְבּ֗וֹ אֲשֶׁ֨ר הֵצִ֜יף אֶת־מֵ֤י יַם־סוּף֙ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶ֔ם בְּרׇדְפָ֖ם אַחֲרֵיכֶ֑ם וַיְאַבְּדֵ֣ם יְהֹוָ֔ה עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 4 | what [God] did to Egypt’s army, its horses and chariots; how יהוה rolled back upon them the waters of the Sea of Reeds when they were pursuing you, thus destroying them once and for all; |

The phrase “unto this day” in Deuteronomy 11:4 likely refers to the lasting impact of the defeat of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, symbolizing the downfall of Egypt as a powerful kingdom. The text explains that the Holy One offered the Torah to all nations, but only Israel accepted it, with the nations being punished for rejecting it. Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Rashi, and Chizkuni provide interpretations of different biblical verses related to speaking, walking, and the actions of the Egyptians. The Targum recounts God’s destruction of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, which is remembered as a punishment for their pursuit of the Israelites.

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| וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשָׂ֛ה לָכֶ֖ם בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר עַד־בֹּאֲכֶ֖ם עַד־הַמָּק֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 5 | what [God] did for you in the wilderness before you arrived in this place; |

The text from Deuteronomy 11:5 mentions the manna in the wilderness as something God did for the Israelites, connecting various experiences in the desert to God’s guidance. In times of ease, it is important to remember punishments and chastisements witnessed in the desert to prevent being enticed by worldly pleasures. The Midrash emphasizes the greatness of God and praises those engaged with the Torah for being delivered from enslavement. Rabbeinu Bahya and Ramban interpret different aspects of Moses being commanded tasks and the punishments inflicted on the Israelites. The Targums discuss how God helped the Israelites in the wilderness until they reached their destination.

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| וַאֲשֶׁ֨ר עָשָׂ֜ה לְדָתָ֣ן וְלַאֲבִירָ֗ם בְּנֵ֣י אֱלִיאָב֮ בֶּן־רְאוּבֵן֒ אֲשֶׁ֨ר פָּצְתָ֤ה הָאָ֙רֶץ֙ אֶת־פִּ֔יהָ וַתִּבְלָעֵ֥ם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶ֖ם וְאֶת־אׇהֳלֵיהֶ֑ם וְאֵ֤ת כׇּל־הַיְקוּם֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּרַגְלֵיהֶ֔ם בְּקֶ֖רֶב כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 6 | and what [God] did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab son of Reuben, when the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them, along with their households, their tents, and every living thing in their train, from amidst all Israel— |

Chasidut emphasizes the connection between money, truth, and breaking greed, with wealth symbolizing judgment and the ability to raise a person up. In the commentary, various interpretations are provided on the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with explanations on the significance of their actions and the miraculous events that occurred. The Midrash discusses hidden treasures, the consequences of quarreling with authority figures, and the fate of those involved in the rebellion. The Talmud delves into Korah’s wealth leading to his downfall, and the Tanakh recounts the rebellion and punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The Targum describes the earth swallowing them as a punishment for their rebellion against God.

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| כִּ֤י עֵֽינֵיכֶם֙ הָֽרֹאֹ֔ת אֶת־כׇּל־מַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה הַגָּדֹ֑ל אֲשֶׁ֖ר עָשָֽׂה׃ | 7 | but that it was you who saw with your own eyes all the marvelous deeds that יהוה performed. |

The Israelites are responsible for passing on their firsthand knowledge of God’s miracles to future generations. The righteous are considered alive even in death, while the wicked are considered dead even in life. Ramban explains the sale of Joseph involving the Ishmaelites and Midianites, and Rabbeinu Bahya discusses the significance of greatness in various contexts related to Hashem’s name. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 11:7 highlight the Israelites’ personal witness to God’s great works.

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| וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם לְמַ֣עַן תֶּחֶזְק֗וּ וּבָאתֶם֙ וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֣ם אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם עֹבְרִ֥ים שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 8 | Keep, therefore, all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you today, so that you may have the strength to enter and take possession of the land that you are about to cross into and possess, |

Ibn Ezra points out a vocalization error in Deuteronomy 11:8, Sforno stresses inscribing Torah on stones, Or HaChaim highlights Torah study’s strengthening power for war, Rav Hirsch connects commandment observance with Israel’s strength and endurance, Steinsaltz emphasizes the importance of observing commandments to possess the land, Da’at Zekenim stresses strength to fulfill commandments out of love for God, Abarbanel links mitzvot performance to blessing or curse, and Chizkuni explains that observing commandments ensures Israel’s endurance in their land. Liturgy emphasizes fearing God, walking in His ways, loving Him, serving Him with heart and soul, keeping commandments, and circumcising hearts, while Targum sources stress the importance of keeping commandments to be strengthened and inherit the land. Ibn Ezra interprets טפוף in Isaiah 3:16 as speaking, swimming slowly, or walking like a child.

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| וּלְמַ֨עַן תַּאֲרִ֤יכוּ יָמִים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר֩ נִשְׁבַּ֨ע יְהֹוָ֧ה לַאֲבֹתֵיכֶ֛ם לָתֵ֥ת לָהֶ֖ם וּלְזַרְעָ֑ם אֶ֛רֶץ זָבַ֥ת חָלָ֖ב וּדְבָֽשׁ׃ | 9 | and that you may long endure upon the soil that יהוה swore to your fathers to assign to them and to their heirs, a land flowing with milk and honey. |

Failure to observe God’s commandments will result in exile from the land, while observing them will lead to a long life in the promised land of milk and honey. The liturgy stresses the importance of fearing and serving Adonoy, loving Him, keeping His commandments, and passing on teachings to future generations. Moses rebuked Israel and found favor with God, contrasting with Balaam’s flattery. Women, slaves, and minors are exempt from certain religious practices, but still required to pray and have a mezuzah. The reason the Israelites were taken out of Egypt and not given the land is due to the different means of fertility in Egypt and Israel. The Targums emphasize the promise of a land abundant in milk and honey for the forefathers and their descendants.

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| כִּ֣י הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתָּ֤ה בָא־שָׁ֙מָּה֙ לְרִשְׁתָּ֔הּ לֹ֣א כְאֶ֤רֶץ מִצְרַ֙יִם֙ הִ֔וא אֲשֶׁ֥ר יְצָאתֶ֖ם מִשָּׁ֑ם אֲשֶׁ֤ר תִּזְרַע֙ אֶֽת־זַרְעֲךָ֔ וְהִשְׁקִ֥יתָ בְרַגְלְךָ֖ כְּגַ֥ן הַיָּרָֽק׃ | 10 | For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden; |

The text contrasts the Land of Israel’s reliance on rainfall for irrigation with Egypt’s dependence on the Nile River, highlighting the importance of observing God’s commandments to ensure rain and sustenance. The Midrash discusses the Israelites’ lack of belief in the land’s superiority despite God’s praise, leading to the spying mission and their subsequent prohibition from entering the land. The Talmud delves into the measurement of a garden bed’s internal area based on Deuteronomy 11:10, while the Tanakh and Targum reference the provision of water in the land and the settlement of Joseph’s family in Egypt.

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| וְהָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתֶּ֜ם עֹבְרִ֥ים שָׁ֙מָּה֙ לְרִשְׁתָּ֔הּ אֶ֥רֶץ הָרִ֖ים וּבְקָעֹ֑ת לִמְטַ֥ר הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם תִּשְׁתֶּה־מָּֽיִם׃ | 11 | but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. |

The land of Canaan has hills and valleys, dependent on rain for water, and is under God’s constant care (Deuteronomy 11:11-12). Priests cannot add to the priestly blessing and must recite prayers before and after blessing the community (Halakhah). All phenomena in the world have matter, form, and previous existence, with humans given the Torah to overcome metamorphosis and become part of the world of pure spirits through good deeds (Jewish Thought). God’s will is carried out on His creations, including angels who can take different forms, and rain is received in various ways in Eretz Yisrael (Midrash). The Mishnah Eruvin 5:4 describes how to measure a Shabbat limit, while Rabbi Yehoshua explains the world’s water source and the unique nature of preparing the ground in Eretz Yisrael (Talmud). Genesis 2:6 suggests a natural irrigation system before rain existed, and Targum describes the land of Israel as having mountains, valleys, and rainwater (Tanakh, Targum).

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| אֶ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ דֹּרֵ֣שׁ אֹתָ֑הּ תָּמִ֗יד עֵינֵ֨י יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בָּ֔הּ מֵֽרֵשִׁית֙ הַשָּׁנָ֔ה וְעַ֖ד אַחֲרִ֥ית שָׁנָֽה׃ | 12 | It is a land which your God יהוה looks after, on which your God יהוה always keeps an eye, from year’s beginning to year’s end. |

Chasidut emphasizes Abraham’s revelation of God’s providence and the connection between seeking God’s presence and charity for the Land of Israel. The purification of vessels symbolizes moving from impurity to holiness, while sin causes a distance between a person and God. The removal of the foreskin reveals the divine life force, and the Jewish people are spiritually first, with the Land of Israel connected to divine providence. The Babylonian Talmud discusses different criteria for multiple New Years, and the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Ha-shana is a mitzvah to express humility. The Kabbalah emphasizes the importance of Torah study and connecting it to prayer, while the Targum highlights God’s constant care for the land of Israel throughout the year.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־שָׁמֹ֤עַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ אֶל־מִצְוֺתַ֔י אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם הַיּ֑וֹם לְאַהֲבָ֞ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶם֙ וּלְעׇבְד֔וֹ בְּכׇל־לְבַבְכֶ֖ם וּבְכׇל־נַפְשְׁכֶֽם׃ | 13 | If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving your God יהוה and serving [God] with all your heart and soul, |

Chasidut emphasizes that the acceptance of the Torah is equal for all, but the reward depends on the impression it makes in one’s heart, with prayer being the service of the heart. Halakhah discusses the specifics of prayer, the Shema, Tefillin, and Mezuzah, highlighting the importance of Torah study and the connection between miracles and nature. Jewish Thought focuses on key principles of faith, love and service to God, and the purpose of prayer in strengthening the relationship with the Creator. Kabbalah discusses the significance of Tefilin and Mezuzah in representing divine lights and unity. Liturgy emphasizes obeying God’s commandments for blessings, while Midrash discusses the importance of mitzvot for the Jewish people. Mishnah details the breaks in the Shema prayer and the recitation of blessings by priests. Musar emphasizes the importance of prayer with intention and the higher level of service that comes from love and devotion. Quoting Commentary stresses the reverence for wise Torah scholars, while Talmud discusses the king’s readings from Deuteronomy, the importance of mentioning rain in prayer, and the significance of prayer as a form of service in the heart. Targum emphasizes obeying God’s commandments and serving Him wholeheartedly, and Tosefta details the king’s readings and the significance of the Ark in relation to Pinchas and the Torah.

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| וְנָתַתִּ֧י מְטַֽר־אַרְצְכֶ֛ם בְּעִתּ֖וֹ יוֹרֶ֣ה וּמַלְק֑וֹשׁ וְאָסַפְתָּ֣ דְגָנֶ֔ךָ וְתִירֹֽשְׁךָ֖ וְיִצְהָרֶֽךָ׃ | 14 | I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil— |

God promises to provide rain in its season, benefiting the people and ensuring bountiful crops, with specific terms indicating timing and impact on crops. Mishneh Torah outlines requirements for crowns on certain letters in passages, emphasizing the obligation of Torah study for all Jewish men. Nefesh HaChayim prioritizes Torah study over worldly pursuits, while Akeidat Yitzchak discusses the significance of the afterlife. The Midrash discusses rain as a gift to the world and the debate on its necessity for fruit production. The importance of moral values and ethical behavior is emphasized in Musar. Shimon the Righteous highlights the importance of Torah, Temple service, and acts of piety for the world to exist, with loving kindness replacing Temple service after its destruction. The Talmud emphasizes the connection between Temple service, blessing, and timely rains, while Zechariah 10:1 encourages asking God for rain. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 11:14 emphasize God’s provision of rain for crop growth.

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| וְנָתַתִּ֛י עֵ֥שֶׂב בְּשָׂדְךָ֖ לִבְהֶמְתֶּ֑ךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ֖ וְשָׂבָֽעְתָּ׃ | 15 | I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill. |

Chasidut: Balak compared the Israelite encampment to oxen denuding the soil, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling commandments before enjoying the fruits of labor, with a focus on rehabilitating fallen sparks through eating the ox after fulfilling commandments. Jewish converts were feared for their influence in elevating others spiritually. The Torah promises provision for animals in the field, highlighting the importance of breaking apart animalistic qualities to reveal God’s countenance.

Commentary: Deuteronomy 11:15 emphasizes being satisfied with provisions, including grass in the fields attributed to God’s role in growth and sustenance. Halakhah states the importance of feeding animals before eating, showing respect to God. Rav Yehuda prohibits tasting anything before feeding animals, following the order of creation.

Jewish Thought: Animals should be fed before humans as part of the order of sustenance following creation. Liturgy emphasizes obeying God’s commandments to receive blessings and warns against turning away from God. Midrash debates rising for a scholar or quarrelsome man, with R. Juda stating one must feed cattle before eating.

Quoting Commentary: Or HaChaim explains the importance of providing for others before oneself, as seen in Genesis 24:19. Talmud discusses the Temple service bringing blessings to the land and its inhabitants. Tanakh outlines blessings from following God’s laws, including abundant harvests and protection.

Targum: Deuteronomy 11:15 is translated to emphasize providing for animals before oneself, ensuring satisfaction for all.

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| הִשָּֽׁמְר֣וּ לָכֶ֔ם פֶּ֥ן יִפְתֶּ֖ה לְבַבְכֶ֑ם וְסַרְתֶּ֗ם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶ֖ם לָהֶֽם׃ | 16 | Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. |

Chasidut emphasizes that idolatry leads to a lack of rain, which results in a lack of satiation and peace, warning against even a slight deviation from faith as a form of idolatry. Halakhah prohibits not only physical worship but also thoughts and inquiries about idolatrous practices, with consequences including lashes. Jewish Thought highlights the importance of eradicating idolatry in Jewish Law and achieving moral perfection through refining one’s personality. The Midrash stresses the constant observation and fulfillment of mitzvot, while Responsa refutes claims that verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed and emphasizes adherence to the Law of Moses. In the Talmud, David decrees that those of illegitimate birth may not enter the congregation due to famine, and Hiel believes Joshua cursed the building of Jericho.

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| וְחָרָ֨ה אַף־יְהֹוָ֜ה בָּכֶ֗ם וְעָצַ֤ר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֙יִם֙ וְלֹֽא־יִהְיֶ֣ה מָטָ֔ר וְהָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה לֹ֥א תִתֵּ֖ן אֶת־יְבוּלָ֑הּ וַאֲבַדְתֶּ֣ם מְהֵרָ֗ה מֵעַל֙ הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטֹּבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר יְהֹוָ֖ה נֹתֵ֥ן לָכֶֽם׃ | 17 | For יהוה’s anger will flare up against you, shutting up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that יהוה is assigning to you. |

Chasidut explains that the soil not yielding produce is a consequence of impeding prayer, leading to exile. Commentary elaborates on the reasons for exile, emphasizing hunger and sin leading to punishment, with a focus on the importance of rain and fasting. Halakhah details the pronunciation rules for the Shema, while Jewish Thought discusses the rewards and punishments for Torah observance. Kabbalah warns against forbidden practices, and Midrash alludes to the nations’ punishment for harming Israel. Musar contrasts Hillel’s modesty with Shammai’s anger. Quoting Commentary highlights the shared experiences of the Jewish people, and Talmud discusses sins leading to the withholding of rain and Temple service importance. Targum discusses the consequences of incurring divine anger.

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| וְשַׂמְתֶּם֙ אֶת־דְּבָרַ֣י אֵ֔לֶּה עַל־לְבַבְכֶ֖ם וְעַֽל־נַפְשְׁכֶ֑ם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּ֨ם אֹתָ֤ם לְאוֹת֙ עַל־יֶדְכֶ֔ם וְהָי֥וּ לְטוֹטָפֹ֖ת בֵּ֥ין עֵינֵיכֶֽם׃ | 18 | Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead, |

Chasidut teaches that the tzaddik brings down new souls through Torah teachings, while the wicked stumble. Commentary emphasizes the importance of maintaining distinctiveness through commandments like wearing T’fillin and Mezuzah, with a focus on teaching Torah to children. Halakhah details the requirements for Torah passages, tefillin, and Torah study obligations. Midrash highlights the Torah as a remedy against sin, stressing the need for self-control. Mishnah discusses the stringency of rabbinic interpretations and the importance of following tradition. Quoting commentary cites Abraham’s observance of Torah, the significance of charity, and the word “totafot.” Second Temple and Talmud texts discuss interpretations of Torah scrolls, phylacteries, and Torah study practices. Tanakh and Targum emphasize the physical reminders of God’s teachings through symbols like tefillin.

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| וְלִמַּדְתֶּ֥ם אֹתָ֛ם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶ֖ם לְדַבֵּ֣ר בָּ֑ם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ֤ בְּבֵיתֶ֙ךָ֙ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ֣ בַדֶּ֔רֶךְ וּֽבְשׇׁכְבְּךָ֖ וּבְקוּמֶֽךָ׃ | 19 | and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up; |

Parents are instructed to teach their children the Torah from a young age, ensuring it becomes a central aspect of their thoughts, speech, and actions throughout their lives. Women, slaves, and minors are not obligated to study Torah, but fathers have the obligation to teach their sons Torah from a young age. In Jewish Thought, man has freedom of choice leading to punishment or reward, and the focus is on performing positive commandments to reach God’s favor. Joshua b. Gamla established schools for children to ensure Torah learning, highlighting the importance of Torah learning and fulfilling mitzvot. The Mishnah discusses the breaks between paragraphs in the Shema prayer, emphasizing the order of accepting the yoke of Heaven before mitzvot. Teaching Torah to children is crucial for perpetuating Torah knowledge and linked to lengthening one’s days, with parents having the duty to prioritize their children’s Torah education. Women are exempt from time-bound commandments, including Torah study. The Targum commentaries stress the importance of teaching commandments to children in various daily situations.

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| וּכְתַבְתָּ֛ם עַל־מְזוּז֥וֹת בֵּיתֶ֖ךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 20 | and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates— |

The commandment to affix a mezuzah on doorposts is a positive mitzvah that symbolizes unity with God and the importance of following His commandments, with neglect leading to negative consequences such as shortened life spans. The Torah, given by God to the Israelites through Moses, outlines divine regulations and duties to be faithfully followed to ensure blessings and prosperity. The mezuzah serves as protection from harmful forces and demons, with the obligation falling on residents to affix and maintain it properly to avoid tragic outcomes. Various interpretations and rules regarding the mezuzah are provided in different commentaries and texts, emphasizing the importance of following commandments for a good life in this world and the next.

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| לְמַ֨עַן יִרְבּ֤וּ יְמֵיכֶם֙ וִימֵ֣י בְנֵיכֶ֔ם עַ֚ל הָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֧ע יְהֹוָ֛ה לַאֲבֹתֵיכֶ֖ם לָתֵ֣ת לָהֶ֑ם כִּימֵ֥י הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם עַל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 21 | to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that יהוה swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth. |

The text discusses the intention one should have when wearing tefillin, focusing on the absorption of attributes of wisdom and understanding into the En Sof, using one’s wisdom and understanding only for God, nullifying the attribute of daat in the soul, studying Torah daily, the connection between length of days and conducting business matters faithfully, and the light of life coming from the Light of the Face as a sign of life. Fulfilling commandments leads to increased lifespan and blessings, with connections to the resurrection of the dead, eternal nature of the land of Israel for the Jewish people, and following God’s laws for a prosperous life. The Shema prayer serves as a recitation of fundamental tenets of Judaism, providing guidelines for Jewish life. The importance of writing sections of Shema and Vehayah Im Shemoa on mezuzahs and affixing them to doorposts is discussed, as well as the significance of tefillin and the Torah scroll. Korach’s rebellion against God’s authority and the enduring strength of those who uphold the cause of Heaven are highlighted. The importance of attending synagogue for prayer, mourning for scholars, and various perspectives on the duration of the Messianic period are discussed in the Midrash. The Mishnah discusses the reading of the Torah by the king during the assembly, while Musar emphasizes the benefits of attending synagogue regularly and providing for the Torah study of one’s sons. The mezuzah must contain both portions of Scripture from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and the order of the parchment scriptures in tefillin is specified by Rabbi Yaakov Tam. The Talmud emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the mitzvot related to the mezuzah, phylacteries, and the passages of the Shema for the well-being and longevity of one’s children. Keeping the covenant brings blessings, both material and spiritual, but success should not lead to forgetfulness of God’s kindness. The longevity of the Israelites and their children on the land promised by God is emphasized in Targum texts.

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| כִּי֩ אִם־שָׁמֹ֨ר תִּשְׁמְר֜וּן אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֣ה הַזֹּ֗את אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם לַעֲשֹׂתָ֑הּ לְאַהֲבָ֞ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֛ם לָלֶ֥כֶת בְּכׇל־דְּרָכָ֖יו וּלְדׇבְקָה־בֽוֹ׃ | 22 | If, then, you faithfully keep all this Instruction that I command you, loving your God יהוה, walking in all God’s ways, and holding fast to [God], |

Chasidut emphasizes connecting to God through Torah, love, and good deeds. Commentary discusses various insights on cleaving to God through Torah study, emulating His ways, and acts of loving-kindness. Halakhah commands cleaving to Torah Sages to establish a bond with God. Jewish Thought explores the possibility of intimate relation with God and the projection of wisdom through prophets. Kabbalah stresses cleaving to God through Torah study and holiness. Liturgy highlights the importance of fearing, loving, and serving God. Midrash equates protection of Torah to protection of one’s soul. Musar emphasizes honoring God and others, warning against studying Torah for personal gain. Quoting Commentary provides insights on the obligatory nature of commandments. Targum states blessings for keeping all commandments, loving God, and clinging to His fear.

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| וְהוֹרִ֧ישׁ יְהֹוָ֛ה אֶת־כׇּל־הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֖לֶּה מִלִּפְנֵיכֶ֑ם וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֣ם גּוֹיִ֔ם גְּדֹלִ֥ים וַעֲצֻמִ֖ים מִכֶּֽם׃ | 23 | יהוה will dislodge before you all these nations: you will dispossess nations greater and more numerous than you. |

God promises to drive out nations before the Israelites if they fulfill their obligations, allowing them to easily earn a livelihood and serve God. The conquest of Canaan must follow a specific order, with individual conquests not having the same legal status. By studying haggadah, one can recognize and cleave to God’s ways. Ramban explains that the Israelites can conquer any land they desire with Divine assurance. The letter refutes claims of verses alluding to Mohammed and emphasizes the importance of preserving the laws of Moses and dealing cautiously with heretics.

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| כׇּל־הַמָּק֗וֹם אֲשֶׁ֨ר תִּדְרֹ֧ךְ כַּֽף־רַגְלְכֶ֛ם בּ֖וֹ לָכֶ֣ם יִהְיֶ֑ה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּ֨ר וְהַלְּבָנ֜וֹן מִן־הַנָּהָ֣ר נְהַר־פְּרָ֗ת וְעַד֙ הַיָּ֣ם הָאַֽחֲר֔וֹן יִהְיֶ֖ה גְּבֻלְכֶֽם׃ | 24 | Every spot on which your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River—the Euphrates—to the Western Sea. |

The text discusses the promise of the Land of Israel to the Israelites, detailing the boundaries from the wilderness and Lebanon to the Euphrates River and the Mediterranean Sea, with specific borders outlined in Numbers and Joshua. Territories not conquered or settled can become sanctified as part of Israel, with the obligation to conquer as far as the Euphrates River, and the ultimate destiny of Israel as promised by God is emphasized. The conquest of lands outside of Eretz Yisrael was permitted only after conquering Eretz Yisrael proper, with mitzvoth applying in those conquered lands, and territories conquered with the instruction of the Sanhedrin are considered part of Israel.

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| לֹא־יִתְיַצֵּ֥ב אִ֖ישׁ בִּפְנֵיכֶ֑ם פַּחְדְּכֶ֨ם וּמוֹרַֽאֲכֶ֜ם יִתֵּ֣ן ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֗ם עַל־פְּנֵ֤י כׇל־הָאָ֙רֶץ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּדְרְכוּ־בָ֔הּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּ֥ר לָכֶֽם׃ | 25 | No one shall stand up to you: your God יהוה will put the dread and the fear of you over the whole land in which you set foot, as promised. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of reciting the Shema twice daily to acknowledge the Kingdom of Heaven with self-sacrifice. Jewish Thought discusses fear as instinctive or based on reverence, with Divine intervention more frequent among the Jewish people when loyal to God. Kabbalah mentions how the Jewish people were given the quality of terror and consuming fire to conquer the land, but lost this inheritance due to sin. Midrash explains that God will protect Israel from all enemies, not just men. Musar recommends reciting specific verses and prayers for protection from sin and evil. Quoting Commentary highlights the alignment between Joshua and Deuteronomy, presenting Yehoshua as a worthy successor to Moshe. Tanakh and Targum both mention God sending terror before the Israelites to make their enemies flee in fear.

# **47**: ראה|Re’eh (Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17)

## Deuteronomy 11

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| רְאֵ֗ה אָנֹכִ֛י נֹתֵ֥ן לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם הַיּ֑וֹם בְּרָכָ֖ה וּקְלָלָֽה׃ | 26 | See, this day I set before you blessing and curse: |

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| אֶֽת־הַבְּרָכָ֑ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּשְׁמְע֗וּ אֶל־מִצְוֺת֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 27 | blessing, if you obey the commandments of your God יהוה that I enjoin upon you this day; |

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| וְהַקְּלָלָ֗ה אִם־לֹ֤א תִשְׁמְעוּ֙ אֶל־מִצְוֺת֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם וְסַרְתֶּ֣ם מִן־הַדֶּ֔רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם הַיּ֑וֹם לָלֶ֗כֶת אַחֲרֵ֛י אֱלֹהִ֥ים אֲחֵרִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹֽא־יְדַעְתֶּֽם׃ | 28 | and curse, if you do not obey the commandments of your God יהוה, but turn away from the path that I enjoin upon you this day and follow other gods, whom you have not experienced. |

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| וְהָיָ֗ה כִּ֤י יְבִֽיאֲךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּ֑הּ וְנָתַתָּ֤ה אֶת־הַבְּרָכָה֙ עַל־הַ֣ר גְּרִזִ֔ים וְאֶת־הַקְּלָלָ֖ה עַל־הַ֥ר עֵיבָֽל׃ | 29 | When your God יהוה brings you into the land that you are about to enter and possess, you shall pronounce the blessing at Mount Gerizim and the curse at Mount Ebal.— |

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| הֲלֹא־הֵ֜מָּה בְּעֵ֣בֶר הַיַּרְדֵּ֗ן אַֽחֲרֵי֙ דֶּ֚רֶךְ מְב֣וֹא הַשֶּׁ֔מֶשׁ בְּאֶ֙רֶץ֙ הַֽכְּנַעֲנִ֔י הַיֹּשֵׁ֖ב בָּעֲרָבָ֑ה מ֚וּל הַגִּלְגָּ֔ל אֵ֖צֶל אֵלוֹנֵ֥י מֹרֶֽה׃ | 30 | Both are on the other side of the Jordan, beyond the west road that is in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah—near Gilgal, by the terebinths of Moreh. |

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| כִּ֤י אַתֶּם֙ עֹבְרִ֣ים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן לָבֹא֙ לָרֶ֣שֶׁת אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֖ם נֹתֵ֣ן לָכֶ֑ם וִֽירִשְׁתֶּ֥ם אֹתָ֖הּ וִֽישַׁבְתֶּם־בָּֽהּ׃ | 31 | For you are about to cross the Jordan to enter and possess the land that your God יהוה is assigning to you. When you have occupied it and are settled in it, |

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| וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֣ם לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֵ֥ת כׇּל־הַֽחֻקִּ֖ים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י נֹתֵ֥ן לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 32 | take care to observe all the laws and rules that I have set before you this day. |

## Deuteronomy 12

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| אֵ֠לֶּה הַֽחֻקִּ֣ים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּשְׁמְר֣וּן לַעֲשׂוֹת֒ בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר֩ נָתַ֨ן יְהֹוָ֜ה אֱלֹהֵ֧י אֲבֹתֶ֛יךָ לְךָ֖ לְרִשְׁתָּ֑הּ כׇּ֨ל־הַיָּמִ֔ים אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּ֥ם חַיִּ֖ים עַל־הָאֲדָמָֽה׃ | 1 | These are the laws and rules that you must carefully observe in the land that יהוה, God of your ancestors, is giving you to possess, as long as you live on earth. |

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| אַבֵּ֣ד תְּ֠אַבְּד֠וּן אֶֽת־כׇּל־הַמְּקֹמ֞וֹת אֲשֶׁ֧ר עָֽבְדוּ־שָׁ֣ם הַגּוֹיִ֗ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתֶּ֛ם יֹרְשִׁ֥ים אֹתָ֖ם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶ֑ם עַל־הֶהָרִ֤ים הָֽרָמִים֙ וְעַל־הַגְּבָע֔וֹת וְתַ֖חַת כׇּל־עֵ֥ץ רַעֲנָֽן׃ | 2 | You must destroy all the sites at which the nations you are to dispossess worshiped their gods, whether on lofty mountains and on hills or under any luxuriant tree. |

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| וְנִתַּצְתֶּ֣ם אֶת־מִזְבְּחֹתָ֗ם וְשִׁבַּרְתֶּם֙ אֶת־מַצֵּ֣בֹתָ֔ם וַאֲשֵֽׁרֵיהֶם֙ תִּשְׂרְפ֣וּן בָּאֵ֔שׁ וּפְסִילֵ֥י אֱלֹֽהֵיהֶ֖ם תְּגַדֵּע֑וּן וְאִבַּדְתֶּ֣ם אֶת־שְׁמָ֔ם מִן־הַמָּק֖וֹם הַהֽוּא׃ | 3 | Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire, and cut down the images of their gods, obliterating their name from that site. |

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| לֹֽא־תַעֲשׂ֣וּן כֵּ֔ן לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 4 | Do not worship your God יהוה in like manner, |

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| כִּ֠י אִֽם־אֶל־הַמָּק֞וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֨ר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶם֙ מִכׇּל־שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֔ם לָשׂ֥וּם אֶת־שְׁמ֖וֹ שָׁ֑ם לְשִׁכְנ֥וֹ תִדְרְשׁ֖וּ וּבָ֥אתָ שָּֽׁמָּה׃ | 5 | but look only to the site that your God יהוה will choose amidst all your tribes as God’s habitation, to establish the divine name there. There you are to go, |

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| וַהֲבֵאתֶ֣ם שָׁ֗מָּה עֹלֹֽתֵיכֶם֙ וְזִבְחֵיכֶ֔ם וְאֵת֙ מַעְשְׂרֹ֣תֵיכֶ֔ם וְאֵ֖ת תְּרוּמַ֣ת יֶדְכֶ֑ם וְנִדְרֵיכֶם֙ וְנִדְבֹ֣תֵיכֶ֔ם וּבְכֹרֹ֥ת בְּקַרְכֶ֖ם וְצֹאנְכֶֽם׃ | 6 | and there you are to bring your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and contributions, your votive and freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks. |

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| וַאֲכַלְתֶּם־שָׁ֗ם לִפְנֵי֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם וּשְׂמַחְתֶּ֗ם בְּכֹל֙ מִשְׁלַ֣ח יֶדְכֶ֔ם אַתֶּ֖ם וּבָתֵּיכֶ֑ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר בֵּֽרַכְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 7 | Together with your households, you shall feast there before your God יהוה, happy in all the undertakings in which your God יהוה has blessed you. |

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| לֹ֣א תַעֲשׂ֔וּן כְּ֠כֹ֠ל אֲשֶׁ֨ר אֲנַ֧חְנוּ עֹשִׂ֛ים פֹּ֖ה הַיּ֑וֹם אִ֖ישׁ כׇּל־הַיָּשָׁ֥ר בְּעֵינָֽיו׃ | 8 | You shall not act at all as we now act here, each of us as we please, |

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| כִּ֥י לֹא־בָאתֶ֖ם עַד־עָ֑תָּה אֶל־הַמְּנוּחָה֙ וְאֶל־הַֽנַּחֲלָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 9 | because you have not yet come to the allotted haven that your God יהוה is giving you. |

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| וַעֲבַרְתֶּם֮ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן֒ וִֽישַׁבְתֶּ֣ם בָּאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֖ם מַנְחִ֣יל אֶתְכֶ֑ם וְהֵנִ֨יחַ לָכֶ֧ם מִכׇּל־אֹיְבֵיכֶ֛ם מִסָּבִ֖יב וִֽישַׁבְתֶּם־בֶּֽטַח׃ | 10 | When you cross the Jordan and settle in the land that your God יהוה is allotting to you, and [God] grants you safety from all your enemies around you and you live in security, |

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| וְהָיָ֣ה הַמָּק֗וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֥ם בּוֹ֙ לְשַׁכֵּ֤ן שְׁמוֹ֙ שָׁ֔ם שָׁ֣מָּה תָבִ֔יאוּ אֵ֛ת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י מְצַוֶּ֣ה אֶתְכֶ֑ם עוֹלֹתֵיכֶ֣ם וְזִבְחֵיכֶ֗ם מַעְשְׂרֹֽתֵיכֶם֙ וּתְרֻמַ֣ת יֶדְכֶ֔ם וְכֹל֙ מִבְחַ֣ר נִדְרֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּדְּר֖וּ לַיהֹוָֽה׃ | 11 | then you must bring everything that I command you to the site where your God יהוה will choose to establish the divine name: your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and contributions, and all the choice votive offerings that you vow to יהוה. |

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| וּשְׂמַחְתֶּ֗ם לִפְנֵי֮ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶם֒ אַתֶּ֗ם וּבְנֵיכֶם֙ וּבְנֹ֣תֵיכֶ֔ם וְעַבְדֵיכֶ֖ם וְאַמְהֹתֵיכֶ֑ם וְהַלֵּוִי֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּשַֽׁעֲרֵיכֶ֔ם כִּ֣י אֵ֥ין ל֛וֹ חֵ֥לֶק וְנַחֲלָ֖ה אִתְּכֶֽם׃ | 12 | And you shall rejoice before your God יהוה with your sons and daughters and with your male and female slaves, along with the [family of the] Levite in your settlements, for he has no territorial allotment among you. |

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֔ פֶּֽן־תַּעֲלֶ֖ה עֹלֹתֶ֑יךָ בְּכׇל־מָק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּרְאֶֽה׃ | 13 | Take care not to sacrifice your burnt offerings in any place you like, |

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| כִּ֣י אִם־בַּמָּק֞וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֤ר יְהֹוָה֙ בְּאַחַ֣ד שְׁבָטֶ֔יךָ שָׁ֖ם תַּעֲלֶ֣ה עֹלֹתֶ֑יךָ וְשָׁ֣ם תַּעֲשֶׂ֔ה כֹּ֛ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י מְצַוֶּֽךָּ׃ | 14 | but only in the place that יהוה will choose in one of your tribal territories. There you shall sacrifice your burnt offerings and there you shall observe all that I enjoin upon you. |

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| רַק֩ בְּכׇל־אַוַּ֨ת נַפְשְׁךָ֜ תִּזְבַּ֣ח ׀ וְאָכַלְתָּ֣ בָשָׂ֗ר כְּבִרְכַּ֨ת יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָֽתַן־לְךָ֖ בְּכׇל־שְׁעָרֶ֑יךָ הַטָּמֵ֤א וְהַטָּהוֹר֙ יֹאכְלֶ֔נּוּ כַּצְּבִ֖י וְכָאַיָּֽל׃ | 15 | But whenever you desire, you may slaughter and eat meat in any of your settlements, according to the blessing that your God יהוה has granted you. The impure and the pure alike may partake of it, as of the gazelle and the deer. |

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| רַ֥ק הַדָּ֖ם לֹ֣א תֹאכֵ֑לוּ עַל־הָאָ֥רֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶ֖נּוּ כַּמָּֽיִם׃ | 16 | But you must not partake of the blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water. |

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| לֹֽא־תוּכַ֞ל לֶאֱכֹ֣ל בִּשְׁעָרֶ֗יךָ מַעְשַׂ֤ר דְּגָֽנְךָ֙ וְתִירֹֽשְׁךָ֣ וְיִצְהָרֶ֔ךָ וּבְכֹרֹ֥ת בְּקָרְךָ֖ וְצֹאנֶ֑ךָ וְכׇל־נְדָרֶ֙יךָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּדֹּ֔ר וְנִדְבֹתֶ֖יךָ וּתְרוּמַ֥ת יָדֶֽךָ׃ | 17 | You may not partake in your settlements of the tithes of your new grain or wine or oil, or of the firstlings of your herds and flocks, or of any of the votive offerings that you vow, or of your freewill offerings, or of your contributions. |

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| כִּ֡י אִם־לִפְנֵי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ תֹּאכְלֶ֗נּוּ בַּמָּקוֹם֙ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִבְחַ֜ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֘יךָ֮ בּוֹ֒ אַתָּ֨ה וּבִנְךָ֤ וּבִתֶּ֙ךָ֙ וְעַבְדְּךָ֣ וַאֲמָתֶ֔ךָ וְהַלֵּוִ֖י אֲשֶׁ֣ר בִּשְׁעָרֶ֑יךָ וְשָׂמַחְתָּ֗ לִפְנֵי֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכֹ֖ל מִשְׁלַ֥ח יָדֶֽךָ׃ | 18 | These you must consume before your God יהוה in the place that your God יהוה will choose—you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, and the [family of the] Levite in your settlements—happy before your God יהוה in all your undertakings. |

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֔ פֶּֽן־תַּעֲזֹ֖ב אֶת־הַלֵּוִ֑י כׇּל־יָמֶ֖יךָ עַל־אַדְמָתֶֽךָ׃ | 19 | Be sure not to neglect the [family of the] Levite as long as you live in your land. |

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| כִּֽי־יַרְחִיב֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֥יךָ אֶֽת־גְּבֻלְךָ֮ כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר דִּבֶּר־לָךְ֒ וְאָמַרְתָּ֙ אֹכְלָ֣ה בָשָׂ֔ר כִּֽי־תְאַוֶּ֥ה נַפְשְׁךָ֖ לֶאֱכֹ֣ל בָּשָׂ֑ר בְּכׇל־אַוַּ֥ת נַפְשְׁךָ֖ תֹּאכַ֥ל בָּשָֽׂר׃ | 20 | When יהוה enlarges your territory, as promised, and you say, “I shall eat some meat,” for you have the urge to eat meat, you may eat meat whenever you wish. |

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| כִּֽי־יִרְחַ֨ק מִמְּךָ֜ הַמָּק֗וֹם אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִבְחַ֜ר יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֘יךָ֮ לָשׂ֣וּם שְׁמ֣וֹ שָׁם֒ וְזָבַחְתָּ֞ מִבְּקָרְךָ֣ וּמִצֹּֽאנְךָ֗ אֲשֶׁ֨ר נָתַ֤ן יְהֹוָה֙ לְךָ֔ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר צִוִּיתִ֑ךָ וְאָֽכַלְתָּ֙ בִּשְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ בְּכֹ֖ל אַוַּ֥ת נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 21 | If the place where יהוה has chosen to establish the divine name is too far from you, you may slaughter any of the cattle or sheep that יהוה gives you, as I have instructed you; and you may eat to your heart’s content in your settlements. |

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| אַ֗ךְ כַּאֲשֶׁ֨ר יֵאָכֵ֤ל אֶֽת־הַצְּבִי֙ וְאֶת־הָ֣אַיָּ֔ל כֵּ֖ן תֹּאכְלֶ֑נּוּ הַטָּמֵא֙ וְהַטָּה֔וֹר יַחְדָּ֖ו יֹאכְלֶֽנּוּ׃ | 22 | Eat it, however, as the gazelle and the deer are eaten: the impure may eat it together with the pure. |

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| רַ֣ק חֲזַ֗ק לְבִלְתִּי֙ אֲכֹ֣ל הַדָּ֔ם כִּ֥י הַדָּ֖ם ה֣וּא הַנָּ֑פֶשׁ וְלֹא־תֹאכַ֥ל הַנֶּ֖פֶשׁ עִם־הַבָּשָֽׂר׃ | 23 | But make sure that you do not partake of the blood; for the blood is the life, and you must not consume the life with the flesh. |

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| לֹ֖א תֹּאכְלֶ֑נּוּ עַל־הָאָ֥רֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶ֖נּוּ כַּמָּֽיִם׃ | 24 | You must not partake of it; you must pour it out on the ground like water: |

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| לֹ֖א תֹּאכְלֶ֑נּוּ לְמַ֨עַן יִיטַ֤ב לְךָ֙ וּלְבָנֶ֣יךָ אַחֲרֶ֔יךָ כִּֽי־תַעֲשֶׂ֥ה הַיָּשָׁ֖ר בְּעֵינֵ֥י יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 25 | you must not partake of it, in order that it may go well with you and with your descendants to come, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of יהוה. |

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| רַ֧ק קׇֽדָשֶׁ֛יךָ אֲשֶׁר־יִהְי֥וּ לְךָ֖ וּנְדָרֶ֑יךָ תִּשָּׂ֣א וּבָ֔אתָ אֶל־הַמָּק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֥ר יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 26 | But such sacred and votive donations as you may have shall be taken by you to the site that יהוה will choose. |

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| וְעָשִׂ֤יתָ עֹלֹתֶ֙יךָ֙ הַבָּשָׂ֣ר וְהַדָּ֔ם עַל־מִזְבַּ֖ח יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְדַם־זְבָחֶ֗יךָ יִשָּׁפֵךְ֙ עַל־מִזְבַּח֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְהַבָּשָׂ֖ר תֹּאכֵֽל׃ | 27 | You shall offer your burnt offerings, both the flesh and the blood, on the altar of your God יהוה; and of your other sacrifices, the blood shall be poured out on the altar of your God יהוה, and you shall eat the flesh. |

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| שְׁמֹ֣ר וְשָׁמַעְתָּ֗ אֵ֚ת כׇּל־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י מְצַוֶּ֑ךָּ לְמַ֩עַן֩ יִיטַ֨ב לְךָ֜ וּלְבָנֶ֤יךָ אַחֲרֶ֙יךָ֙ עַד־עוֹלָ֔ם כִּ֤י תַעֲשֶׂה֙ הַטּ֣וֹב וְהַיָּשָׁ֔ר בְּעֵינֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 28 | Be careful to heed all these commandments that I enjoin upon you; thus it will go well with you and with your descendants after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of your God יהוה. |

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| כִּֽי־יַכְרִית֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִ֗ם אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֛מָּה לָרֶ֥שֶׁת אוֹתָ֖ם מִפָּנֶ֑יךָ וְיָרַשְׁתָּ֣ אֹתָ֔ם וְיָשַׁבְתָּ֖ בְּאַרְצָֽם׃ | 29 | When your God יהוה has cut down before you the nations that you are about to enter and dispossess, and you have dispossessed them and settled in their land, |

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֗ פֶּן־תִּנָּקֵשׁ֙ אַחֲרֵיהֶ֔ם אַחֲרֵ֖י הִשָּׁמְדָ֣ם מִפָּנֶ֑יךָ וּפֶן־תִּדְרֹ֨שׁ לֵאלֹֽהֵיהֶ֜ם לֵאמֹ֗ר אֵיכָ֨ה יַעַבְד֜וּ הַגּוֹיִ֤ם הָאֵ֙לֶּה֙ אֶת־אֱלֹ֣הֵיהֶ֔ם וְאֶעֱשֶׂה־כֵּ֖ן גַּם־אָֽנִי׃ | 30 | beware of being lured into their ways after they have been wiped out before you! Do not inquire about their gods, saying, “How did those nations worship their gods? I too will follow those practices.” |

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| לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה כֵ֔ן לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ כִּי֩ כׇל־תּוֹעֲבַ֨ת יְהֹוָ֜ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר שָׂנֵ֗א עָשׂוּ֙ לֵאלֹ֣הֵיהֶ֔ם כִּ֣י גַ֤ם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם֙ וְאֶת־בְּנֹ֣תֵיהֶ֔ם יִשְׂרְפ֥וּ בָאֵ֖שׁ לֵאלֹֽהֵיהֶֽם׃ | 31 | You shall not act thus toward your God יהוה, for they perform for their gods every abhorrent act that יהוה detests; they even offer up their sons and daughters in fire to their gods. |

## Deuteronomy 13

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| אֵ֣ת כׇּל־הַדָּבָ֗ר אֲשֶׁ֤ר אָנֹכִי֙ מְצַוֶּ֣ה אֶתְכֶ֔ם אֹת֥וֹ תִשְׁמְר֖וּ לַעֲשׂ֑וֹת לֹא־תֹסֵ֣ף עָלָ֔יו וְלֹ֥א תִגְרַ֖ע מִמֶּֽנּוּ׃ | 1 | Be careful to observe only that which I enjoin upon you: neither add to it nor take away from it. |

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| כִּֽי־יָק֤וּם בְּקִרְבְּךָ֙ נָבִ֔יא א֖וֹ חֹלֵ֣ם חֲל֑וֹם וְנָתַ֥ן אֵלֶ֛יךָ א֖וֹת א֥וֹ מוֹפֵֽת׃ | 2 | If there appears among you a prophet or a dream-diviner, who gives you a sign or a portent, |

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| וּבָ֤א הָאוֹת֙ וְהַמּוֹפֵ֔ת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּ֥ר אֵלֶ֖יךָ לֵאמֹ֑ר נֵֽלְכָ֞ה אַחֲרֵ֨י אֱלֹהִ֧ים אֲחֵרִ֛ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹֽא־יְדַעְתָּ֖ם וְנׇֽעׇבְדֵֽם׃ | 3 | saying, “Let us follow and worship another god”—whom you have not experienced —even if the sign or portent named to you comes true, |

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| לֹ֣א תִשְׁמַ֗ע אֶל־דִּבְרֵי֙ הַנָּבִ֣יא הַה֔וּא א֛וֹ אֶל־חוֹלֵ֥ם הַחֲל֖וֹם הַה֑וּא כִּ֣י מְנַסֶּ֞ה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶם֙ אֶתְכֶ֔ם לָדַ֗עַת הֲיִשְׁכֶ֤ם אֹֽהֲבִים֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֔ם בְּכׇל־לְבַבְכֶ֖ם וּבְכׇל־נַפְשְׁכֶֽם׃ | 4 | do not heed the words of that prophet or that dream-diviner. For your God יהוה is testing you to see whether you really love your God יהוה with all your heart and soul. |

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| אַחֲרֵ֨י יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֛ם תֵּלֵ֖כוּ וְאֹת֣וֹ תִירָ֑אוּ וְאֶת־מִצְוֺתָ֤יו תִּשְׁמֹ֙רוּ֙ וּבְקֹל֣וֹ תִשְׁמָ֔עוּ וְאֹת֥וֹ תַעֲבֹ֖דוּ וּב֥וֹ תִדְבָּקֽוּן׃ | 5 | It is your God יהוה alone whom you should follow, whom you should revere, whose commandments you should observe, whose orders you should heed, whom you should worship, and to whom you should hold fast. |

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| וְהַנָּבִ֣יא הַה֡וּא א֣וֹ חֹלֵם֩ הַחֲל֨וֹם הַה֜וּא יוּמָ֗ת כִּ֣י דִבֶּר־סָ֠רָ֠ה עַל־יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֜ם הַמּוֹצִ֥יא אֶתְכֶ֣ם ׀ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֗יִם וְהַפֹּֽדְךָ֙ מִבֵּ֣ית עֲבָדִ֔ים לְהַדִּֽיחֲךָ֙ מִן־הַדֶּ֔רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֧ר צִוְּךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לָלֶ֣כֶת בָּ֑הּ וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 6 | As for that prophet or dream-diviner, such a one shall be put to death for having urged disloyalty to your God יהוה —who freed you from the land of Egypt and who redeemed you from the house of bondage—to make you stray from the path that your God יהוה commanded you to follow. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst. |

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| כִּ֣י יְסִֽיתְךָ֡ אָחִ֣יךָ בֶן־אִ֠מֶּ֠ךָ אֽוֹ־בִנְךָ֨ אֽוֹ־בִתְּךָ֜ א֣וֹ ׀ אֵ֣שֶׁת חֵיקֶ֗ךָ א֧וֹ רֵֽעֲךָ֛ אֲשֶׁ֥ר כְּנַפְשְׁךָ֖ בַּסֵּ֣תֶר לֵאמֹ֑ר נֵֽלְכָ֗ה וְנַֽעַבְדָה֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁר֙ לֹ֣א יָדַ֔עְתָּ אַתָּ֖ה וַאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 7 | If your brother, your own mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your closest friend entices you in secret, saying, “Come let us worship other gods”—whom neither you nor your ancestors have experienced — |

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| מֵאֱלֹהֵ֣י הָֽעַמִּ֗ים אֲשֶׁר֙ סְבִיבֹ֣תֵיכֶ֔ם הַקְּרֹבִ֣ים אֵלֶ֔יךָ א֖וֹ הָרְחֹקִ֣ים מִמֶּ֑ךָּ מִקְצֵ֥ה הָאָ֖רֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵ֥ה הָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 8 | from among the gods of the peoples around you, either near to you or distant, anywhere from one end of the earth to the other: |

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| לֹא־תֹאבֶ֣ה ל֔וֹ וְלֹ֥א תִשְׁמַ֖ע אֵלָ֑יו וְלֹא־תָח֤וֹס עֵֽינְךָ֙ עָלָ֔יו וְלֹֽא־תַחְמֹ֥ל וְלֹֽא־תְכַסֶּ֖ה עָלָֽיו׃ | 9 | do not assent or give heed to any of them. Show no pity or compassion, and do not cover up the matter; |

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| כִּ֤י הָרֹג֙ תַּֽהַרְגֶ֔נּוּ יָ֥דְךָ֛ תִּֽהְיֶה־בּ֥וֹ בָרִֽאשׁוֹנָ֖ה לַהֲמִית֑וֹ וְיַ֥ד כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם בָּאַחֲרֹנָֽה׃ | 10 | but take that person’s life. Let your hand be the first to put that person to death, followed by the hand of the rest of the people. |

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| וּסְקַלְתּ֥וֹ בָאֲבָנִ֖ים וָמֵ֑ת כִּ֣י בִקֵּ֗שׁ לְהַדִּֽיחֲךָ֙ מֵעַל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ֛ מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרַ֖יִם מִבֵּ֥ית עֲבָדִֽים׃ | 11 | Stone that person to death for having sought to make you stray from your God יהוה, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. |

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| וְכׇ֨ל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל יִשְׁמְע֖וּ וְיִֽרָא֑וּן וְלֹֽא־יוֹסִ֣פוּ לַעֲשׂ֗וֹת כַּדָּבָ֥ר הָרָ֛ע הַזֶּ֖ה בְּקִרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 12 | Thus all Israel will hear and be afraid, and such evil things will not be done again in your midst. |

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| כִּֽי־תִשְׁמַ֞ע בְּאַחַ֣ת עָרֶ֗יךָ אֲשֶׁר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֛ לָשֶׁ֥בֶת שָׁ֖ם לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 13 | If you hear it said, of one of the towns that your God יהוה is giving you to dwell in, |

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| יָצְא֞וּ אֲנָשִׁ֤ים בְּנֵֽי־בְלִיַּ֙עַל֙ מִקִּרְבֶּ֔ךָ וַיַּדִּ֛יחוּ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵ֥י עִירָ֖ם לֵאמֹ֑ר נֵלְכָ֗ה וְנַעַבְדָ֛ה אֱלֹהִ֥ים אֲחֵרִ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־יְדַעְתֶּֽם׃ | 14 | that some scoundrels from among you have gone and subverted the inhabitants of their town, saying, “Come let us worship other gods”—whom you have not experienced— |

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| וְדָרַשְׁתָּ֧ וְחָקַרְתָּ֛ וְשָׁאַלְתָּ֖ הֵיטֵ֑ב וְהִנֵּ֤ה אֱמֶת֙ נָכ֣וֹן הַדָּבָ֔ר נֶעֶשְׂתָ֛ה הַתּוֹעֵבָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את בְּקִרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 15 | you shall investigate and inquire and interrogate thoroughly. If it is true, the fact is established—that abhorrent thing was perpetrated in your midst— |

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| הַכֵּ֣ה תַכֶּ֗ה אֶת־יֹ֥שְׁבֵ֛י הָעִ֥יר הַהִ֖וא לְפִי־חָ֑רֶב הַחֲרֵ֨ם אֹתָ֧הּ וְאֶת־כׇּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּ֛הּ וְאֶת־בְּהֶמְתָּ֖הּ לְפִי־חָֽרֶב׃ | 16 | put the inhabitants of that town to the sword and put its cattle to the sword. Doom it and all that is in it to destruction: |

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| וְאֶת־כׇּל־שְׁלָלָ֗הּ תִּקְבֹּץ֮ אֶל־תּ֣וֹךְ רְחֹבָהּ֒ וְשָׂרַפְתָּ֨ בָאֵ֜שׁ אֶת־הָעִ֤יר וְאֶת־כׇּל־שְׁלָלָהּ֙ כָּלִ֔יל לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְהָיְתָה֙ תֵּ֣ל עוֹלָ֔ם לֹ֥א תִבָּנֶ֖ה עֽוֹד׃ | 17 | gather all its spoil into the open square, and burn the town and all its spoil as a holocaust to your God יהוה. And it shall remain an everlasting ruin, never to be rebuilt. |

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| וְלֹֽא־יִדְבַּ֧ק בְּיָדְךָ֛ מְא֖וּמָה מִן־הַחֵ֑רֶם לְמַ֩עַן֩ יָשׁ֨וּב יְהֹוָ֜ה מֵחֲר֣וֹן אַפּ֗וֹ וְנָֽתַן־לְךָ֤ רַחֲמִים֙ וְרִֽחַמְךָ֣ וְהִרְבֶּ֔ךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לַאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 18 | Let nothing that has been doomed stick to your hand, in order that יהוה may turn from a blazing anger and show you compassion, and in compassion increase you as promised on oath to your fathers— |

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| כִּ֣י תִשְׁמַ֗ע בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹר֙ אֶת־כׇּל־מִצְוֺתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם לַעֲשׂוֹת֙ הַיָּשָׁ֔ר בְּעֵינֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 19 | for you will be heeding your God יהוה, obeying all the divine commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, doing what is right in the sight of your God יהוה. |

## Deuteronomy 14

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| בָּנִ֣ים אַתֶּ֔ם לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם לֹ֣א תִתְגֹּֽדְד֗וּ וְלֹֽא־תָשִׂ֧ימוּ קׇרְחָ֛ה בֵּ֥ין עֵינֵיכֶ֖ם לָמֵֽת׃ | 1 | You are children of your God יהוה. You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead. |

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| כִּ֣י עַ֤ם קָדוֹשׁ֙ אַתָּ֔ה לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וּבְךָ֞ בָּחַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֗ה לִֽהְי֥וֹת לוֹ֙ לְעַ֣ם סְגֻלָּ֔ה מִכֹּל֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־פְּנֵ֥י הָאֲדָמָֽה׃ | 2 | For you are a people consecrated to your God יהוה: your God יהוה chose you from among all other peoples on earth to be a treasured people. |

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| לֹ֥א תֹאכַ֖ל כׇּל־תּוֹעֵבָֽה׃ | 3 | You shall not eat anything abhorrent. |

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| זֹ֥את הַבְּהֵמָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר תֹּאכֵ֑לוּ שׁ֕וֹר שֵׂ֥ה כְשָׂבִ֖ים וְשֵׂ֥ה עִזִּֽים׃ | 4 | These are the animals that you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat; |

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| אַיָּ֥ל וּצְבִ֖י וְיַחְמ֑וּר וְאַקּ֥וֹ וְדִישֹׁ֖ן וּתְא֥וֹ וָזָֽמֶר׃ | 5 | the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, the mountain sheep, |

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| וְכׇל־בְּהֵמָ֞ה מַפְרֶ֣סֶת פַּרְסָ֗ה וְשֹׁסַ֤עַת שֶׁ֙סַע֙ שְׁתֵּ֣י פְרָס֔וֹת מַעֲלַ֥ת גֵּרָ֖ה בַּבְּהֵמָ֑ה אֹתָ֖הּ תֹּאכֵֽלוּ׃ | 6 | and any other animal that has true hoofs which are cleft in two and brings up the cud—such you may eat. |

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| אַ֣ךְ אֶת־זֶ֞ה לֹ֤א תֹֽאכְלוּ֙ מִמַּֽעֲלֵ֣י הַגֵּרָ֔ה וּמִמַּפְרִיסֵ֥י הַפַּרְסָ֖ה הַשְּׁסוּעָ֑ה אֶֽת־הַ֠גָּמָ֠ל וְאֶת־הָאַרְנֶ֨בֶת וְאֶת־הַשָּׁפָ֜ן כִּֽי־מַעֲלֵ֧ה גֵרָ֣ה הֵ֗מָּה וּפַרְסָה֙ לֹ֣א הִפְרִ֔יסוּ טְמֵאִ֥ים הֵ֖ם לָכֶֽם׃ | 7 | But the following, which do bring up the cud or have true hoofs which are cleft through, you may not eat: the camel, the hare, and the daman—for although they bring up the cud, they have no true hoofs—they are impure for you; |

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| וְאֶת־הַ֠חֲזִ֠יר כִּֽי־מַפְרִ֨יס פַּרְסָ֥ה הוּא֙ וְלֹ֣א גֵרָ֔ה טָמֵ֥א ה֖וּא לָכֶ֑ם מִבְּשָׂרָם֙ לֹ֣א תֹאכֵ֔לוּ וּבְנִבְלָתָ֖ם לֹ֥א תִגָּֽעוּ׃ | 8 | also the swine—for although it has true hoofs, it does not bring up the cud—is impure for you. You shall not eat of their flesh or touch their carcasses. |

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| אֶת־זֶה֙ תֹּֽאכְל֔וּ מִכֹּ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֣ר בַּמָּ֑יִם כֹּ֧ל אֲשֶׁר־ל֛וֹ סְנַפִּ֥יר וְקַשְׂקֶ֖שֶׂת תֹּאכֵֽלוּ׃ | 9 | These you may eat of all that live in water: you may eat anything that has fins and scales. |

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| וְכֹ֨ל אֲשֶׁ֧ר אֵֽין־ל֛וֹ סְנַפִּ֥יר וְקַשְׂקֶ֖שֶׂת לֹ֣א תֹאכֵ֑לוּ טָמֵ֥א ה֖וּא לָכֶֽם׃ | 10 | But you may not eat anything that has no fins and scales: it is impure for you. |

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| כׇּל־צִפּ֥וֹר טְהֹרָ֖ה תֹּאכֵֽלוּ׃ | 11 | You may eat any pure bird. |

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| וְזֶ֕ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹֽא־תֹאכְל֖וּ מֵהֶ֑ם הַנֶּ֥שֶׁר וְהַפֶּ֖רֶס וְהָֽעׇזְנִיָּֽה׃ | 12 | The following you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, and the black vulture; |

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| וְהָרָאָה֙ וְאֶת־הָ֣אַיָּ֔ה וְהַדַּיָּ֖ה לְמִינָֽהּ׃ | 13 | the kite, the falcon, and the buzzard of any variety; |

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| וְאֵ֥ת כׇּל־עֹרֵ֖ב לְמִינֽוֹ׃ | 14 | every variety of raven; |

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| וְאֵת֙ בַּ֣ת הַֽיַּעֲנָ֔ה וְאֶת־הַתַּחְמָ֖ס וְאֶת־הַשָּׁ֑חַף וְאֶת־הַנֵּ֖ץ לְמִינֵֽהוּ׃ | 15 | the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, and the hawk of any variety; |

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| אֶת־הַכּ֥וֹס וְאֶת־הַיַּנְשׁ֖וּף וְהַתִּנְשָֽׁמֶת׃ | 16 | the little owl, the great owl, and the white owl; |

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| וְהַקָּאָ֥ת וְאֶֽת־הָרָחָ֖מָה וְאֶת־הַשָּׁלָֽךְ׃ | 17 | the pelican, the bustard, and the cormorant; |

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| וְהַ֣חֲסִידָ֔ה וְהָאֲנָפָ֖ה לְמִינָ֑הּ וְהַדּוּכִיפַ֖ת וְהָעֲטַלֵּֽף׃ | 18 | the stork, any variety of heron, the hoopoe, and the bat. |

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| וְכֹל֙ שֶׁ֣רֶץ הָע֔וֹף טָמֵ֥א ה֖וּא לָכֶ֑ם לֹ֖א יֵאָכֵֽלוּ׃ | 19 | All winged swarming things are impure for you: they may not be eaten. |

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| כׇּל־ע֥וֹף טָה֖וֹר תֹּאכֵֽלוּ׃ | 20 | You may eat only pure winged creatures. |

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| לֹ֣א תֹאכְל֣וּ כׇל־נְ֠בֵלָ֠ה לַגֵּ֨ר אֲשֶׁר־בִּשְׁעָרֶ֜יךָ תִּתְּנֶ֣נָּה וַאֲכָלָ֗הּ א֤וֹ מָכֹר֙ לְנׇכְרִ֔י כִּ֣י עַ֤ם קָדוֹשׁ֙ אַתָּ֔ה לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לֹֽא־תְבַשֵּׁ֥ל גְּדִ֖י בַּחֲלֵ֥ב אִמּֽוֹ׃ | 21 | You shall not eat anything that has died a natural death; give it to the stranger in your community to eat, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people consecrated to your God יהוה. You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk. |

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| עַשֵּׂ֣ר תְּעַשֵּׂ֔ר אֵ֖ת כׇּל־תְּבוּאַ֣ת זַרְעֶ֑ךָ הַיֹּצֵ֥א הַשָּׂדֶ֖ה שָׁנָ֥ה שָׁנָֽה׃ | 22 | You shall set aside every year a tenth part of all the yield of your sowing that is brought from the field. |

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| וְאָכַלְתָּ֞ לִפְנֵ֣י ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ בַּמָּק֣וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר֮ לְשַׁכֵּ֣ן שְׁמ֣וֹ שָׁם֒ מַעְשַׂ֤ר דְּגָֽנְךָ֙ תִּירֹֽשְׁךָ֣ וְיִצְהָרֶ֔ךָ וּבְכֹרֹ֥ת בְּקָרְךָ֖ וְצֹאנֶ֑ךָ לְמַ֣עַן תִּלְמַ֗ד לְיִרְאָ֛ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ כׇּל־הַיָּמִֽים׃ | 23 | You shall consume the tithes of your new grain and wine and oil, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks, in the presence of your God יהוה, in the place where [God] will choose to establish the divine name, so that you may learn to revere your God יהוה forever. |

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| וְכִֽי־יִרְבֶּ֨ה מִמְּךָ֜ הַדֶּ֗רֶךְ כִּ֣י לֹ֣א תוּכַל֮ שְׂאֵתוֹ֒ כִּֽי־יִרְחַ֤ק מִמְּךָ֙ הַמָּק֔וֹם אֲשֶׁ֤ר יִבְחַר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לָשׂ֥וּם שְׁמ֖וֹ שָׁ֑ם כִּ֥י יְבָרֶכְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 24 | Should the distance be too great for you, should you be unable to transport them, because the place where your God יהוה has chosen to establish the divine name is far from you and because your God יהוה has blessed you, |

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| וְנָתַתָּ֖ה בַּכָּ֑סֶף וְצַרְתָּ֤ הַכֶּ֙סֶף֙ בְּיָ֣דְךָ֔ וְהָֽלַכְתָּ֙ אֶל־הַמָּק֔וֹם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִבְחַ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בּֽוֹ׃ | 25 | you may convert them into money. Wrap up the money and take it with you to the place that your God יהוה has chosen, |

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| וְנָתַתָּ֣ה הַכֶּ֡סֶף בְּכֹל֩ אֲשֶׁר־תְּאַוֶּ֨ה נַפְשְׁךָ֜ בַּבָּקָ֣ר וּבַצֹּ֗אן וּבַיַּ֙יִן֙ וּבַשֵּׁכָ֔ר וּבְכֹ֛ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּֽשְׁאָלְךָ֖ נַפְשֶׁ֑ךָ וְאָכַ֣לְתָּ שָּׁ֗ם לִפְנֵי֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְשָׂמַחְתָּ֖ אַתָּ֥ה וּבֵיתֶֽךָ׃ | 26 | and spend the money on anything you want—cattle, sheep, wine, or other intoxicant, or anything you may desire. And you shall feast there, in the presence of your God יהוה, and rejoice with your household. |

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| וְהַלֵּוִ֥י אֲשֶׁר־בִּשְׁעָרֶ֖יךָ לֹ֣א תַֽעַזְבֶ֑נּוּ כִּ֣י אֵ֥ין ל֛וֹ חֵ֥לֶק וְנַחֲלָ֖ה עִמָּֽךְ׃ | 27 | But do not neglect the [family of the] Levite in your community, for he has no hereditary portion as you have. |

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| מִקְצֵ֣ה ׀ שָׁלֹ֣שׁ שָׁנִ֗ים תּוֹצִיא֙ אֶת־כׇּל־מַעְשַׂר֙ תְּבוּאָ֣תְךָ֔ בַּשָּׁנָ֖ה הַהִ֑וא וְהִנַּחְתָּ֖ בִּשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 28 | Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your yield of that year, but leave it within your settlements. |

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| וּבָ֣א הַלֵּוִ֡י כִּ֣י אֵֽין־לוֹ֩ חֵ֨לֶק וְנַחֲלָ֜ה עִמָּ֗ךְ וְ֠הַגֵּ֠ר וְהַיָּת֤וֹם וְהָֽאַלְמָנָה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בִּשְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ וְאָכְל֖וּ וְשָׂבֵ֑עוּ לְמַ֤עַן יְבָרֶכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇל־מַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יָדְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֶֽׂה׃ | 29 | Then the [family of the] Levite, who has no hereditary portion as you have, and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your settlements shall come and eat their fill, so that your God יהוה may bless you in all the enterprises you undertake. |

## Deuteronomy 15

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| מִקֵּ֥ץ שֶֽׁבַע־שָׁנִ֖ים תַּעֲשֶׂ֥ה שְׁמִטָּֽה׃ | 1 | Every seventh year you shall practice remission of debts. |

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| וְזֶה֮ דְּבַ֣ר הַשְּׁמִטָּה֒ שָׁמ֗וֹט כׇּל־בַּ֙עַל֙ מַשֵּׁ֣ה יָד֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר יַשֶּׁ֖ה בְּרֵעֵ֑הוּ לֹֽא־יִגֹּ֤שׂ אֶת־רֵעֵ֙הוּ֙ וְאֶת־אָחִ֔יו כִּֽי־קָרָ֥א שְׁמִטָּ֖ה לַיהֹוָֽה׃ | 2 | This shall be the nature of the remission: all creditors shall remit the due that they claim from their fellow [Israelites]; they shall not dun their fellow [Israelites] or kin, for the remission proclaimed is of יהוה. |

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| אֶת־הַנׇּכְרִ֖י תִּגֹּ֑שׂ וַאֲשֶׁ֨ר יִהְיֶ֥ה לְךָ֛ אֶת־אָחִ֖יךָ תַּשְׁמֵ֥ט יָדֶֽךָ׃ | 3 | You may dun the foreigner; but you must remit whatever is due you from your kin. |

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| אֶ֕פֶס כִּ֛י לֹ֥א יִֽהְיֶה־בְּךָ֖ אֶבְי֑וֹן כִּֽי־בָרֵ֤ךְ יְבָֽרֶכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֔ה בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹֽתֵן־לְךָ֥ נַחֲלָ֖ה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 4 | There shall be no needy among you—since your God יהוה will bless you in the land that your God יהוה is giving you as a hereditary portion— |

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| רַ֚ק אִם־שָׁמ֣וֹעַ תִּשְׁמַ֔ע בְּק֖וֹל יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֤ר לַעֲשׂוֹת֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֣ה הַזֹּ֔את אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 5 | if only you heed your God יהוה and take care to keep all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day. |

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| כִּֽי־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בֵּֽרַכְךָ֔ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּר־לָ֑ךְ וְהַֽעֲבַטְתָּ֞ גּוֹיִ֣ם רַבִּ֗ים וְאַתָּה֙ לֹ֣א תַעֲבֹ֔ט וּמָֽשַׁלְתָּ֙ בְּגוֹיִ֣ם רַבִּ֔ים וּבְךָ֖ לֹ֥א יִמְשֹֽׁלוּ׃ | 6 | For your God יהוה will bless you as promised: you will extend loans to many nations, but require none yourself; you will dominate many nations, but they will not dominate you. |

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| כִּֽי־יִהְיֶה֩ בְךָ֨ אֶבְי֜וֹן מֵאַחַ֤ד אַחֶ֙יךָ֙ בְּאַחַ֣ד שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ בְּאַ֨רְצְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֑ךְ לֹ֧א תְאַמֵּ֣ץ אֶת־לְבָבְךָ֗ וְלֹ֤א תִקְפֹּץ֙ אֶת־יָ֣דְךָ֔ מֵאָחִ֖יךָ הָאֶבְיֽוֹן׃ | 7 | If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kin in any of your settlements in the land that your God יהוה is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kin. |

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| כִּֽי־פָתֹ֧חַ תִּפְתַּ֛ח אֶת־יָדְךָ֖ ל֑וֹ וְהַעֲבֵט֙ תַּעֲבִיטֶ֔נּוּ דֵּ֚י מַחְסֹר֔וֹ אֲשֶׁ֥ר יֶחְסַ֖ר לֽוֹ׃ | 8 | Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need. |

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| הִשָּׁ֣מֶר לְךָ֡ פֶּן־יִהְיֶ֣ה דָבָר֩ עִם־לְבָבְךָ֨ בְלִיַּ֜עַל לֵאמֹ֗ר קָֽרְבָ֣ה שְׁנַֽת־הַשֶּׁ֘בַע֮ שְׁנַ֣ת הַשְּׁמִטָּה֒ וְרָעָ֣ה עֵֽינְךָ֗ בְּאָחִ֙יךָ֙ הָֽאֶבְי֔וֹן וְלֹ֥א תִתֵּ֖ן ל֑וֹ וְקָרָ֤א עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ אֶל־יְהֹוָ֔ה וְהָיָ֥ה בְךָ֖ חֵֽטְא׃ | 9 | Beware lest you harbor the base thought, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching,” so that you are mean and give nothing to your needy kin—who will cry out to יהוה against you, and you will incur guilt. |

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| נָת֤וֹן תִּתֵּן֙ ל֔וֹ וְלֹא־יֵרַ֥ע לְבָבְךָ֖ בְּתִתְּךָ֣ ל֑וֹ כִּ֞י בִּגְלַ֣ל ׀ הַדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּ֗ה יְבָרֶכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇֽל־מַעֲשֶׂ֔ךָ וּבְכֹ֖ל מִשְׁלַ֥ח יָדֶֽךָ׃ | 10 | Give readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return your God יהוה will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. |

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| כִּ֛י לֹא־יֶחְדַּ֥ל אֶבְי֖וֹן מִקֶּ֣רֶב הָאָ֑רֶץ עַל־כֵּ֞ן אָנֹכִ֤י מְצַוְּךָ֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר פָּ֠תֹ֠חַ תִּפְתַּ֨ח אֶת־יָדְךָ֜ לְאָחִ֧יךָ לַעֲנִיֶּ֛ךָ וּלְאֶבְיֹנְךָ֖ בְּאַרְצֶֽךָ׃ | 11 | For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kin in your land. |

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| כִּֽי־יִמָּכֵ֨ר לְךָ֜ אָחִ֣יךָ הָֽעִבְרִ֗י א֚וֹ הָֽעִבְרִיָּ֔ה וַעֲבָֽדְךָ֖ שֵׁ֣שׁ שָׁנִ֑ים וּבַשָּׁנָה֙ הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔ת תְּשַׁלְּחֶ֥נּוּ חׇפְשִׁ֖י מֵעִמָּֽךְ׃ | 12 | If a fellow Hebrew man—or woman—is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall set him free. |

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| וְכִֽי־תְשַׁלְּחֶ֥נּוּ חׇפְשִׁ֖י מֵֽעִמָּ֑ךְ לֹ֥א תְשַׁלְּחֶ֖נּוּ רֵיקָֽם׃ | 13 | When you set him free, do not let him go empty-handed: |

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| הַעֲנֵ֤יק תַּעֲנִיק֙ ל֔וֹ מִצֹּ֣אנְךָ֔ וּמִֽגׇּרְנְךָ֖ וּמִיִּקְבֶ֑ךָ אֲשֶׁ֧ר בֵּרַכְךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ תִּתֶּן־לֽוֹ׃ | 14 | Furnish him out of the flock, threshing floor, and vat, with which your God יהוה has blessed you. |

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| וְזָכַרְתָּ֗ כִּ֣י עֶ֤בֶד הָיִ֙יתָ֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם וַֽיִּפְדְּךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ עַל־כֵּ֞ן אָנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ אֶת־הַדָּבָ֥ר הַזֶּ֖ה הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 15 | Bear in mind that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and your God יהוה redeemed you; therefore I enjoin this commandment upon you today. |

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| וְהָיָה֙ כִּֽי־יֹאמַ֣ר אֵלֶ֔יךָ לֹ֥א אֵצֵ֖א מֵעִמָּ֑ךְ כִּ֤י אֲהֵֽבְךָ֙ וְאֶת־בֵּיתֶ֔ךָ כִּי־ט֥וֹב ל֖וֹ עִמָּֽךְ׃ | 16 | But should he say to you, “I do not want to leave you”—for he loves you and your household and is happy with you— |

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| וְלָקַחְתָּ֣ אֶת־הַמַּרְצֵ֗עַ וְנָתַתָּ֤ה בְאׇזְנוֹ֙ וּבַדֶּ֔לֶת וְהָיָ֥ה לְךָ֖ עֶ֣בֶד עוֹלָ֑ם וְאַ֥ף לַאֲמָתְךָ֖ תַּעֲשֶׂה־כֵּֽן׃ | 17 | you shall take an awl and put it through his ear into the door, and he shall become your slave in perpetuity. Do the same with your female slave. |

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| לֹא־יִקְשֶׁ֣ה בְעֵינֶ֗ךָ בְּשַׁלֵּֽחֲךָ֨ אֹת֤וֹ חׇפְשִׁי֙ מֵֽעִמָּ֔ךְ כִּ֗י מִשְׁנֶה֙ שְׂכַ֣ר שָׂכִ֔יר עֲבָֽדְךָ֖ שֵׁ֣שׁ שָׁנִ֑ים וּבֵֽרַכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכֹ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֶֽׂה׃ | 18 | When you do set either one free, do not feel aggrieved; for in the six years you have been given double the service of a hired worker. Moreover, your God יהוה will bless you in all you do. |

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| כׇּֽל־הַבְּכ֡וֹר אֲשֶׁר֩ יִוָּלֵ֨ד בִּבְקָרְךָ֤ וּבְצֹֽאנְךָ֙ הַזָּכָ֔ר תַּקְדִּ֖ישׁ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ לֹ֤א תַעֲבֹד֙ בִּבְכֹ֣ר שׁוֹרֶ֔ךָ וְלֹ֥א תָגֹ֖ז בְּכ֥וֹר צֹאנֶֽךָ׃ | 19 | You shall consecrate to your God יהוה all male firstlings that are born in your herd and in your flock: you must not work your firstling ox or shear your firstling sheep. |

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| לִפְנֵי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֤יךָ תֹאכְלֶ֙נּוּ֙ שָׁנָ֣ה בְשָׁנָ֔ה בַּמָּק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֑ה אַתָּ֖ה וּבֵיתֶֽךָ׃ | 20 | You and your household shall eat it annually before your God יהוה in the place that יהוה will choose. |

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| וְכִֽי־יִהְיֶ֨ה ב֜וֹ מ֗וּם פִּסֵּ֙חַ֙ א֣וֹ עִוֵּ֔ר כֹּ֖ל מ֣וּם רָ֑ע לֹ֣א תִזְבָּחֶ֔נּוּ לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 21 | But if it has a defect, lameness or blindness, any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to your God יהוה. |

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| בִּשְׁעָרֶ֖יךָ תֹּאכְלֶ֑נּוּ הַטָּמֵ֤א וְהַטָּהוֹר֙ יַחְדָּ֔ו כַּצְּבִ֖י וְכָאַיָּֽל׃ | 22 | Eat it in your settlements, the impure among you no less than the pure, just like the gazelle and the deer. |

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| רַ֥ק אֶת־דָּמ֖וֹ לֹ֣א תֹאכֵ֑ל עַל־הָאָ֥רֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶ֖נּוּ כַּמָּֽיִם׃ | 23 | Only you must not partake of its blood; you shall pour it out on the ground like water. |

## Deuteronomy 16

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| שָׁמוֹר֙ אֶת־חֹ֣דֶשׁ הָאָבִ֔יב וְעָשִׂ֣יתָ פֶּ֔סַח לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ כִּ֞י בְּחֹ֣דֶשׁ הָֽאָבִ֗יב הוֹצִ֨יאֲךָ֜ יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ מִמִּצְרַ֖יִם לָֽיְלָה׃ | 1 | Observe the month of Abib and offer a passover sacrifice to your God יהוה, for it was in the month of Abib, at night, that your God יהוה freed you from Egypt. |

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| וְזָבַ֥חְתָּ פֶּ֛סַח לַיהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ צֹ֣אן וּבָקָ֑ר בַּמָּקוֹם֙ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֔ה לְשַׁכֵּ֥ן שְׁמ֖וֹ שָֽׁם׃ | 2 | You shall slaughter the passover sacrifice for your God יהוה, from the flock and the herd, in the place where יהוה will choose to establish the divine name. |

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| לֹא־תֹאכַ֤ל עָלָיו֙ חָמֵ֔ץ שִׁבְעַ֥ת יָמִ֛ים תֹּֽאכַל־עָלָ֥יו מַצּ֖וֹת לֶ֣חֶם עֹ֑נִי כִּ֣י בְחִפָּז֗וֹן יָצָ֙אתָ֙ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם לְמַ֣עַן תִּזְכֹּ֗ר אֶת־י֤וֹם צֵֽאתְךָ֙ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם כֹּ֖ל יְמֵ֥י חַיֶּֽיךָ׃ | 3 | You shall not eat anything leavened with it; for seven days thereafter you shall eat unleavened bread, bread of distress—for you departed from the land of Egypt hurriedly—so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live. |

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| וְלֹֽא־יֵרָאֶ֨ה לְךָ֥ שְׂאֹ֛ר בְּכׇל־גְּבֻלְךָ֖ שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֑ים וְלֹא־יָלִ֣ין מִן־הַבָּשָׂ֗ר אֲשֶׁ֨ר תִּזְבַּ֥ח בָּעֶ֛רֶב בַּיּ֥וֹם הָרִאשׁ֖וֹן לַבֹּֽקֶר׃ | 4 | For seven days no leaven shall be found with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall be left until morning. |

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| לֹ֥א תוּכַ֖ל לִזְבֹּ֣חַ אֶת־הַפָּ֑סַח בְּאַחַ֣ד שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 5 | You are not permitted to slaughter the passover sacrifice in any of the settlements that your God יהוה is giving you; |

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| כִּ֠י אִֽם־אֶל־הַמָּק֞וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֨ר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ לְשַׁכֵּ֣ן שְׁמ֔וֹ שָׁ֛ם תִּזְבַּ֥ח אֶת־הַפֶּ֖סַח בָּעָ֑רֶב כְּב֣וֹא הַשֶּׁ֔מֶשׁ מוֹעֵ֖ד צֵֽאתְךָ֥ מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 6 | but at the place where your God יהוה will choose to establish the divine name, there alone shall you slaughter the passover sacrifice, in the evening, at sundown, the time of day when you departed from Egypt. |

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| וּבִשַּׁלְתָּ֙ וְאָ֣כַלְתָּ֔ בַּמָּק֕וֹם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִבְחַ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בּ֑וֹ וּפָנִ֣יתָ בַבֹּ֔קֶר וְהָלַכְתָּ֖ לְאֹהָלֶֽיךָ׃ | 7 | You shall cook and eat it at the place that your God יהוה will choose; and in the morning you may start back on your journey home. |

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| שֵׁ֥שֶׁת יָמִ֖ים תֹּאכַ֣ל מַצּ֑וֹת וּבַיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֗י עֲצֶ֙רֶת֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לֹ֥א תַעֲשֶׂ֖ה מְלָאכָֽה׃ | 8 | After eating unleavened bread six days, you shall hold a solemn gathering for your God יהוה on the seventh day: you shall do no work. |

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| שִׁבְעָ֥ה שָׁבֻעֹ֖ת תִּסְפׇּר־לָ֑ךְ מֵהָחֵ֤ל חֶרְמֵשׁ֙ בַּקָּמָ֔ה תָּחֵ֣ל לִסְפֹּ֔ר שִׁבְעָ֖ה שָׁבֻעֽוֹת׃ | 9 | You shall count off seven weeks; start to count the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. |

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| וְעָשִׂ֜יתָ חַ֤ג שָׁבֻעוֹת֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ מִסַּ֛ת נִדְבַ֥ת יָדְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּתֵּ֑ן כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר יְבָרֶכְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 10 | Then you shall observe the Feast of Weeks for your God יהוה, offering your freewill contribution according as your God יהוה has blessed you. |

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| וְשָׂמַחְתָּ֞ לִפְנֵ֣י ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אַתָּ֨ה וּבִנְךָ֣ וּבִתֶּ֘ךָ֮ וְעַבְדְּךָ֣ וַאֲמָתֶ֒ךָ֒ וְהַלֵּוִי֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בִּשְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ וְהַגֵּ֛ר וְהַיָּת֥וֹם וְהָאַלְמָנָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּקִרְבֶּ֑ךָ בַּמָּק֗וֹם אֲשֶׁ֤ר יִבְחַר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לְשַׁכֵּ֥ן שְׁמ֖וֹ שָֽׁם׃ | 11 | You shall rejoice before your God יהוה with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the [family of the] Levite in your communities, and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your midst, at the place where your God יהוה will choose to establish the divine name. |

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| וְזָ֣כַרְתָּ֔ כִּי־עֶ֥בֶד הָיִ֖יתָ בְּמִצְרָ֑יִם וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֣ וְעָשִׂ֔יתָ אֶת־הַֽחֻקִּ֖ים הָאֵֽלֶּה׃ | 12 | Bear in mind that you were slaves in Egypt, and take care to obey these laws. |

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| חַ֧ג הַסֻּכֹּ֛ת תַּעֲשֶׂ֥ה לְךָ֖ שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֑ים בְּאׇ֨סְפְּךָ֔ מִֽגׇּרְנְךָ֖ וּמִיִּקְבֶֽךָ׃ | 13 | After the ingathering from your threshing floor and your vat, you shall hold the Feast of Booths for seven days. |

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| וְשָׂמַחְתָּ֖ בְּחַגֶּ֑ךָ אַתָּ֨ה וּבִנְךָ֤ וּבִתֶּ֙ךָ֙ וְעַבְדְּךָ֣ וַאֲמָתֶ֔ךָ וְהַלֵּוִ֗י וְהַגֵּ֛ר וְהַיָּת֥וֹם וְהָאַלְמָנָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר בִּשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 14 | You shall rejoice in your festival, with your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the [family of the] Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your communities. |

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| שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֗ים תָּחֹג֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בַּמָּק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֑ה כִּ֣י יְבָרֶכְךָ֞ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ בְּכֹ֤ל תְּבוּאָֽתְךָ֙ וּבְכֹל֙ מַעֲשֵׂ֣ה יָדֶ֔יךָ וְהָיִ֖יתָ אַ֥ךְ שָׂמֵֽחַ׃ | 15 | You shall hold a festival for your God יהוה seven days, in the place that יהוה will choose; for your God יהוה will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, and you shall have nothing but joy. |

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| שָׁל֣וֹשׁ פְּעָמִ֣ים ׀ בַּשָּׁנָ֡ה יֵרָאֶ֨ה כׇל־זְכוּרְךָ֜ אֶת־פְּנֵ֣י ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ בַּמָּקוֹם֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִבְחָ֔ר בְּחַ֧ג הַמַּצּ֛וֹת וּבְחַ֥ג הַשָּׁבֻע֖וֹת וּבְחַ֣ג הַסֻּכּ֑וֹת וְלֹ֧א יֵרָאֶ֛ה אֶת־פְּנֵ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה רֵיקָֽם׃ | 16 | Three times a year—on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Booths—all your males shall appear before your God יהוה in the place that [God] will choose. They shall not appear before יהוה empty-handed, |

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| אִ֖ישׁ כְּמַתְּנַ֣ת יָד֑וֹ כְּבִרְכַּ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָֽתַן־לָֽךְ׃ | 17 | but each with his own gift, according to the blessing that your God יהוה has bestowed upon you. |

# **48**: שופטים|Shoftim (Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9)

## Deuteronomy 16

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| שֹׁפְטִ֣ים וְשֹֽׁטְרִ֗ים תִּֽתֶּן־לְךָ֙ בְּכׇל־שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ לִשְׁבָטֶ֑יךָ וְשָׁפְט֥וּ אֶת־הָעָ֖ם מִשְׁפַּט־צֶֽדֶק׃ | 18 | You shall appoint magistrates and officials for your tribes, in all the settlements that your God יהוה is giving you, and they shall govern the people with due justice. |

The text emphasizes the importance of appointing judges and officers to ensure fair justice on earth, reflecting the attribute of mercy seen in celestial spheres. It highlights the need for self-judgment, judging favorably, and maintaining love and fear of God in all thoughts and actions, particularly in Jerusalem. The Torah commands Israel to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in all cities to ensure fair judgments and righteousness, reflecting the ideal of peace central to the Torah’s teachings. The Jewish court aims for perfect truth in judgment, with strict procedures for evidence. The Halakhah mandates the appointment of judges in every Jewish community to enforce Torah commandments and maintain justice. Jewish thought emphasizes the necessity of laws and judges to prevent wrongdoing and maintain order, while Kabbalah discusses the quality of justice and righteousness in divine judgment. The Midrash stresses the importance of appointing righteous judges for fair judgment, and Musar highlights the need to impute merit to others in judgment. The Talmud discusses the importance of appointing fit judges over the community and the obligation to establish courts in every city only in Eretz Yisrael. Rashbam, Rabbeinu Yonah, Or HaChaim, Haamek Sheilah, and Rashi provide further insights on appointing judges. Finally, responsa stress the obligation for judges to rule in accordance with legal standards, ensuring just law and right rulings.

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| לֹא־תַטֶּ֣ה מִשְׁפָּ֔ט לֹ֥א תַכִּ֖יר פָּנִ֑ים וְלֹא־תִקַּ֣ח שֹׁ֔חַד כִּ֣י הַשֹּׁ֗חַד יְעַוֵּר֙ עֵינֵ֣י חֲכָמִ֔ים וִֽיסַלֵּ֖ף דִּבְרֵ֥י צַדִּיקִֽם׃ | 19 | You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just. |

Various texts from Chasidut, Halakhah, Jewish Thought, Midrash, Mishnah, Musar, Quoting Commentary, Talmud, Tanakh, Targum, and Tosefta emphasize the prohibition against bribery, warning against accepting bribes in judicial processes to ensure fair and impartial judgment. Bribery is seen as blinding the eyes of the wise and perverting justice, with severe consequences for those who engage in corrupt practices. The importance of upholding justice, truth, and impartiality in legal matters is stressed across these commentaries and teachings.

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| צֶ֥דֶק צֶ֖דֶק תִּרְדֹּ֑ף לְמַ֤עַן תִּֽחְיֶה֙ וְיָרַשְׁתָּ֣ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 20 | Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that your God יהוה is giving you. |

The pursuit of justice and righteousness is emphasized in various Jewish texts, highlighting the need for ethical conduct, fair judgment, and adherence to laws for both individuals and judges. The consequences of corrupt judgments, the qualities required of judges, and the importance of pursuing righteousness to achieve life and honor are all discussed, with the pursuit of justice seen as essential for a harmonious society and the fulfillment of God’s covenant with the people. Different approaches to achieving fair judgment, including avoiding bribes and following the best court for justice, are outlined in these texts.

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| לֹֽא־תִטַּ֥ע לְךָ֛ אֲשֵׁרָ֖ה כׇּל־עֵ֑ץ אֵ֗צֶל מִזְבַּ֛ח יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּֽךְ׃ | 21 | You shall not set up a sacred post—any kind of pole beside the altar of your God יהוה that you may make— |

In prayer, one should not seek personal gain or defer to human traits, judges should be appointed based on Torah knowledge and suitability, wooden structures are prohibited in the Temple, and the importance of justice in judgment is emphasized. The prohibition of planting trees near the altar is likened to appointing unfit judges, and the Talmud discusses the implications of building wooden porticoes in the Temple courtyard. The Asherah is described as a sacred grove of Canaanitic worship associated with fertility, and the need to avoid planting near the altar is highlighted in various texts.

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| וְלֹֽא־תָקִ֥ים לְךָ֖ מַצֵּבָ֑ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר שָׂנֵ֖א יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 22 | or erect a stone pillar; for such your God יהוה detests. |

Chasidut interprets the prohibition of setting up a stone pillar in Deuteronomy 16:22 as a metaphor for spiritual preparation for the afterlife and prioritizing core principles over personal opinions. Commentary from Ramban, Rashi, and others links the prohibition to Canaanite idol worship, contrasting it with permissible sacrifices to God on altars. Halakhah extends the prohibition to appointing judges not well-versed in Torah law and building wooden structures in the Temple. Jewish Thought explores the reasons behind prohibitions like marrying two sisters and planting trees in the Temple mount. Midrash discusses fair judgment in trials and the importance of unity among the people for redemption. The Second Temple text emphasizes the impermanence of human existence, reflected in the prohibition against erecting pillars to oneself. Targum warns against building monuments that God detests and appointing proud individuals as leaders.

## Deuteronomy 17

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| לֹא־תִזְבַּח֩ לַיהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ שׁ֣וֹר וָשֶׂ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִהְיֶ֥ה בוֹ֙ מ֔וּם כֹּ֖ל דָּבָ֣ר רָ֑ע כִּ֧י תוֹעֲבַ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ הֽוּא׃ | 1 | You shall not sacrifice to your God יהוה an ox or a sheep that has any defect of a serious kind, for that is abhorrent to your God יהוה. |

Chasidut warns against praying from a place of deficiency and with negative intentions, emphasizing the importance of presenting offerings free from defects. Halakhah prohibits offering animals with temporary blemishes as sacrifices, with transgressions resulting in lashes. Kabbalah states that only Israel is affected by holiness, while the nations are not included. Midrash discusses laws of substitution in sacrifices and the prohibition of sacrificing blemished animals. Quoting Commentary clarifies that both the hire of a harlot and the price of a dog are considered abominations to God. Talmud explains differing opinions on slaughtering offerings with improper intent and the prohibition of sacrificing blemished animals. Tanakh states that eating the flesh of a sacrifice of well-being on the third day is unacceptable. Targum warns against offering blemished or defective animals as sacrifices to God.

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| כִּֽי־יִמָּצֵ֤א בְקִרְבְּךָ֙ בְּאַחַ֣ד שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֑ךְ אִ֣ישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר יַעֲשֶׂ֧ה אֶת־הָרַ֛ע בְּעֵינֵ֥י יְהֹוָה־אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לַעֲבֹ֥ר בְּרִיתֽוֹ׃ | 2 | If there is found among you, in one of the settlements that your God יהוה is giving you, a man or woman who has affronted your God יהוה and transgressed the Covenant— |

The law against idolatry applies both in and outside of the Land of Israel, with worshipers to be stoned at the gates of the city where they worshiped; women are specifically mentioned due to susceptibility, and the covenant is violated with idolatry. Cities of refuge cannot be condemned to prevent destruction, and witchcraft and idolatry involving women were prevalent. The Sifrei commentaries emphasize consequences of idolatry, the Talmud discusses stoning locations, and Tosefta addresses Passover observance in a state of impurity.

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| וַיֵּ֗לֶךְ וַֽיַּעֲבֹד֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים וַיִּשְׁתַּ֖חוּ לָהֶ֑ם וְלַשֶּׁ֣מֶשׁ ׀ א֣וֹ לַיָּרֵ֗חַ א֛וֹ לְכׇל־צְבָ֥א הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־צִוִּֽיתִי׃ | 3 | turning to the worship of other gods and bowing down to them, to the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, something I never commanded— |

Chasidut and Talmudic commentary emphasize the prohibition of worshiping celestial bodies like the sun and moon, which are not commanded by God, and warn against engaging with the world of Action-Asiyah. The Mishnah discusses the punishment for inciters who lead others to idol worship, while the Talmud and Targum highlight changes made to clarify God’s commandments and avoid idolatry. Rabbeinu Bahya explains the significance of daily offerings in countering astrological influences and fasting as a form of repentance.

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| וְהֻֽגַּד־לְךָ֖ וְשָׁמָ֑עְתָּ וְדָרַשְׁתָּ֣ הֵיטֵ֔ב וְהִנֵּ֤ה אֱמֶת֙ נָכ֣וֹן הַדָּבָ֔ר נֶעֶשְׂתָ֛ה הַתּוֹעֵבָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את בְּיִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 4 | and you have been informed or have learned of it, then you shall make a thorough inquiry. If it is true, the fact is established, that abhorrent thing was perpetrated in Israel, |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 17:4 stress the importance of thorough investigation and examination in legal proceedings, with Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Siftei Chakhamim, and Rav Hirsch all highlighting different aspects of this process. The legislation is also noted to apply in the Diaspora by Tur HaArokh. The Midrash emphasizes the use of seven cross-examinations and factual reviews in legal proceedings, while Ramban and Bartenura discuss the application of these laws to idol worship and the detailed examinations required before imposing the death penalty. The Talmud further elaborates on the requirements for congruent testimony and thorough investigations in capital cases. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also stress the importance of accurate and authenticated information in hearing reports of wrongdoing within the community of Yisroel.

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| וְהֽוֹצֵאתָ֣ אֶת־הָאִ֣ישׁ הַה֡וּא אוֹ֩ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁ֨ה הַהִ֜וא אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָ֠שׂ֠וּ אֶת־הַדָּבָ֨ר הָרָ֤ע הַזֶּה֙ אֶל־שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ אֶת־הָאִ֕ישׁ א֖וֹ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁ֑ה וּסְקַלְתָּ֥ם בָּאֲבָנִ֖ים וָמֵֽתוּ׃ | 5 | you shall take the man or the woman who did that wicked thing out to the public place, and you shall stone that man or woman to death.— |

The punishment for idolatry in ancient times was stoning until death, requiring two witnesses for conviction and execution at the city gate where the idol was worshipped to demonstrate the deity’s inability to save the idolater’s life (Guides, Halakhah, Commentary, Mishnah, Quoting Commentary, Talmud, Targum). The Mishnah outlines cases judged by a court of seventy-one judges, including an entire tribe sinning, a false prophet, or a High Priest transgressing a prohibition carrying a possible death sentence. The Talmud discusses scenarios for stoning and emphasizes following Torah laws and commandments, while the Tosefta addresses the Passover offering in cases of impurity within the community.

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| עַל־פִּ֣י ׀ שְׁנַ֣יִם עֵדִ֗ים א֛וֹ שְׁלֹשָׁ֥ה עֵדִ֖ים יוּמַ֣ת הַמֵּ֑ת לֹ֣א יוּמַ֔ת עַל־פִּ֖י עֵ֥ד אֶחָֽד׃ | 6 | A person shall be put to death only on the testimony of two or more witnesses; no one shall be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.— |

The Torah requires two or three witnesses for capital punishment, with Ramban insisting on a Sanhedrin of twenty-three judges for acceptance of testimony. Halakhah prohibits women as witnesses and emphasizes oral testimony over written. The Midrash discusses the importance of witnesses in enforcing decrees and recounts the story of Akhan’s punishment. The Mishnah explores the significance of two and three witnesses in rendering testimony valid or invalid, with differing opinions on disqualifying witnesses. Musar discusses the appointment of judges and law-enforcers and the prohibition of handling fire on the Sabbath as a testimony to God’s creation ex nihilo. The Talmud emphasizes the necessity of testimony from witnesses’ mouths, the requirement of two witnesses for punishment, and the invalidity of disjointed testimony in capital law. Lastly, Targum highlights the need for two or three witnesses for death sentences, not just one.

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| יַ֣ד הָעֵדִ֞ים תִּֽהְיֶה־בּ֤וֹ בָרִאשֹׁנָה֙ לַהֲמִית֔וֹ וְיַ֥ד כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם בָּאַחֲרֹנָ֑ה וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 7 | Let the hands of the witnesses be the first to put [the condemned] to death, followed by the hands of the rest of the people. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst. |

Ibn Ezra discusses singular and plural nouns in biblical texts, Steinsaltz emphasizes the role of witnesses in the court process, Halakhah explains the commandment to judge capital cases in the Land of Israel, Kabbalah discusses the negative effects of envy and authority, Midrash connects the process of putting someone to death to the story of Jacob and Laban, Mishnah details the process of stoning and hanging the condemned, Musar discusses the migration of souls and the lineage of Bileam, Quoting Commentary highlights the burning bush and the prohibition against sorceresses, Second Temple examines the execution of apostates, Talmud explains the procedures for stoning, Tanakh recounts the stoning of Naboth, and Targum interprets the importance of witnesses in executing the guilty party.

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| כִּ֣י יִפָּלֵא֩ מִמְּךָ֨ דָבָ֜ר לַמִּשְׁפָּ֗ט בֵּֽין־דָּ֨ם ׀ לְדָ֜ם בֵּֽין־דִּ֣ין לְדִ֗ין וּבֵ֥ין נֶ֙גַע֙ לָנֶ֔גַע דִּבְרֵ֥י רִיבֹ֖ת בִּשְׁעָרֶ֑יךָ וְקַמְתָּ֣ וְעָלִ֔יתָ אֶ֨ל־הַמָּק֔וֹם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִבְחַ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בּֽוֹ׃ | 8 | If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault—matters of dispute in your courts—you shall promptly repair to the place that your God יהוה will have chosen, |

The importance of consulting judges and the Supreme Court in resolving disputes, especially in matters of judgment and legal complexities, is highlighted in various commentaries, halakhic texts, and Jewish thought. The significance of the Great Sanhedrin in making difficult judgments, the authority of the sages, and the reliance on divine decree are emphasized, along with the need to follow the decisions of the court and seek guidance in challenging cases. The role of the Sanhedrin in resolving disputes, the complexity of legal matters, and the importance of distinguishing between different types of impurity, blood, and disputes are recurring themes across different texts and commentaries.

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| וּבָאתָ֗ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים֙ הַלְוִיִּ֔ם וְאֶ֨ל־הַשֹּׁפֵ֔ט אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִהְיֶ֖ה בַּיָּמִ֣ים הָהֵ֑ם וְדָרַשְׁתָּ֙ וְהִגִּ֣ידוּ לְךָ֔ אֵ֖ת דְּבַ֥ר הַמִּשְׁפָּֽט׃ | 9 | and appear before the levitical priests, or the magistrate in charge at the time, and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, |

The importance of seeking guidance from priests, Levites, and judges appointed by God is emphasized in various texts, highlighting the authority of the Supreme Court in interpreting and applying Torah teachings. The Torah instructs to follow the word of the teachings without deviation, warning against nullifying any part of the Torah even as times change. It is crucial to obey the judges and priests of one’s generation to prevent serious consequences and maintain the tradition passed down through generations.

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| וְעָשִׂ֗יתָ עַל־פִּ֤י הַדָּבָר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יַגִּ֣ידֽוּ לְךָ֔ מִן־הַמָּק֣וֹם הַה֔וּא אֲשֶׁ֖ר יִבְחַ֣ר יְהֹוָ֑ה וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֣ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת כְּכֹ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר יוֹרֽוּךָ׃ | 10 | you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place that יהוה chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you. |

The highest court’s rulings must be obeyed, followed, and adhered to, including those from the Sanhedrin, with emphasis on the judges’ instructions and the obligation to follow their commands in all matters related to the Torah, under penalty of execution. The duties of the heart detailed in Scripture require reflection and intellectual investigation to sift truth from false notions, focusing on moral obligations in relationships with society, family, and oneself, with the ultimate judge being G-d. The importance of following the decrees of the rabbis is emphasized, as they are in accordance with God’s will, using various biblical examples to illustrate this point. The Talmud discusses the rules for issuing death sentences and explores the conditions under which individuals are liable for punishment based on their adherence to or deviation from the rulings of the High Court, with specific references to different scenarios and interpretations of the law.

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| עַל־פִּ֨י הַתּוֹרָ֜ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר יוֹר֗וּךָ וְעַל־הַמִּשְׁפָּ֛ט אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְר֥וּ לְךָ֖ תַּעֲשֶׂ֑ה לֹ֣א תָס֗וּר מִן־הַדָּבָ֛ר אֲשֶׁר־יַגִּ֥ידֽוּ לְךָ֖ יָמִ֥ין וּשְׂמֹֽאל׃ | 11 | You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the ruling handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of following the teachings of the sages and tzaddik of the generation to achieve spiritual clarity and understanding of mishpat, while Jewish Thought and Kabbalah stress the authority of Torah scholars in interpreting and applying laws. Halakhah highlights the necessity of obeying decrees and ordinances of the Sanhedrin, with Musar emphasizing the importance of listening to wise men even if their rulings seem contradictory. The Talmud and Responsa emphasize the significance of adhering to established laws and teachings, while the Tanakh instructs to follow the teachings of Moses without deviation for success.

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| וְהָאִ֞ישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂ֣ה בְזָד֗וֹן לְבִלְתִּ֨י שְׁמֹ֤עַ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן֙ הָעֹמֵ֞ד לְשָׁ֤רֶת שָׁם֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ א֖וֹ אֶל־הַשֹּׁפֵ֑ט וּמֵת֙ הָאִ֣ישׁ הַה֔וּא וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 12 | Should either party [to the dispute] act presumptuously and disregard the priest charged with serving there your God יהוה, or the magistrate, that party shall die. Thus you will sweep out evil from Israel: |

The text emphasizes the importance of upholding the authority of the Sanhedrin and following its rulings, with severe consequences for defying the court. Disobeying the directives of the court is a negative commandment, while heeding its decisions is a positive commandment in matters of Torah. Deliberate sins are considered more severe than impulsive sins, as seen in the case of king Menashe. The Torah tradition guides judgment and natural laws exist to enable humans to fulfill their destiny. Mishnah and Talmudic texts discuss the punishment for rebellious elders who go against the Supreme Court’s rulings, with different opinions on the process and frequency of executions. The Targums state that those who disobey the priest or judge serving before God are to be executed to eliminate evil from Israel.

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| וְכׇל־הָעָ֖ם יִשְׁמְע֣וּ וְיִרָ֑אוּ וְלֹ֥א יְזִיד֖וּן עֽוֹד׃ | 13 | all the people will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again. |

The law mandates that the execution of an elder who disobeys the Supreme Court’s ruling should be postponed until the next festival in Jerusalem to ensure widespread awareness and deterrence, serving as a public example to promote respect for authority and discourage rebellion. Various commandments from the Torah are discussed, emphasizing the importance of following God’s laws and remembering Jewish history and values. The Talmud and Tosefta outline the process for dealing with rebellious individuals, suggesting execution during a festival in Jerusalem to serve as a warning to others.

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| כִּֽי־תָבֹ֣א אֶל־הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֔ךְ וִֽירִשְׁתָּ֖הּ וְיָשַׁ֣בְתָּה בָּ֑הּ וְאָמַרְתָּ֗ אָשִׂ֤ימָה עָלַי֙ מֶ֔לֶךְ כְּכׇל־הַגּוֹיִ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר סְבִיבֹתָֽי׃ | 14 | If, after you have entered the land that your God יהוה has assigned to you, and taken possession of it and settled in it, you decide, “I will set a king over me, as do all the nations about me,” |

The concept of having a king over Israel is debated among commentators, with some arguing for the necessity of a king for unity and stability, while others believe temporary leaders and judges can suffice. Samuel’s criticism of the people’s request for a king was due to a lack of faith in the Bet Din to administer Torah law effectively. The appointment of a king is seen as a concession to human weakness rather than a religious necessity, with the focus on maintaining a well-ordered society through a balance of judges and a king. The appointment of a king in Israel was a debated topic among commentators, with different opinions on the Torah’s allowance for it and the reasons behind the request for a king. The elders of Israel requested a king to govern them like other nations, despite warnings of the consequences. The Talmud discusses various mitzvot related to entering and settling in Eretz Yisrael, including appointing a king, cutting off the seed of Amalek in war, and building the Temple in Jerusalem. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention the scenario of the Israelites entering the land, inheriting it, and desiring a king like the surrounding nations.

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| שׂ֣וֹם תָּשִׂ֤ים עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ מֶ֔לֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִבְחַ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בּ֑וֹ מִקֶּ֣רֶב אַחֶ֗יךָ תָּשִׂ֤ים עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ מֶ֔לֶךְ לֹ֣א תוּכַ֗ל לָתֵ֤ת עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ אִ֣ישׁ נׇכְרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹֽא־אָחִ֖יךָ הֽוּא׃ | 15 | you shall be free to set a king over yourself, one chosen by your God יהוה. Be sure to set as king over yourself one of your own people; you must not set a foreigner over you, one who is not your kin. |

The text discusses the importance of appointing a king over Israel who cares for the entire community, emphasizing the need to avoid appointing a king with anger and highlighting the significance of accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. The appointment of a king over Israel is seen as a positive development to elevate the people spiritually, with the king’s character and intentions being crucial. The king must be an Israelite, and only a Jewish king is allowed to rule over Israel, with the king serving as the heart of Israel.

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| רַק֮ לֹא־יַרְבֶּה־לּ֣וֹ סוּסִים֒ וְלֹֽא־יָשִׁ֤יב אֶת־הָעָם֙ מִצְרַ֔יְמָה לְמַ֖עַן הַרְבּ֣וֹת ס֑וּס וַֽיהֹוָה֙ אָמַ֣ר לָכֶ֔ם לֹ֣א תֹסִפ֗וּן לָשׁ֛וּב בַּדֶּ֥רֶךְ הַזֶּ֖ה עֽוֹד׃ | 16 | Moreover, he shall not keep many horses or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses, since יהוה has warned you, “You must not go back that way again.” |

The Torah prohibits a Jewish king from dwelling in Egypt and accumulating many horses, emphasizing trust in God over military might and foreign influences. The Mishnah outlines restrictions on the king’s behavior and possessions, while Musar highlights the symbolic significance of the king’s actions and the dangers of material reliance. The Talmud recounts historical events related to these prohibitions, and Tanakh provides examples of reliance on God over worldly powers. The Targum reinforces the warning against excessive horses to prevent negative consequences.

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| וְלֹ֤א יַרְבֶּה־לּוֹ֙ נָשִׁ֔ים וְלֹ֥א יָס֖וּר לְבָב֑וֹ וְכֶ֣סֶף וְזָהָ֔ב לֹ֥א יַרְבֶּה־לּ֖וֹ מְאֹֽד׃ | 17 | And he shall not have many wives, lest his heart go astray; nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess. |

Chasidut focuses on Shlomo HaMelech’s understanding of spirits and demons, breaking kelipot to reveal the Tetragrammaton, emphasizing the need to find good within evil. Halakhah prohibits a king from accumulating excessive wealth and wives, emphasizing Torah study and the needs of Israel. Jewish Thought stresses the importance of abstinence from permitted pleasures and fulfilling commandments. Midrash discusses Solomon’s downfall due to disregarding Torah commands, while Mishnah outlines restrictions on a king’s wives, horses, and wealth. Musar links yein nessech to prohibitions for a Jewish king, and the Talmud discusses limitations on a king’s possessions and religious duties, using Solomon as an example. Tanakh emphasizes God’s role in providing for David, and Targum states restrictions on a king’s wives and wealth to prevent rebellion.

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| וְהָיָ֣ה כְשִׁבְתּ֔וֹ עַ֖ל כִּסֵּ֣א מַמְלַכְתּ֑וֹ וְכָ֨תַב ל֜וֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵ֨ה הַתּוֹרָ֤ה הַזֹּאת֙ עַל־סֵ֔פֶר מִלִּפְנֵ֖י הַכֹּהֲנִ֥ים הַלְוִיִּֽם׃ | 18 | When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Teaching written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests. |

The Torah commands a king to write two Torah scrolls, one for himself and one to carry at all times, with specific regulations outlined in Jewish law. The king’s constant study and observance of the Torah are emphasized to instill fear of God and refine his character. The requirement for the king to have the Torah at all times serves as a model for all individuals to prioritize Torah study in their lives, as highlighted in various commentaries, including Ramban and Talmudic sources.

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| וְהָיְתָ֣ה עִמּ֔וֹ וְקָ֥רָא ב֖וֹ כׇּל־יְמֵ֣י חַיָּ֑יו לְמַ֣עַן יִלְמַ֗ד לְיִרְאָה֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהָ֔יו לִ֠שְׁמֹ֠ר אֶֽת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֞י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֛את וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּ֥ים הָאֵ֖לֶּה לַעֲשֹׂתָֽם׃ | 19 | Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere his God יהוה, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching as well as these laws. |

Chasidut emphasizes the king studying Torah to bring life into his leadership, while Halakhah mandates a king to write a Torah scroll, read from it daily, and have it with him at all times. Jewish Thought explores true freedom in serving God, Kabbalah discusses the king’s need for Torah to learn awe for God, Midrash emphasizes the importance of impartiality in leadership, Mishnah outlines limitations for kings, Musar stresses the fear of God through Torah study, and Talmud details requirements for a king. Commentary highlights the significance of a prince bringing an offering for atonement, with Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and others providing insights. Targum emphasizes the king’s daily reading of the Torah, and Tosefta discusses the importance of writing a Sefer Torah for personal use and studying it continually.

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| לְבִלְתִּ֤י רוּם־לְבָבוֹ֙ מֵֽאֶחָ֔יו וּלְבִלְתִּ֛י ס֥וּר מִן־הַמִּצְוָ֖ה יָמִ֣ין וּשְׂמֹ֑אול לְמַ֩עַן֩ יַאֲרִ֨יךְ יָמִ֧ים עַל־מַמְלַכְתּ֛וֹ ה֥וּא וּבָנָ֖יו בְּקֶ֥רֶב יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 20 | Thus he will not act haughtily toward his fellows or deviate from the Instruction to the right or to the left, to the end that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel. |

The appointment of a king in Judaism emphasizes humility, adherence to divine law, and servant leadership to ensure a long reign and avoid negative consequences. Kings are anointed from a horn, not priests, and anointing is required in cases of succession disputes. The king of Israel is commanded to have a special Torah scroll, read it daily, and lead the nation under the sacred canopy of the divine word. The Targum emphasizes that a king should not be prideful towards his brothers, follow the commandments, and have a long reign over his kingdom.

## Deuteronomy 18

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| לֹֽא־יִ֠הְיֶ֠ה לַכֹּהֲנִ֨ים הַלְוִיִּ֜ם כׇּל־שֵׁ֧בֶט לֵוִ֛י חֵ֥לֶק וְנַחֲלָ֖ה עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל אִשֵּׁ֧י יְהֹוָ֛ה וְנַחֲלָת֖וֹ יֹאכֵלֽוּן׃ | 1 | The levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no territorial portion with Israel. They shall live only off יהוה’s offerings by fire as their portion, |

The Levites are prohibited from inheriting land in the Land of Israel and are to receive offerings from the people to sustain themselves. The concept of surrender and humility allows connection with the Creator, contrasting with arrogance. The tribe of Levi did not receive a hereditary portion of land, as their portion was the fire offerings of God. The priests of the tribe of Levi will not have a portion or inheritance with the rest of the Israelites, but will eat the offerings of the Lord as their portion.

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| וְנַחֲלָ֥ה לֹא־יִֽהְיֶה־לּ֖וֹ בְּקֶ֣רֶב אֶחָ֑יו יְהֹוָה֙ ה֣וּא נַחֲלָת֔וֹ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּר־לֽוֹ׃ | 2 | and shall have no portion among their brother tribes: יהוה is their portion, as promised. |

Rashi explains that priests and Levites did not inherit land in Israel, as stated in Deuteronomy 18:2, to ensure their dedication to serving God. The Levites are excluded from inheriting land or spoils due to their spiritual role, with the rationale that they should not be involved in material pursuits. The allocation of cities of refuge in the Land of Israel and the scattering of Israel among the gates of the world are discussed in the Midrash, with the promise of gathering them back in the future. Aaron is told in Numbers 18:20 that he will not have a share of land or possessions among the Israelites, as God himself is his portion and inheritance.

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| וְזֶ֡ה יִהְיֶה֩ מִשְׁפַּ֨ט הַכֹּהֲנִ֜ים מֵאֵ֣ת הָעָ֗ם מֵאֵ֛ת זֹבְחֵ֥י הַזֶּ֖בַח אִם־שׁ֣וֹר אִם־שֶׂ֑ה וְנָתַן֙ לַכֹּהֵ֔ן הַזְּרֹ֥עַ וְהַלְּחָיַ֖יִם וְהַקֵּבָֽה׃ | 3 | This then shall be the priests’ due from the people: Everyone who offers a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep, must give the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach to the priest. |

The Torah commands priests to receive portions of non-consecrated animals, including the foreleg, cheekbones, and stomach, as compensation for specific actions, not obligatory for wild or consecrated animals, exclusive to non-priests [Commentary]. The commandment to give a priest specific parts of slaughtered animals is universal, practiced at all times, with some exceptions for consecrated animals and hybrids [Halakhah]. The text emphasizes the importance of following Torah commandments, helping the poor, and showing compassion, while discussing various laws and commandments related to offerings and priestly gifts [Midrash]. Priests are entitled to receive various offerings, with differences in opinion regarding certain items, and the mitzva of giving the first sheared wool to a priest applies to sheep but not goats or cattle [Mishnah]. Various commentators, including Rashi, Bartenura, and Ibn Ezra, detail the parts of sacrificial animals that must be given to priests according to Deuteronomy 18:3 [Quoting Commentary]. The Talmud discusses the obligation to give gifts of the priesthood from slaughtered animals, the requirements for sharing tithes and Sabbatical produce in Syria, and the exemption of gifts of the priesthood from hybrid animals like a koy [Talmud]. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan specify the parts of sacrifices that priests will receive according to Deuteronomy 18:3 [Targum]. The Tosefta addresses various laws regarding ritual slaughter, gifts for the poor, separation of terumah and priestly gifts, and the obligations related to the first of the fleece and priestly gifts, outlining rights and obligations regarding newborns and priestly gifts [Tosefta].

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| רֵאשִׁ֨ית דְּגָֽנְךָ֜ תִּירֹֽשְׁךָ֣ וְיִצְהָרֶ֗ךָ וְרֵאשִׁ֛ית גֵּ֥ז צֹאנְךָ֖ תִּתֶּן־לֽוֹ׃ | 4 | You shall also give him the first fruits of your new grain and wine and oil, and the first shearing of your sheep. |

The text discusses the obligation to give the first shearing of flocks to the priest, with specific measurements and rules outlined in Deuteronomy 18:4. Various commentators emphasize the symbolic importance of these gifts, the levels of generosity in giving them, and the specific requirements for donations and fleece of sheep. The concept of tithing is connected to the sephirah of Malkhut in Kabbalah, highlighting the importance of giving back to the divine. The Midrash delves into laws regarding offerings, the story of Korach, and the significance of various elements in Judaism. The Mishnah details the obligation of the first shearing of wool for sheep, not goats or cattle, and the specific weight required for the priest. Rav Huna explains that the universe was created due to merits acquired by Israel, including setting aside challah, giving tithes, and bringing first ripe fruits to the Temple. Rashi and Ramban explore the meaning of “In the beginning God created” in Genesis 1:1, connecting it to the creation of the world for the sake of Torah and Israel. The Talmud discusses the strictness of consecrated items compared to terumah, specific measurements and rules for priestly gifts, and the importance of following purity laws to avoid sin. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan instruct to give the first portion of grain, wine, olive oil, and sheep’s fleece to the designated recipient in Deuteronomy 18:4. In Tosefta, it is explained that failure to fulfill obligations as a Kohen or Levite results in not receiving associated gifts, and certain animals are exempt from the obligation of the first of the fleece based on specific conditions.

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| כִּ֣י ב֗וֹ בָּחַ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ מִכׇּל־שְׁבָטֶ֑יךָ לַעֲמֹ֨ד לְשָׁרֵ֧ת בְּשֵׁם־יְהֹוָ֛ה ה֥וּא וּבָנָ֖יו כׇּל־הַיָּמִֽים׃ | 5 | For your God יהוה has chosen him and his descendants, out of all your tribes, to be in attendance for service in the name of יהוה for all time. |

The sacrificial service in the Temple must be performed standing, with priests provided with food and clothing to serve, and the High Priest pronouncing the 42-lettered name of God on the Day of Atonement. The Sefer HaChinukh, Mishneh Torah, Sefer HaMitzvot, and Mishnah detail various requirements and prohibitions related to Temple service, sanctification, and priestly duties. The prophet, Temple, and priests all represent divine authority and the will of God, with blessings, oaths, and prayers made in the name of God seeking divine intervention. The Midrash discusses rules for the Priestly Blessing, the importance of priests being chosen to bless the people, and specific actions and prayers during various occasions. The Talmud emphasizes that priests must stand while performing Temple service and reciting the Priestly Benediction, with lifted hands, and that priests sitting disqualify the rites they perform. The Tosefta states that all priestly rituals are incumbent upon the sons of Aaron, and Kohanim receive their portion from God’s offerings when they do His will.

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| וְכִֽי־יָבֹ֨א הַלֵּוִ֜י מֵאַחַ֤ד שְׁעָרֶ֙יךָ֙ מִכׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אֲשֶׁר־ה֖וּא גָּ֣ר שָׁ֑ם וּבָא֙ בְּכׇל־אַוַּ֣ת נַפְשׁ֔וֹ אֶל־הַמָּק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֥ר יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 6 | If a Levite would go, from any of the settlements throughout Israel where he has been residing, to the place that יהוה has chosen, he may do so whenever he pleases. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of connecting with others close to the tzaddik for guidance and wisdom. Commentary discusses the eligibility of Levites and priests to serve in the Temple, highlighting the specific obligations related to Temple service. Halakhah details the shifts for priests and Levites in the Temple, with priests having more flexibility in offering sacrifices. Midrash distinguishes between Levites and Cohanim in performing sacrificial service. Quoting Commentary contrasts Ramban’s interpretation with Rashi’s on the repetition of words in Scripture. Talmud allows priests to sacrifice offerings at any time, even outside their designated watch. Targum emphasizes the fulfillment of obligation for a Levite coming to the chosen place with all his soul’s desire.

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| וְשֵׁרֵ֕ת בְּשֵׁ֖ם יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהָ֑יו כְּכׇל־אֶחָיו֙ הַלְוִיִּ֔ם הָעֹמְדִ֥ים שָׁ֖ם לִפְנֵ֥י יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 7 | He may serve in the name of his God יהוה like all his fellow Levites who are there in attendance before יהוה. |

In Deuteronomy 18:7, priests from the countryside are granted equality in service and share of sacrifices with those already in function based on a rotational system. Levites were obligated to serve in the Temple as gatekeepers and singers during sacrifices, with only Levites allowed to recite songs during Temple service. The Levites must stand while serving, and both Cohanim and Levites have a portion and inheritance with Israel. The Rabbis discuss differences between individual burnt offerings and communal gift offerings, with priests allowed to offer sacrifices at any time they desire. Priests are allowed to sacrifice offerings at any time they desire, even outside of their designated priestly watch, and there is a mitzva to perform the service while standing. The Talmud indicates a basic requirement to accompany communal offerings with song.

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| חֵ֥לֶק כְּחֵ֖לֶק יֹאכֵ֑לוּ לְבַ֥ד מִמְכָּרָ֖יו עַל־הָאָבֽוֹת׃ | 8 | They shall receive equal shares of the dues, without regard to personal gifts or patrimonies. |

Priests in Jerusalem during festivals can partake in sin-offerings, share sacrificial meat equitably, and offer personal sacrifices out of turn. The system of priestly rosters, established by King David and Samuel, ensures orderly service in the Temple with each roster serving for two weeks per year. Levites can eat a share of offerings brought during festivals regardless of roster affiliation. The priests’ shares were determined by agreements resembling sales contracts between ancestors, and priests were entitled to equal shares of meal-offerings regardless of duties or family groups. All priestly watches have equal status in portions of Festival offerings, only applicable during pilgrimage Festivals when all of Israel enters through one gate.

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| כִּ֤י אַתָּה֙ בָּ֣א אֶל־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֑ךְ לֹֽא־תִלְמַ֣ד לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת כְּתוֹעֲבֹ֖ת הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָהֵֽם׃ | 9 | When you enter the land that your God יהוה is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abhorrent practices of those nations. |

Rebbe Nachman warns against praying with kavanot if unfit, likening it to sorcery, emphasizing the importance of only using Kabbalistic meditations for understanding and issuing rulings (Likutei Moharan, Part II 120:1:2). The text prohibits engaging in abominable practices like sorcery and divination, discussing the influence of astrology and warning against relying on such practices for knowledge of the future. Noahides are commanded to observe seven laws, including blasphemy and idolatry, with consequences for transgressions. Certain acts, like sorcery, are permitted for Torah study and teaching purposes, exemplified by Rabbi Gamliel and others. The Tosefta discusses criteria for a beguiled city in the Land of Israel and the importance of truthfulness and avoiding causing the righteous to live among the wicked.

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| לֹֽא־יִמָּצֵ֣א בְךָ֔ מַעֲבִ֥יר בְּנֽוֹ־וּבִתּ֖וֹ בָּאֵ֑שׁ קֹסֵ֣ם קְסָמִ֔ים מְעוֹנֵ֥ן וּמְנַחֵ֖שׁ וּמְכַשֵּֽׁף׃ | 10 | Let no one be found among you who consigns a son or daughter to the fire, or who is an augur, a soothsayer, a diviner, a sorcerer, |

Various forbidden practices are condemned in Jewish law, including passing children through fire for idol worship, engaging in sorcery, divination, and seeking supernatural knowledge. Violations of these prohibitions can result in lashes, stoning, or other penalties. The Torah emphasizes the importance of relying on God for guidance and avoiding these practices. The Talmud discusses interpretations and consequences of these prohibitions, while the Tosefta outlines the specific commandments for the sons of Noach, including prohibitions against idolatry and other forbidden practices.

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| וְחֹבֵ֖ר חָ֑בֶר וְשֹׁאֵ֥ל אוֹב֙ וְיִדְּעֹנִ֔י וְדֹרֵ֖שׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִֽים׃ | 11 | one who casts spells, or one who consults ghosts or familiar spirits, or one who inquires of the dead. |

Various Jewish commentaries, Halakhah, Jewish thought, Kabbalah, Midrash, Mishnah, and Talmud all discuss prohibitions against practices such as necromancy, divination, sorcery, and consulting with the dead, emphasizing the importance of following God’s statutes and avoiding sinful behaviors. The Talmud differentiates between different types of practitioners and their specific methods and punishments, while the prophet in Judaism is described as warning of a future that can be changed through human choices rather than predicting outcomes. The Tanakh and Targum also warn against seeking guidance from ghosts or familiar spirits and engaging in activities like snake charming and using magical knots.

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| כִּֽי־תוֹעֲבַ֥ת יְהֹוָ֖ה כׇּל־עֹ֣שֵׂה אֵ֑לֶּה וּבִגְלַל֙ הַתּוֹעֵבֹ֣ת הָאֵ֔לֶּה יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ מוֹרִ֥ישׁ אוֹתָ֖ם מִפָּנֶֽיךָ׃ | 12 | For anyone who does such things is abhorrent to יהוה, and it is because of these abhorrent things that your God יהוה is dispossessing them before you. |

The Torah prohibits practices like divination and idol worship, considering them abominations to the Lord. The Canaanites were dispossessed from their land for engaging in such practices. Rabbi Shimon b. Yochai compares Israel’s relationship with God to a king feeding his obedient sons and servants. The Talmud explains that Gentiles are warned about specific prohibitions, including idolatry. The Targum mentions that those who commit abominations are expelled by the Lord.

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| תָּמִ֣ים תִּֽהְיֶ֔ה עִ֖ם יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 13 | You must be wholehearted with your God יהוה. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of wholehearted faith in God, avoiding seeking answers from other sources and being pure-hearted. Halakhah prohibits involvement in occult arts and emphasizes that true wisdom comes from faith in God. Jewish Thought warns against seeking answers through forbidden means and emphasizes innocence and trust in God. Kabbalah discusses balancing and perfecting spiritual aspects, while Midrash praises those who follow God’s commandments wholeheartedly. Musar highlights the importance of being wholehearted with God, encompassing all praiseworthy qualities. Quoting Commentary explains that being whole-hearted with God means trusting in His control over fate and aligning internal virtues with external actions. Responsa permits consulting sorcerers in cases of danger but prohibits it otherwise, while Talmud argues against consulting astrologers. Tanakh describes Noah as righteous and blameless, walking with God, and Targum emphasizes the importance of walking in perfect trust and fear of God.

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| כִּ֣י ׀ הַגּוֹיִ֣ם הָאֵ֗לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֤ר אַתָּה֙ יוֹרֵ֣שׁ אוֹתָ֔ם אֶל־מְעֹנְנִ֥ים וְאֶל־קֹסְמִ֖ים יִשְׁמָ֑עוּ וְאַתָּ֕ה לֹ֣א כֵ֔ן נָ֥תַן לְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 14 | Those nations that you are about to dispossess do indeed resort to soothsayers and augurs; to you, however, your God יהוה has not assigned the like. |

The text emphasizes that the Israelites are forbidden from consulting soothsayers or diviners, as they have prophets and the “Urim and Thummim” for guidance on God’s plans. The Torah warns against falsehood and idolatry, stressing the importance of faith in God and distinguishing between true prophets and diviners. The Jewish people are urged to trust in God rather than resorting to divination, which is associated with the Gentile nations. The Midrash teaches the importance of following God’s guidance like Avraham did, rather than relying on divination like the nations. The Torah prohibits divination and emphasizes trust in God over seeking guidance from diviners. Sforno, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and Targum all highlight the contrast between seeking God’s proximity and relying on demonic divination practices, emphasizing the importance of prophecy and faith in God.

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| נָבִ֨יא מִקִּרְבְּךָ֤ מֵאַחֶ֙יךָ֙ כָּמֹ֔נִי יָקִ֥ים לְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ אֵלָ֖יו תִּשְׁמָעֽוּן׃ | 15 | From among your own people, your God יהוה will raise up for you a prophet like myself; that is whom you shall heed. |

The concept of prophecy in the Land of Israel is discussed, emphasizing that prophets will arise only from among the Israelites, like Moses, and will deliver messages from God faithfully. It is a mitzvah to listen to prophets as long as they do not deviate from the Torah’s laws, and any temporary changes they suggest should align with the Torah’s overall message. The importance of understanding the deeper meaning behind the mitzvot, respecting parents, and eradicating perversions for holiness on a national level is highlighted. The exclusivity of prophecy, Torah, the land of Israel, and resurrection of the dead to the Jewish people is emphasized through biblical verses and interpretations. The Gemara suggests that even if a true prophet tells you to transgress a mitzvah, you must listen to him for the requirement of the hour, indicating that a Torah mitzvah can be uprooted in an active manner.

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| כְּכֹ֨ל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁאַ֜לְתָּ מֵעִ֨ם יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בְּחֹרֵ֔ב בְּי֥וֹם הַקָּהָ֖ל לֵאמֹ֑ר לֹ֣א אֹסֵ֗ף לִשְׁמֹ֙עַ֙ אֶת־קוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהָ֔י וְאֶת־הָאֵ֨שׁ הַגְּדֹלָ֥ה הַזֹּ֛את לֹֽא־אֶרְאֶ֥ה ע֖וֹד וְלֹ֥א אָמֽוּת׃ | 16 | This is just what you asked of your God יהוה at Horeb, on the day of the Assembly, saying, “Let me not hear the voice of my God יהוה any longer or see this wondrous fire any more, lest I die.” |

The Torah prohibits practices related to propitiating the constellations to prevent idol worship, compensating for lost benefits with adherence to mitzvoth and reliance on prophets. Esau’s deceitful nature is contrasted with Jacob’s integrity in Isaac’s blessing. The Israelites merited prophets by asking God in Chorev, leading to the need for prophets throughout generations. The four methods of executing someone legally in Jewish law are stoning, burning, sword, and asphyxiation, symbolizing different sins and executed by the angel of death based on Justice. The Israelites feared the sounds at Mount Sinai, leading to the need for Moses as an intermediary and later prophets. The text refutes claims that verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed, emphasizing the importance of upholding the teachings of Moses and not adding or subtracting from them. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe the Israelites’ request at Choreiv to avoid hearing the voice of Adonoy and seeing the great fire of God to prevent death.

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| וַיֹּ֥אמֶר יְהֹוָ֖ה אֵלָ֑י הֵיטִ֖יבוּ אֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֵּֽרוּ׃ | 17 | Whereupon יהוה said to me, “They have done well in speaking thus. |

The Israelites believed in Moses as a prophet, leading to a commitment to accept future prophets as intermediaries for communication with God, as implied by Moses. R. Akiva believes they should respond affirmatively to both affirmatives and negatives from God’s commands. Ibn Ezra notes a similarity between Isaiah 15:7:2 and Deuteronomy 8:17. The Talmud discusses the importance of not speaking before someone wiser and the examples of appropriate and inappropriate ways of speaking. The Targum confirms that the words spoken by the people were correct, as mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:17.

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| נָבִ֨יא אָקִ֥ים לָהֶ֛ם מִקֶּ֥רֶב אֲחֵיהֶ֖ם כָּמ֑וֹךָ וְנָתַתִּ֤י דְבָרַי֙ בְּפִ֔יו וְדִבֶּ֣ר אֲלֵיהֶ֔ם אֵ֖ת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֲצַוֶּֽנּוּ׃ | 18 | I will raise up for them from among their own people a prophet like yourself, in whose mouth I will put My words and who will speak to them all that I command; |

The primary function of a prophet is to instruct Israel regarding God’s word, with the prophet relaying God’s commands to the people when necessary and not establishing a new faith. It is a mitzvah to listen to a prophet, as failure to do so may result in death at the hand of God. Following post-Mosaic prophets, priests, and judges is important for guidance in interpreting laws and regulations, as they have divine assistance and vast learning. The appointment of a prophet is based on the merit of Israel, and prophets must speak in accordance with the will of God. Moses’ decline in prophetic abilities is hinted at in Deut. 18:18, and a prophet’s role is to uphold Torah laws, not establish a new religion. God promises to raise up a prophet from among the people to speak His words, like Moses, and commandments to the people.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה הָאִישׁ֙ אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־יִשְׁמַע֙ אֶל־דְּבָרַ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר יְדַבֵּ֖ר בִּשְׁמִ֑י אָנֹכִ֖י אֶדְרֹ֥שׁ מֵעִמּֽוֹ׃ | 19 | and anybody who fails to heed the words [the prophet] speaks in My name, I Myself will call to account. |

Prophets are appointed by God to command people to fulfill the precepts of the Torah and warn against transgression, with dire consequences for those who do not heed their words. Failure to listen to a prophet can result in death by the hand of God, and those who suppress or violate a prophecy may face execution by strangulation. The Talmud and Mishnah both emphasize the importance of obeying the commands of a prophet, as God will demand accountability and punish those who refuse to obey.

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| אַ֣ךְ הַנָּבִ֡יא אֲשֶׁ֣ר יָזִיד֩ לְדַבֵּ֨ר דָּבָ֜ר בִּשְׁמִ֗י אֵ֣ת אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־צִוִּיתִיו֙ לְדַבֵּ֔ר וַאֲשֶׁ֣ר יְדַבֵּ֔ר בְּשֵׁ֖ם אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֑ים וּמֵ֖ת הַנָּבִ֥יא הַהֽוּא׃ | 20 | But any prophet who presumes to speak in My name an oracle that I did not command to be uttered, or who speaks in the name of other gods—that prophet shall die.” |

The Torah warns that false prophets who speak in the name of other gods or make inaccurate prophecies will face death by strangulation, as outlined in Deuteronomy 18:19-20 and reiterated in various commentaries, including the Mishnah and Talmud. Such prophets, whether claiming to speak for false gods or idols, are considered guilty of idolatry and subject to the death penalty. The seriousness of false prophecy is emphasized, with consequences including execution by strangulation for deliberate sinners who speak falsely in the name of the Lord. Additionally, cases involving false prophets, an entire tribe’s sin, or a High Priest transgressing serious prohibitions must be judged by a court of seventy-one judges, as detailed in the Mishnah and Talmud. The text also cautions against false Messiahs, urging patience and faith in awaiting the true redemption of Israel.

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| וְכִ֥י תֹאמַ֖ר בִּלְבָבֶ֑ךָ אֵיכָה֙ נֵדַ֣ע אֶת־הַדָּבָ֔ר אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־דִבְּר֖וֹ יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 21 | And should you ask yourselves, “How can we know that the oracle was not spoken by יהוה?”— |

Ramban, Rashi, Sforno, Tur HaArokh, Rav Hirsch, and Mishneh Torah explain the criteria for distinguishing false prophets from true ones, emphasizing the importance of accurate predictions of future events. The Sifri on Parshat Shoftim addresses conflicting prophecies regarding the fate of the Temple, with the Torah instructing not to fear prophecies that do not come true. Jeremiah warns against false prophets claiming the return of the vessels of the House of God from Babylon, while Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan discuss discerning statements not spoken by the Lord in Deuteronomy 18:21.

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| אֲשֶׁר֩ יְדַבֵּ֨ר הַנָּבִ֜יא בְּשֵׁ֣ם יְהֹוָ֗ה וְלֹֽא־יִהְיֶ֤ה הַדָּבָר֙ וְלֹ֣א יָבֹ֔א ה֣וּא הַדָּבָ֔ר אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־דִבְּר֖וֹ יְהֹוָ֑ה בְּזָדוֹן֙ דִּבְּר֣וֹ הַנָּבִ֔יא לֹ֥א תָג֖וּר מִמֶּֽנּוּ׃ | 22 | if the prophet speaks in the name of יהוה and the oracle does not come true, that oracle was not spoken by יהוה; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not stand in dread of that person. |

False prophets who make predictions that do not come true should be considered illegitimate, as true prophets are confirmed by miracles from God. The importance of not fearing or refraining from executing a false prophet is emphasized, with the commandment to kill them even if they prophesy about the fulfillment of commandments. The construction of the tabernacle falls under Divine intervention, emphasizing the need to discern true prophecy from false prophecy and not rely on unacceptable means for knowledge. Offenses punishable by strangulation include false prophecy, with the need to demonstrate criminal intent in prosecuting false prophets. If a prophet’s words do not come true, it is not from the Lord but spoken maliciously, and one should not fear them.

## Deuteronomy 19

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| כִּֽי־יַכְרִ֞ית יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִ֔ם אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ אֶת־אַרְצָ֑ם וִֽירִשְׁתָּ֕ם וְיָשַׁבְתָּ֥ בְעָרֵיהֶ֖ם וּבְבָתֵּיהֶֽם׃ | 1 | When your God יהוה has cut down the nations whose land your God יהוה is assigning to you, and you have dispossessed them and settled in their towns and homes, |

Moses establishes cities of refuge for unintentional murderers in the land, emphasizing the sanctity of human life and the need to cleanse the land from idolatry and innocent blood. Judges must measure the distance precisely to the nearest city with a court of 23 judges, excluding Jerusalem, and the mitzvah only applies in the land given by God. The obligation to designate cities of refuge is dependent on entry into the land, with specific requirements and the need for six cities to ensure availability. The “enlargement” of the border allows for the establishment of additional cities of refuge, permitting the consumption of secular meat meals. The destruction of nations by God and the Israelites inheriting their land, cities, and houses is emphasized in Targum translations.

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| שָׁל֥וֹשׁ עָרִ֖ים תַּבְדִּ֣יל לָ֑ךְ בְּת֣וֹךְ אַרְצְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 2 | you shall set aside three cities in the land that your God יהוה is giving you to possess. |

Moses establishes six cities of refuge within Israel for inadvertent killers to flee to, with specific requirements for their designation and maintenance. The commandment applies only in Eretz Yisrael and is the responsibility of both the king and the community, with details explained in various commentaries. The cities are spiritually and physically significant, with mystical symbolism related to the soul’s journey in the afterlife. Moses designated three cities in TransJordan and Yehoshua set aside three in Canaan, with a total of six required before serving as a haven. The Talmud discusses differing views on the number of cities needed and notes five things missing in the last Temple compared to the first. The Targums also emphasize the setting apart of three cities within the land.

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| תָּכִ֣ין לְךָ֮ הַדֶּ֒רֶךְ֒ וְשִׁלַּשְׁתָּ֙ אֶת־גְּב֣וּל אַרְצְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֥ר יַנְחִֽילְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְהָיָ֕ה לָנ֥וּס שָׁ֖מָּה כׇּל־רֹצֵֽחַ׃ | 3 | You shall survey the distances, and divide into three parts the territory of the country that your God יהוה has allotted to you, so that any [man] who has killed someone may have a place to flee to.— |

The establishment of cities of refuge for unintentional murderers is detailed in various texts, including Mishneh Torah and Talmud, with specific requirements for roads leading to these cities, equal division of the land, and spiritual significance in guiding sinners to safety through God’s mercy and guidance. The division of the land into three parts symbolizes spiritual ascent and rehabilitation for unintentional killers, with clear roads and signs pointing the way to ensure equal distance and accessibility to each city. Additionally, the consequences of intentional wrongdoing, such as in the case of Yoav, are highlighted as punishment for deliberate actions despite seeking refuge.

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| וְזֶה֙ דְּבַ֣ר הָרֹצֵ֔חַ אֲשֶׁר־יָנ֥וּס שָׁ֖מָּה וָחָ֑י אֲשֶׁ֨ר יַכֶּ֤ה אֶת־רֵעֵ֙הוּ֙ בִּבְלִי־דַ֔עַת וְה֛וּא לֹא־שֹׂנֵ֥א ל֖וֹ מִתְּמֹ֥ל שִׁלְשֹֽׁם׃ | 4 | Now this is the case of the killer who may flee there and live: one who has slain another unwittingly, without having been an enemy in the past. |

Murderers, whether intentional or unintentional, must acknowledge their status and not accept honors or positions of authority. Cities of refuge provide protection for unintentional killers, who must disclose their status when honored. Torah scholars accompany them to prevent attacks, and they must return to their previous office after the High Priest’s death. The Talmud discusses laws of unintentional murder and exile, with Rabbi Meir suggesting blind people be included in exile. The Targum discusses unintentional murder cases without prior enmity towards the victim.

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| וַאֲשֶׁר֩ יָבֹ֨א אֶת־רֵעֵ֥הוּ בַיַּ֘עַר֮ לַחְטֹ֣ב עֵצִים֒ וְנִדְּחָ֨ה יָד֤וֹ בַגַּרְזֶן֙ לִכְרֹ֣ת הָעֵ֔ץ וְנָשַׁ֤ל הַבַּרְזֶל֙ מִן־הָעֵ֔ץ וּמָצָ֥א אֶת־רֵעֵ֖הוּ וָמֵ֑ת ה֗וּא יָנ֛וּס אֶל־אַחַ֥ת הֶעָרִים־הָאֵ֖לֶּה וָחָֽי׃ | 5 | For instance, a man goes with another fellow into a grove to cut wood; as his hand swings the ax to cut down a tree, the ax-head flies off the handle and strikes the other so that he dies. That man shall flee to one of these cities and live.— |

Various Jewish commentators, Halakhic authorities, and Midrashim discuss unintentional murder and the laws surrounding it, including the circumstances that warrant exile, exemptions for certain situations like acts during a mitzvah, and differing opinions on legal matters such as the treatment of blind individuals. The Mishnah and Talmud delve into specific scenarios and interpretations of verses like Deuteronomy 19:5 to determine liability for unintentional killings and the purpose of cities of refuge. Philo and Targum offer additional insights into the concept of unintentional homicide and seeking refuge in God.

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| פֶּן־יִרְדֹּף֩ גֹּאֵ֨ל הַדָּ֜ם אַחֲרֵ֣י הָרֹצֵ֗חַ כִּי־יֵחַם֮ לְבָבוֹ֒ וְהִשִּׂיג֛וֹ כִּֽי־יִרְבֶּ֥ה הַדֶּ֖רֶךְ וְהִכָּ֣הוּ נָ֑פֶשׁ וְלוֹ֙ אֵ֣ין מִשְׁפַּט־מָ֔וֶת כִּ֠י לֹ֣א שֹׂנֵ֥א ה֛וּא ל֖וֹ מִתְּמ֥וֹל שִׁלְשֽׁוֹם׃ | 6 | Otherwise, when the distance is great, the blood-avenger, pursuing the killer in hot anger, may overtake him and strike him down; yet he did not incur the death penalty, since he had never been the other’s enemy. |

The need for multiple cities of refuge to protect unintentional murderers from blood redeemers seeking revenge is emphasized in Deuteronomy 19:6. The Mishneh Torah states that a blood redeemer is not liable for killing someone who unintentionally killed outside the Sabbath limits of his city of refuge. The Midrash discusses various emotions and actions of the heart, emphasizing justice and mercy through biblical examples. Rashi highlights the importance of cities of refuge being close enough for fugitives to reach quickly. The Talmud clarifies that the blood redeemer is exempt from punishment if they kill an unintentional murderer on the way to a city of refuge. In Leviticus 25:25, the nearest redeemer has the right to redeem sold property. The Targums warn against blood redeemers pursuing and killing murderers out of anger.

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| עַל־כֵּ֛ן אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ לֵאמֹ֑ר שָׁלֹ֥שׁ עָרִ֖ים תַּבְדִּ֥יל לָֽךְ׃ | 7 | That is why I command you: set aside three cities. |

The commandment to establish three cities of refuge in the land is a positive commandment in Eretz Yisrael, ensuring unintentional killers can flee for protection and receive a fair trial. The Midrash emphasizes that all six cities of refuge must be designated before any can serve as a city of refuge, while both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that three cities should be set apart for specific purposes as commanded in Deuteronomy 19:7.

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| וְאִם־יַרְחִ֞יב יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֶת־גְּבֻ֣לְךָ֔ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּ֖ע לַאֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ וְנָ֤תַן לְךָ֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֶּ֖ר לָתֵ֥ת לַאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 8 | And when your God יהוה enlarges your territory, as was sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land that was promised to be given to your fathers— |

The commandment to add three more cities of refuge, in accordance with Deuteronomy 19:8-9, will be fulfilled in the era of the King Mashiach with the cities of the Keni, K’nizi, and the Kadmoni. The mitzvah of expanding one’s borders is rewarded by God with an actual expansion of territory, as seen in the promise to the forefathers. The three Temples that will be built in the future are symbolized by the wells dug by Isaac in Genesis 26, with each well representing a different Temple. Ramban discusses the symbolic meaning of the wells and predicts a time of peace and prosperity when the Third House will be built. In Genesis 15:9, God instructs Abraham to bring specific animals for sacrifice, and both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention that if God expands the boundaries of the land as promised, the people will receive the entire land.

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| כִּֽי־תִשְׁמֹר֩ אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֨ה הַזֹּ֜את לַעֲשֹׂתָ֗הּ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֣י מְצַוְּךָ֮ הַיּוֹם֒ לְאַהֲבָ֞ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ וְלָלֶ֥כֶת בִּדְרָכָ֖יו כׇּל־הַיָּמִ֑ים וְיָסַפְתָּ֨ לְךָ֥ עוֹד֙ שָׁלֹ֣שׁ עָרִ֔ים עַ֖ל הַשָּׁלֹ֥שׁ הָאֵֽלֶּה׃ | 9 | if you faithfully observe all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day, to love your God יהוה and to walk in God’s ways at all times—then you shall add three more towns to those three. |

Rashi explains that there will be a total of nine cities of refuge, Ibn Ezra stresses the importance of walking in God’s ways, Tur HaArokh highlights that observing all commandments leads to the addition of three more cities of refuge, Nachmanides explains that when all Jewish people observe all commandments out of love for God, the three additional cities will be established, Rabbeinu Bahya mentions a third group of three cities of refuge to be added, and Steinsaltz clarifies that the three additional cities will be needed when the land expands due to people observing the commandments. The Levites do not have an ancestral portion in Eretz Yisrael but were commanded to provide cities for them to dwell in, including the six cities of refuge and 42 additional cities, with three more cities to be added in the future. Moses set aside three cities of refuge across the Jordan, another three in Eretz Yisrael, and in the future, they will set up another three, totaling nine cities of refuge. The text emphasizes the importance of emulating God’s ways in all aspects of life and clinging to God with such intensity that one cannot part from Him. Abba Shaul advocates for six additional cities of refuge in the Northern part of the Land of Promise, while R. Nehorai suggests a total of fifteen cities. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan discuss adding three cities to the existing three when following God’s commandments to love Him and walk in His ways.

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| וְלֹ֤א יִשָּׁפֵךְ֙ דָּ֣ם נָקִ֔י בְּקֶ֣רֶב אַרְצְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָ֑ה וְהָיָ֥ה עָלֶ֖יךָ דָּמִֽים׃ | 10 | Thus blood of the innocent will not be shed, bringing bloodguilt upon you in the land that your God יהוה is allotting to you. |

Deuteronomy 19:10 warns against spilling innocent blood in the land given by God, placing responsibility on the people as a whole to prevent murders and seek justice for the victims. Various commandments and prohibitions are discussed, emphasizing the importance of following God’s laws as gratitude for redemption from Egypt. The establishment of six towns of asylum for unintentional murderers is outlined, with a fluid interpretation of biblical texts by Rabbinic law transmitters and editors. The responsibility of court agents to prevent accidental bloodshed is discussed, with negligence leading to guilt as if they had shed the blood. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also stress the importance of not shedding innocent blood in the land.

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| וְכִֽי־יִהְיֶ֥ה אִישׁ֙ שֹׂנֵ֣א לְרֵעֵ֔הוּ וְאָ֤רַב לוֹ֙ וְקָ֣ם עָלָ֔יו וְהִכָּ֥הוּ נֶ֖פֶשׁ וָמֵ֑ת וְנָ֕ס אֶל־אַחַ֖ת הֶעָרִ֥ים הָאֵֽל׃ | 11 | If, however, a man who is the enemy of another lies in wait and sets upon [the victim] and strikes a fatal blow and then flees to one of these towns, |

The Sefer Chasidim warns against minor transgressions leading to serious offenses like murder, referencing Deuteronomy 19:11. The Mishnah explains the process of trial and punishment for intentional murderers, including fleeing to cities of refuge. Rashbam, Sforno, Rashi, and other commentaries interpret Deuteronomy 19:11 in various ways related to intent and murder. The Talmud discusses the legal status of intent in cases of murder, with Rabbi Shimon and the Rabbis holding different views. Leviticus 19:17 instructs individuals not to hate relatives but to reprove them. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 19:11 mention fleeing to cities of refuge after causing death through ambush.

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| וְשָֽׁלְחוּ֙ זִקְנֵ֣י עִיר֔וֹ וְלָקְח֥וּ אֹת֖וֹ מִשָּׁ֑ם וְנָתְנ֣וּ אֹת֗וֹ בְּיַ֛ד גֹּאֵ֥ל הַדָּ֖ם וָמֵֽת׃ | 12 | the elders of his town shall have him brought back from there and shall hand him over to the blood-avenger to be put to death; |

In Deuteronomy 19:12, the elders of the city send murderers to face justice and be tried by the blood redeemer, resulting in a death sentence. The Mishneh Torah outlines the process for unintentional and intentional killers seeking refuge and facing trial, with those found guilty of intentional murder being executed. The Talmud specifies that guilty individuals are executed, while innocent ones are freed or returned to the city of refuge. Exodus 21:13 provides guidelines for unintentional killings and assigns a place of asylum, with Targum emphasizing the role of the elders in sending offenders for execution.

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| לֹא־תָח֥וֹס עֵֽינְךָ֖ עָלָ֑יו וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֧ דַֽם־הַנָּקִ֛י מִיִּשְׂרָאֵ֖ל וְט֥וֹב לָֽךְ׃ | 13 | you must show him no pity. Thus you will purge Israel of the blood of the innocent, and it will go well with you. |

The text emphasizes the importance of not showing pity towards murderers, stressing the need to eliminate sources of evil to protect society. Judges are commanded not to have compassion for killers, those obligated to pay fines, or pursuers, and to avoid favoritism based on social status or wealth. The Mishnah discusses laws regarding accidental killing and the establishment of cities of refuge, emphasizing the importance of heeding even lighter commandments. The Torah warns against polluting the land with bloodshed and emphasizes the need to atone for bloodshed through the blood of the perpetrator. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 19:13 stress the importance of eliminating shedding of innocent blood to ensure the well-being of Israel.

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| לֹ֤א תַסִּיג֙ גְּב֣וּל רֵֽעֲךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֥ר גָּבְל֖וּ רִאשֹׁנִ֑ים בְּנַחֲלָֽתְךָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּנְחַ֔ל בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 14 | You shall not move your neighbor’s landmarks, set up by previous generations, in the property that will be allotted to you in the land that your God יהוה is giving you to possess. |

The prohibition against removing a neighbor’s landmark in the Land of Israel is emphasized in various texts, including the Halakhah, Midrash, Musar, Second Temple writings, Talmud, Tanakh, and Targum, highlighting the importance of respecting boundaries to avoid disputes and maintain peace. Violating this commandment is seen as challenging the original distribution of land and can lead to severe consequences, with the boundaries set by previous generations considered sacred.

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| לֹֽא־יָקוּם֩ עֵ֨ד אֶחָ֜ד בְּאִ֗ישׁ לְכׇל־עָוֺן֙ וּלְכׇל־חַטָּ֔את בְּכׇל־חֵ֖טְא אֲשֶׁ֣ר יֶֽחֱטָ֑א עַל־פִּ֣י ׀ שְׁנֵ֣י עֵדִ֗ים א֛וֹ עַל־פִּ֥י שְׁלֹשָֽׁה־עֵדִ֖ים יָק֥וּם דָּבָֽר׃ | 15 | A single witness may not validate against an [accused] party any guilt or blame for any offense that may be committed; a case can be valid only on the testimony of two witnesses or more. |

Chasidut warns against speaking negatively about others to avoid being influenced by evil inclinations (Rishpei Aish, Mishpotim 44). Commentary emphasizes the requirement of two witnesses for testimony in legal matters (Sanhedrin, Deuteronomy 19:15). Halakhah prohibits rendering decisions based on single witness testimony in various cases (Deuteronomy 19:15). Maimonides notes exceptions to the two-witness rule, emphasizing unity and compassion in Jewish law (Yevamot 87b). Midrash highlights the importance of witnesses in establishing truth and justice in legal proceedings. Mishnah discusses scenarios where one witness’s testimony may be sufficient in certain cases. Musar stresses the importance of not being a vain witness and not seeking vengeance for revealed sins. Quoting various commentaries on the significance of multiple witnesses in legal matters. Talmud explores interpretations and implications of the two-witness requirement in various legal contexts. Tanakh states that multiple witnesses are needed to warrant a death sentence for murder (Numbers 35:30). Targum Jonathan emphasizes the need for two or three witnesses to establish a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15).

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| כִּֽי־יָק֥וּם עֵד־חָמָ֖ס בְּאִ֑ישׁ לַעֲנ֥וֹת בּ֖וֹ סָרָֽה׃ | 16 | If someone appears against another party to testify maliciously and gives incriminating yet false testimony, |

False witnesses can be identified when their testimony is discredited by other witnesses proving their absence at the crime scene, as crucial in preventing miscarriages of justice. Sinners, including thieves and violent individuals, are disqualified from being witnesses based on biblical verses and Rabbinic decree. A husband can divorce his wife with a written document to prevent false claims, as stated in Deuteronomy 24:1. Pursuit of wisdom, property, and Torah is emphasized in Midrash texts, warning against robbery and highlighting the importance of righteous actions. Women are not allowed to testify in court according to Talmud, and witnesses must stand while testifying. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan comment on false witnesses in Deuteronomy 19:16.

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| וְעָמְד֧וּ שְׁנֵֽי־הָאֲנָשִׁ֛ים אֲשֶׁר־לָהֶ֥ם הָרִ֖יב לִפְנֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֑ה לִפְנֵ֤י הַכֹּֽהֲנִים֙ וְהַשֹּׁ֣פְטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִהְי֖וּ בַּיָּמִ֥ים הָהֵֽם׃ | 17 | the two parties to the dispute shall appear before יהוה, before the priests or magistrates in authority at the time, |

The text emphasizes the importance of standing before God during testimonies, the need for witnesses and litigants to stand during legal proceedings, the privileges and exemptions of Torah sages, the prohibition of flattery towards rulers during judgment, the declaration of belief in God as creator after prayer, the mitzvah of defending the poor, and the credibility of witnesses in legal matters. The Talmud discusses the requirement for witnesses to stand while testifying, the importance of equality and respect in legal proceedings, and the need for both parties to be heard before a decision is made.

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| וְדָרְשׁ֥וּ הַשֹּׁפְטִ֖ים הֵיטֵ֑ב וְהִנֵּ֤ה עֵֽד־שֶׁ֙קֶר֙ הָעֵ֔ד שֶׁ֖קֶר עָנָ֥ה בְאָחִֽיו׃ | 18 | and the magistrates shall make a thorough investigation. If the one who testified is a false witness, having testified falsely against a fellow Israelite, |

The text explains the process of identifying false witnesses in court, where a second pair of witnesses contradicting the first pair by proving an alibi results in the first pair being considered false witnesses and subject to the same punishment intended for the accused. The Torah requires evidence that the witnesses could not have witnessed the alleged crime, rather than incontrovertible proof of falsehood, to ensure accountability for deceit. The importance of speaking the truth as a commandment from God is emphasized, with references to various verses. In Mishnah Makkot, witnesses are only considered conspiring witnesses if impeached by another set of witnesses, not just their testimony, and diligent inquiry is required in cases of plotting witnesses to determine the truth.

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| וַעֲשִׂ֣יתֶם ל֔וֹ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר זָמַ֖ם לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת לְאָחִ֑יו וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 19 | you shall do to the one as the one schemed to do to the other. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst; |

False witnesses who conspire against an innocent person are punished according to their intentions, with the punishment being equal to the crime they sought to inflict, whether it be death, stripes, or payment of money (Halakhah, Mishnah, Jewish Thought). The Torah decrees that conspiring witnesses must be punished, either through lashes or financial restitution, and they are not executed if the accused has already been put to death based on their false testimony (Guides, Talmud). The punishment for plotting witnesses is seen as a divine decree, with the judges relying on the Holy Spirit to ensure justice is served (Commentary).

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| וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִ֖ים יִשְׁמְע֣וּ וְיִרָ֑אוּ וְלֹֽא־יֹסִ֨פוּ לַעֲשׂ֜וֹת ע֗וֹד כַּדָּבָ֥ר הָרָ֛ע הַזֶּ֖ה בְּקִרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 20 | others will hear and be afraid, and such evil things will not again be done in your midst. |

The law requires a public announcement for lying witnesses, as stated in Deuteronomy 19:20, to warn qualified witnesses and deter others from committing similar crimes. The punishment of false witnesses serves as a deterrent and reminder for the community to act with care when submitting testimony. The radiance of specific lights in the Sefirot chain down from Keter to Malchut, showing how attributes like judgment ultimately stem from kindness and serve to deter sin. The execution of the stubborn and rebellious son in Deuteronomy 21:18 serves as a deterrent and benefit to others, similar to other cases like rebellious elders and plotting witnesses. The Talmud discusses the need for a proclamation to inform the public about condemned transgressors, emphasizing the warning against continuing sinful conduct. The Targum states that witnessing punishment for evil deeds will deter others from committing similar acts.

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| וְלֹ֥א תָח֖וֹס עֵינֶ֑ךָ נֶ֣פֶשׁ בְּנֶ֗פֶשׁ עַ֤יִן בְּעַ֙יִן֙ שֵׁ֣ן בְּשֵׁ֔ן יָ֥ד בְּיָ֖ד רֶ֥גֶל בְּרָֽגֶל׃ | 21 | Nor must you show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 19:15-21 explain the concept of “eye for eye” as referring to monetary compensation, warn against showing pity to false witnesses, emphasize the need for justice to be served, and link the phrase to retribution. The Babylonian Talmud discusses the importance of multiple witnesses in establishing guilt and the consequences for false witnesses. Mishneh Torah prohibits showing pity in judgments concerning fines, while Sefer HaChinukh emphasizes not showing pity to those who intentionally harm others. R. Yehudah interprets “you shall have no pity” as indicating monetary compensation, and the Mishnah states that conspiring witnesses are executed only after the accused’s verdict is concluded. The Targum emphasizes that justice should be served without compassion, with punishments equivalent to the harm caused.

## Deuteronomy 20

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| כִּֽי־תֵצֵ֨א לַמִּלְחָמָ֜ה עַל־אֹיְבֶ֗ךָ וְֽרָאִ֜יתָ ס֤וּס וָרֶ֙כֶב֙ עַ֚ם רַ֣ב מִמְּךָ֔ לֹ֥א תִירָ֖א מֵהֶ֑ם כִּֽי־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ עִמָּ֔ךְ הַמַּֽעַלְךָ֖ מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם׃ | 1 | When you [an Israelite warrior] take the field against your enemies, and see horses and chariots—forces larger than yours—have no fear of them, for your God יהוה, who brought you from the land of Egypt, is with you. |

Chasidut discusses the symbolism of war horses and chariots in facing enemies, emphasizing the need to rely on God’s help in battle. The Guides mention the encouragement to not fear enemies in battle and exemptions from fighting for certain individuals. The Midrash highlights the importance of relying on God in times of war and executing justice before battle. The Mishnah discusses cases where women are permitted to their yevamin but forbidden to their husbands. Musar emphasizes the pursuit of peace even with foes and trust in God during challenges. Quoting Commentary explains the use of trumpets in obligatory wars and the perception of enemies as insignificant. Second Temple texts discuss the symbolism of enemies in war representing unruly thoughts. The Talmud discusses the requirements for an unintentional murderer to remain in a city of refuge until the death of the High Priest. Targum emphasizes the need to not fear when facing a stronger enemy in battle.

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| וְהָיָ֕ה כְּקָֽרׇבְכֶ֖ם אֶל־הַמִּלְחָמָ֑ה וְנִגַּ֥שׁ הַכֹּהֵ֖ן וְדִבֶּ֥ר אֶל־הָעָֽם׃ | 2 | Before you join battle, the priest shall come forward and address the troops. |

The priest anointed for war speaks to the people in Hebrew before battle, reciting verses and words of encouragement, instilling confidence and divine support in the soldiers while emphasizing spiritual preparedness over military strategy. The priest’s role is crucial in preparing the army for battle, ensuring their readiness and commitment to the cause, as seen in various biblical examples and Mishnah regulations.

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| וְאָמַ֤ר אֲלֵהֶם֙ שְׁמַ֣ע יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אַתֶּ֨ם קְרֵבִ֥ים הַיּ֛וֹם לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה עַל־אֹיְבֵיכֶ֑ם אַל־יֵרַ֣ךְ לְבַבְכֶ֗ם אַל־תִּֽירְא֧וּ וְאַֽל־תַּחְפְּז֛וּ וְאַל־תַּֽעַרְצ֖וּ מִפְּנֵיהֶֽם׃ | 3 | He shall say to them, “Hear, O Israel! You are about to join battle with your enemy. Let not your courage falter. Do not be in fear, or in panic, or in dread of them. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of recognizing Hashem’s Oneness and having faith in Him before battle, with even reciting “Shema Yisrael” being enough merit to save us. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and others stresses the significance of not fearing or panicking during warfare, while Halakhah mandates soldiers not to be afraid or run away from enemies. The priest anointed for war in the Talmud warns against fighting against brothers and reassures the people that God will be with them in battle, emphasizing the use of Hebrew language for conveying seriousness and holiness. Tanakh recounts the treatment of captives in battle, while Targum emphasizes the importance of not being faint-hearted or panicked when facing enemies.

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| כִּ֚י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹֽהֵיכֶ֔ם הַהֹלֵ֖ךְ עִמָּכֶ֑ם לְהִלָּחֵ֥ם לָכֶ֛ם עִם־אֹיְבֵיכֶ֖ם לְהוֹשִׁ֥יעַ אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 4 | For it is your God יהוה who marches with you to do battle for you against your enemy, to bring you victory.” |

Various commentaries, halakhic guidelines, liturgical prayers, Midrashic teachings, Mishnaic laws, Talmudic discussions, Targum interpretations, and Tosefta readings emphasize the importance of relying on God’s strength in battle, with the presence of the sacred ark symbolizing divine protection and victory. Specific guidelines are given for exemptions from combat, encouraging soldiers not to be afraid, and reciting verses to inspire courage before engaging in war. The text also highlights the significance of the priest anointed for war, the role of Phinehas as the chaplain of the army, and the ultimate salvation and victory provided by God in battle.

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| וְדִבְּר֣וּ הַשֹּֽׁטְרִים֮ אֶל־הָעָ֣ם לֵאמֹר֒ מִֽי־הָאִ֞ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֨ר בָּנָ֤ה בַֽיִת־חָדָשׁ֙ וְלֹ֣א חֲנָכ֔וֹ יֵלֵ֖ךְ וְיָשֹׁ֣ב לְבֵית֑וֹ פֶּן־יָמוּת֙ בַּמִּלְחָמָ֔ה וְאִ֥ישׁ אַחֵ֖ר יַחְנְכֶֽנּוּ׃ | 5 | Then the officials shall address the troops, as follows: “Is there anyone who has built a new house but has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another dedicate it. |

Chasidut explains the concept of Chinukh as introducing someone to a particular occupation, not applicable in all contexts of beginning, as seen in biblical verses and examples from the Gemara and Sanhedrin. The Torah exempts soldiers who have built new houses but not yet lived in them from battle to prevent distractions and maintain morale, with priests anointed for war addressing the nation and releasing men from combat under certain circumstances. The text discusses the commandment to anoint a priest for war, the order of priorities for sensible men in establishing occupation, marriage, and housing, and the distinctions between milhemet mizvah and milhemet reshut in Jewish law. The Torah emphasizes the importance of building a house, planting a vineyard, and marrying a wife in that order, with exemptions and rules applying to different scenarios, and discussions on invoking a specific name of G-d to counteract fears when traveling. The Talmud delves into the rules regarding who should speak to the people before battle, exemptions related to owning a house, and the obligations and exemptions based on the size and type of house. The Tosefta discusses instances where a priest speaks to soldiers at the border and regarding war regulations, with exemptions for soldiers who have built new houses but not yet inaugurated them, adding that new additions to the house also warrant returning home.

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| וּמִֽי־הָאִ֞ישׁ אֲשֶׁר־נָטַ֥ע כֶּ֙רֶם֙ וְלֹ֣א חִלְּל֔וֹ יֵלֵ֖ךְ וְיָשֹׁ֣ב לְבֵית֑וֹ פֶּן־יָמוּת֙ בַּמִּלְחָמָ֔ה וְאִ֥ישׁ אַחֵ֖ר יְחַלְּלֶֽנּוּ׃ | 6 | Is there anyone who has planted a vineyard but has never harvested it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another harvest it. |

Various commentators interpret the requirement to not eat the fruit of a vineyard until the fourth year after planting differently, with some focusing on the redemption of the fruit, the celebration of the harvest, or the owner’s enjoyment. Mishneh Torah advises establishing an occupation, purchasing a house, and marrying a wife in that order, while the Talmud emphasizes building a house, planting a vineyard, and marrying a wife. Exemptions from battle are discussed based on planting vineyards or orchards, with specific guidelines on behavior and duties for soldiers. The Tosefta clarifies that someone who plants a vineyard or five fruit trees can return home without deconsecrating them, with differing opinions on the application of the verse.

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| וּמִֽי־הָאִ֞ישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אֵרַ֤שׂ אִשָּׁה֙ וְלֹ֣א לְקָחָ֔הּ יֵלֵ֖ךְ וְיָשֹׁ֣ב לְבֵית֑וֹ פֶּן־יָמוּת֙ בַּמִּלְחָמָ֔ה וְאִ֥ישׁ אַחֵ֖ר יִקָּחֶֽנָּה׃ | 7 | Is there anyone who has paid the bride-price for a wife, but who has not yet taken her [into his household]? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another take her [into his household as his wife].” |

The Torah exempts a man betrothed but not married from going to war as his time to die has not come, with disagreement on the interpretation of terms; preparation for marriage includes learning a trade and following a specific order outlined in the Torah; the text emphasizes the concept of free will, maturity before marriage, and God’s incomprehensible knowledge; the officers were instructed to allow those who built a house, planted a vineyard, or betrothed a wife to return home before battle, with specific exemptions and consequences discussed in various texts.

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| וְיָסְפ֣וּ הַשֹּׁטְרִים֮ לְדַבֵּ֣ר אֶל־הָעָם֒ וְאָמְר֗וּ מִי־הָאִ֤ישׁ הַיָּרֵא֙ וְרַ֣ךְ הַלֵּבָ֔ב יֵלֵ֖ךְ וְיָשֹׁ֣ב לְבֵית֑וֹ וְלֹ֥א יִמַּ֛ס אֶת־לְבַ֥ב אֶחָ֖יו כִּלְבָבֽוֹ׃ | 8 | The officials shall go on addressing the troops and say, “Is there anyone afraid and disheartened? Let him go back to his home, lest the courage of his comrades flag like his.” |

Chasidut highlights the impact of fear due to sins on one’s ability to go to battle, contrasting forgiveness and true repentance. The commentary on Deuteronomy 20:8 discusses the reasons for exemption from battle, including concerns about personal matters like building a house or betrothing a wife. Halakhah details the procedures for preparing for war and emphasizes the importance of not showing fear in battle. Jewish Thought delves into the moral implications of various biblical stories, emphasizing the importance of protecting the weak and following God’s teachings. The Talmud and Mishnah discuss the roles of priests and officers in addressing the army before battle and the criteria for returning from battle, including fearfulness and sins. Tanakh recounts Gideon’s reduction of troops based on fear and timidity, while Targum and Tosefta discuss the conditions under which soldiers are exempt from battle, including fear of sin and personal circumstances.

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| וְהָיָ֛ה כְּכַלֹּ֥ת הַשֹּׁטְרִ֖ים לְדַבֵּ֣ר אֶל־הָעָ֑ם וּפָ֥קְד֛וּ שָׂרֵ֥י צְבָא֖וֹת בְּרֹ֥אשׁ הָעָֽם׃ | 9 | When the officials have finished addressing the troops, army commanders shall assume command of the troops. |

The Torah commands the appointment of captains of hosts to lead the troops in battle, with guards to prevent desertion and ensure focus, highlighting the importance of leaders and preparation for G-d’s intervention. In times of mandatory war, all must go out to battle, even newlyweds, with exemptions for elective wars. The Mishnah discusses the appointment of captains of legions and guards to prevent fleeing, with specific rules and procedures outlined for military orders during times of war. The Talmud addresses rituals and declarations to be said in the holy language, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling obligations, even for newlyweds. After officers speak to the people, army commanders are appointed to lead the troops.

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| כִּֽי־תִקְרַ֣ב אֶל־עִ֔יר לְהִלָּחֵ֖ם עָלֶ֑יהָ וְקָרָ֥אתָ אֵלֶ֖יהָ לְשָׁלֽוֹם׃ | 10 | When you approach a town to attack it, you shall offer it terms of peace. |

The text discusses the requirement to offer peace before waging war on a city, even in the case of the seven nations of Canaan, with terms of tribute and service, while highlighting the distinction between permissible and obligatory wars. The Torah allows for voluntary wars under prescribed laws, with peace terms required before waging war, except with Ammon and Moav. The importance of seeking peace even in times of war is emphasized in various Jewish commentaries, highlighting the power and significance of peace in Jewish tradition. Ramban, Gur Aryeh, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Or HaChaim, and Chizkuni provide insights into the laws of war and the exceptions to offering peace before battle. R. Jose the Galilean and Talmud emphasize the importance of peace, even in times of conflict, and Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 20:10 as instructing to offer peace before engaging in battle.

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| וְהָיָה֙ אִם־שָׁל֣וֹם תַּֽעַנְךָ֔ וּפָתְחָ֖ה לָ֑ךְ וְהָיָ֞ה כׇּל־הָעָ֣ם הַנִּמְצָא־בָ֗הּ יִהְי֥וּ לְךָ֛ לָמַ֖ס וַעֲבָדֽוּךָ׃ | 11 | If it responds peaceably and lets you in, all the people present there shall serve you at forced labor. |

Ramban explains that surrendering nations must accept tribute and servitude, as seen in the Gibeonite incident. The king is entitled to propose settlements, and war should only be waged after offering peace. During wartime, values become perverted, emphasizing the need for peace. Moses made three requests to God, which were all granted. Tosafot discusses the sanctity of God’s name in upholding vows, using the Gibeonites as an example. If a city responds with peace, its people will become tribute payers and servants.

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| וְאִם־לֹ֤א תַשְׁלִים֙ עִמָּ֔ךְ וְעָשְׂתָ֥ה עִמְּךָ֖ מִלְחָמָ֑ה וְצַרְתָּ֖ עָלֶֽיהָ׃ | 12 | If it does not surrender to you, but would join battle with you, you shall lay siege to it; |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Siftei Chakhamim, and Steinsaltz agree that if a nation refuses peace and goes to war, besieging it is justified. Positive Commandment 190:1 from Sefer HaMitzvot details the rules for optional wars against other nations, including the treatment of those who refuse peace. The Torah emphasizes ethical conduct in warfare, addressing impurity, treatment of prisoners, and prohibitions against certain actions. Rabbi Levi highlights instances where God agreed with Moses, including offering peace to a town. Peace is considered a high quality in Musar, with examples from Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, his brothers, and David and Saul. Ibn Ezra interprets specific phrases in Isaiah to emphasize the importance of peace. In Zechariah 9:10, it is prophesied that the ruler will bring peace and banish weapons. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan agree that a city that refuses peace should be besieged.

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| וּנְתָנָ֛הּ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ בְּיָדֶ֑ךָ וְהִכִּיתָ֥ אֶת־כׇּל־זְכוּרָ֖הּ לְפִי־חָֽרֶב׃ | 13 | and when your God יהוה delivers it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. |

Rashi explains that following prescribed actions will lead to victory, while Steinsaltz clarifies that killing male inhabitants is permitted as they are considered enemies. The text warns against adding or subtracting from commandments and states that a prophet may not innovate new commandments. The Jerusalem Talmud discusses the punishment for sorcery, with different rabbis arguing for stoning or beheading based on interpretations of verses. In Deuteronomy 20:13, both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that God will deliver the enemy into the hands of the Israelites, who are instructed to kill all the males with the sword.

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| רַ֣ק הַ֠נָּשִׁ֠ים וְהַטַּ֨ף וְהַבְּהֵמָ֜ה וְכֹל֩ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִהְיֶ֥ה בָעִ֛יר כׇּל־שְׁלָלָ֖הּ תָּבֹ֣ז לָ֑ךְ וְאָֽכַלְתָּ֙ אֶת־שְׁלַ֣ל אֹיְבֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֛ן יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לָֽךְ׃ | 14 | You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, the livestock, and everything in the town—all its spoil—and enjoy the use of the spoil of your enemy, which your God יהוה gives you. |

Rashi clarifies that “the little ones” refers to male children, while Steinsaltz explains that women and children can be taken as plunder in war. Halakhah dictates that in war, all males past majority should be killed, but women and children should not be harmed unless the seven nations or Amalek refuse a peaceful settlement. The Midrash discusses the selection of Israel for the Torah, the conquest of Jericho, and the punishment of Achan. Various commentators, such as Sforno and Rambam, discuss the consumption of enemies’ possessions in war and the purification of captured loot. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that in conquest, Israelites are allowed to take women, children, and spoils as plunder.

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| כֵּ֤ן תַּעֲשֶׂה֙ לְכׇל־הֶ֣עָרִ֔ים הָרְחֹקֹ֥ת מִמְּךָ֖ מְאֹ֑ד אֲשֶׁ֛ר לֹא־מֵעָרֵ֥י הַגּֽוֹיִם־הָאֵ֖לֶּה הֵֽנָּה׃ | 15 | Thus you shall deal with all towns that lie very far from you, towns that do not belong to nations hereabout. |

Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz explain that those “very far off” are not part of the seven nations and are distant from the Land of Israel. Halakhah dictates that war should be waged against nations that refuse peaceful settlements or the seven mitzvot, sparing women and children in some cases but not for the seven nations or Amalek. In the Midrash, Joshua allowed nations to leave, make peace, or wage war, resulting in different outcomes. Ramban states that peace must be offered before war in both permissible and obligatory wars, with different terms for distant cities and the seven nations. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan agree that the same treatment should be applied to all cities far away and not part of the seven nations.

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| רַ֗ק מֵעָרֵ֤י הָֽעַמִּים֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָ֑ה לֹ֥א תְחַיֶּ֖ה כׇּל־נְשָׁמָֽה׃ | 16 | In the towns of the latter peoples, however, which your God יהוה is giving you as a heritage, you shall not let a soul remain alive. |

In Chasidut, Rashi interprets the eruptive plague on a house in Leviticus as a sign of buried treasures being revealed, symbolizing the elevation of fallen sparks to serve the Creator. In Commentary, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Rav Hirsch, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni provide different perspectives on the treatment of the Canaanite nations, with varying opinions on peace, expulsion, and exceptions to the commandment to kill all people from these nations. Halakhah outlines the commandment to annihilate all members of the seven Canaanite nations, emphasizing the positive and negative aspects of this commandment. In Jewish Thought, idolatry, the commandment of karet, and the annihilation of the seven nations are discussed as ways to remove obstacles to the knowledge of God. In Musar, the connection between exterminating the Canaanite nations and the sanctity of the Holy Land is highlighted, with a focus on spiritual symbolism and the balance of negative forces. Lastly, the Talmud presents various opinions on the treatment of Canaanites, witches, and executions, while Tanakh and Targum provide scriptural references emphasizing the importance of obedience to God’s commands regarding the Canaanites.

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| כִּֽי־הַחֲרֵ֣ם תַּחֲרִימֵ֗ם הַחִתִּ֤י וְהָאֱמֹרִי֙ הַכְּנַעֲנִ֣י וְהַפְּרִזִּ֔י הַחִוִּ֖י וְהַיְבוּסִ֑י כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוְּךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 17 | No, you must proscribe them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—as your God יהוה has commanded you, |

The command to destroy the nations in Canaan, including the Girgashites, is for the security of the Israelites and allows them to keep the belongings of the conquered nations. The obligation to wage war, even at the risk of life, cannot be set aside, emphasizing the importance of peace and mercy. Various commentaries discuss the legal status of certain nations and the call for peace in both permissible and obligatory wars. In the Talmud, the Gibeonites were excluded from the Jewish marriage pool, and idols captured in wars could become permitted over time. Leviticus 27:29 states that anyone dedicated for destruction cannot be redeemed. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan command the complete destruction of the nations in Canaan, while Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon have differing views on where the Torah was written.

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| לְמַ֗עַן אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹֽא־יְלַמְּד֤וּ אֶתְכֶם֙ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת כְּכֹל֙ תּֽוֹעֲבֹתָ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשׂ֖וּ לֵאלֹֽהֵיהֶ֑ם וַחֲטָאתֶ֖ם לַיהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 18 | lest they lead you into doing all the abhorrent things that they have done for their gods and you stand guilty before your God יהוה. |

The commentaries on Deuteronomy 20:18 warn against allowing former inhabitants to remain in the land to prevent them from leading the Israelites to sin. The importance of following Torah commandments, such as consecrating firstborns and not dwelling with certain nations, is emphasized, with consequences for not doing so. The Talmud discusses the destruction of gentiles in Eretz Yisrael unless they repented, while the Targum warns against idol worship. Rabbi Shimon believes the Torah was written for gentiles to understand the consequences of not repenting.

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| כִּֽי־תָצ֣וּר אֶל־עִיר֩ יָמִ֨ים רַבִּ֜ים לְֽהִלָּחֵ֧ם עָלֶ֣יהָ לְתׇפְשָׂ֗הּ לֹֽא־תַשְׁחִ֤ית אֶת־עֵצָהּ֙ לִנְדֹּ֤חַ עָלָיו֙ גַּרְזֶ֔ן כִּ֚י מִמֶּ֣נּוּ תֹאכֵ֔ל וְאֹת֖וֹ לֹ֣א תִכְרֹ֑ת כִּ֤י הָֽאָדָם֙ עֵ֣ץ הַשָּׂדֶ֔ה לָבֹ֥א מִפָּנֶ֖יךָ בַּמָּצֽוֹר׃ | 19 | When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? |

Chasidut emphasizes the significance of the month of Elul for rectifying the covenant and finding a wife, while Tu BiShevat symbolizes the connection between upper and lower realms. Halakhah prohibits wanton destruction, including cutting down fruit trees, and extends to other forms of destruction. Kabbalah discusses the connection between Talmidei Chachamim and the Tree of Life, while Midrash highlights the importance of not destroying trees during war. Musar emphasizes the ongoing battle against the evil urge and the importance of repentance, prayer, and charity. The Talmud discusses scenarios where actions like tearing clothes or cutting down trees may violate the prohibition against destruction, while Targum emphasizes the value of trees as a source of sustenance.

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| רַ֞ק עֵ֣ץ אֲשֶׁר־תֵּדַ֗ע כִּֽי־לֹא־עֵ֤ץ מַאֲכָל֙ ה֔וּא אֹת֥וֹ תַשְׁחִ֖ית וְכָרָ֑תָּ וּבָנִ֣יתָ מָצ֗וֹר עַל־הָעִיר֙ אֲשֶׁר־הִ֨וא עֹשָׂ֧ה עִמְּךָ֛ מִלְחָמָ֖ה עַ֥ד רִדְתָּֽהּ׃ | 20 | Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced. |

The text discusses the rules of war, including the permission to destroy non-fruit-bearing trees during a siege, the importance of protecting fruit trees, and the adaptation of Jewish law to changing circumstances. It also addresses specific scenarios, such as the treatment of women in sieged cities and the significance of avoiding slander and being mindful of food consumption. The prohibition against cutting down fruit trees during a siege is seen as a temporary suspension of Torah law in cases of great need.

## Deuteronomy 21

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| כִּי־יִמָּצֵ֣א חָלָ֗ל בָּאֲדָמָה֙ אֲשֶׁר֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ נֹתֵ֤ן לְךָ֙ לְרִשְׁתָּ֔הּ נֹפֵ֖ל בַּשָּׂדֶ֑ה לֹ֥א נוֹדַ֖ע מִ֥י הִכָּֽהוּ׃ | 1 | If, in the land that your God יהוה is assigning you to possess, someone slain is found lying in the open, the identity of the slayer not being known, |

Chasidut likens desecration of Shabbat to loss of one’s first wife, resulting in consequences [Likutei Moharan 277:4:2]. Commentary emphasizes justice and public accountability in murder cases, detailing the investigation process and ritual significance. Halakhah allows for one witness testimony in certain cases and uses circumstantial evidence for justice. Mishnah specifies conditions for rituals, including heifer’s neck breaking. Talmud discusses procedures for unsolved murders and exclusion of Jerusalem from ritual participation.

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| וְיָצְא֥וּ זְקֵנֶ֖יךָ וְשֹׁפְטֶ֑יךָ וּמָדְדוּ֙ אֶל־הֶ֣עָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֖ר סְבִיבֹ֥ת הֶחָלָֽל׃ | 2 | your elders and magistrates shall go out and measure the distances from the corpse to the nearby towns. |

In cases of unsolved murder, the elders of the High Court in Jerusalem must measure the distance to nearby cities to identify the closest one, with specific rituals prescribed by the Torah. The Mishnah and Talmud discuss the number of judges required for legal proceedings, the qualifications needed for judges, and the significance of their actions. Targum Jonathan and Onkelos mention that elders and judges are involved in measuring distances from a corpse to surrounding cities, while Tosefta highlights the seriousness of bloodshed and impurity in the Temple.

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| וְהָיָ֣ה הָעִ֔יר הַקְּרֹבָ֖ה אֶל־הֶחָלָ֑ל וְלָֽקְח֡וּ זִקְנֵי֩ הָעִ֨יר הַהִ֜וא עֶגְלַ֣ת בָּקָ֗ר אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־עֻבַּד֙ בָּ֔הּ אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־מָשְׁכָ֖ה בְּעֹֽל׃ | 3 | The elders of the town nearest to the corpse shall then take a heifer which has never been worked, which has never pulled in a yoke; |

The red heifer used in the ritual must be free of physical blemishes and have never performed any work, including carrying a yoke, with the elders of the closest city responsible for selecting a calf that meets these criteria. The law of restoring lost property and breaking the neck of a heifer serve to uncover murderers and prevent cultivation until the culprit is found, promoting mutual respect and justice. The Mishnah clarifies specific procedures and exceptions for the red heifer ritual, while the Talmud discusses disqualifications for the animals based on labor and yoke-bearing, as well as the city selection process.

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| וְהוֹרִ֡דוּ זִקְנֵי֩ הָעִ֨יר הַהִ֤וא אֶת־הָֽעֶגְלָה֙ אֶל־נַ֣חַל אֵיתָ֔ן אֲשֶׁ֛ר לֹא־יֵעָבֵ֥ד בּ֖וֹ וְלֹ֣א יִזָּרֵ֑עַ וְעָֽרְפוּ־שָׁ֥ם אֶת־הָעֶגְלָ֖ה בַּנָּֽחַל׃ | 4 | and the elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to an everflowing wadi, which is not tilled or sown. There, in the wadi, they shall break the heifer’s neck. |

Various commentaries and texts discuss the ritual of breaking the neck of a heifer in the case of an unknown murderer, with different interpretations and implications. The Mishnah details specific laws regarding offerings and rituals, including prohibitions on deriving benefit from certain items and mixing forbidden items. The Talmud delves into laws related to the heifer’s neck-breaking ceremony, Torah study, and moral lessons. In Genesis 15:9, God instructs Abraham to bring specific animals for sacrifice, while the Targum describes the process of taking the calf to a stony valley for decapitation. The Tosefta distinguishes between the red heifer and the heifer whose neck is broken in terms of validity for sacrifice.

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| וְנִגְּשׁ֣וּ הַכֹּהֲנִים֮ בְּנֵ֣י לֵוִי֒ כִּ֣י בָ֗ם בָּחַ֞ר יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ לְשָׁ֣רְת֔וֹ וּלְבָרֵ֖ךְ בְּשֵׁ֣ם יְהֹוָ֑ה וְעַל־פִּיהֶ֥ם יִהְיֶ֖ה כׇּל־רִ֥יב וְכׇל־נָֽגַע׃ | 5 | The priests, sons of Levi, shall come forward; for your God יהוה has chosen them for divine service and to pronounce blessing in the name of יהוה, and every lawsuit and case of assault is subject to their ruling. |

The involvement of priests, specifically the sons of Levi, is crucial in cases of innocent bloodshed, as they are responsible for performing rituals for atonement and blessing, investigating murders, and pronouncing rulings on matters of purity and disputes. Priests must rely on sages to declare individuals pure or impure based on blemishes, with specific laws prohibiting certain attire and grooming practices. The Talmud employs the “hekesh” analogy method to interpret texts, emphasizing the importance of appointing judges and officers for fair judgment. Kabbalistic teachings connect oil and wine to different aspects of thought and judgment, while the Midrash highlights the role of priests in serving and pronouncing rulings. The Mishnah details the procedures for priests in purifying a city from murder, emphasizing the priestly attribute of Chesed.

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| וְכֹ֗ל זִקְנֵי֙ הָעִ֣יר הַהִ֔וא הַקְּרֹבִ֖ים אֶל־הֶחָלָ֑ל יִרְחֲצוּ֙ אֶת־יְדֵיהֶ֔ם עַל־הָעֶגְלָ֖ה הָעֲרוּפָ֥ה בַנָּֽחַל׃ | 6 | Then all the elders of the town nearest to the corpse shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi. |

In Chasidut, washing in the Holy Temple symbolizes removing personal motives and aligning actions with God’s will, as seen in the washing of the Cohanim. The elders of the city wash their hands to show innocence in Deuteronomy 21:6. The requirement for elders to wash their hands before a ritual sacrifice applies to all elders in the city, even if there are a hundred of them. In Mishnah Sotah 9:6, the Elders wash their hands and declare innocence in the case of a murdered victim. Joseph informed his brothers of religious subjects by mentioning the Heifer with the broken neck. Second Temple laws emphasized acts of kindness and care for others. The Talmud discusses specific verses related to the heifer whose neck is broken and the removal of ashes. In Targum, the elders wash their hands over the beheaded calf. Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Yosei clarify the types of animals used for atonement in Tosefta.

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| וְעָנ֖וּ וְאָמְר֑וּ יָדֵ֗ינוּ לֹ֤א אֶת־הַדָּ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה וְעֵינֵ֖ינוּ לֹ֥א רָאֽוּ׃ | 7 | And they shall make this declaration: “Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done. |

The elders and priests declare their innocence in the murder case, emphasizing their fulfillment of duties as hosts to any passing guests. The rituals surrounding the murder case underscore the importance of providing for guests and ensuring their safety. The Talmud teaches the sequence of building a house, planting a vineyard, and getting married, along with the actions of the elders and priests in cases of murder. The Akeidat Yitzchak emphasizes presenting offerings thoughtfully and acknowledging God’s role in providing abundance. The Mishnah details the procedures for the elders and priests in cases of an unsolved murder, while Musar discusses confession as a positive commandment for atonement. Rabbeinu Bahya explains the significance of bringing bikkurim in a basket, and the Talmud clarifies the actions and responsibilities of the court and individuals in cases of murder. The Targums emphasize the innocence of those involved in unsolved murder cases, and the Tosefta highlights the importance of individual statements in specific situations.

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| כַּפֵּר֩ לְעַמְּךָ֨ יִשְׂרָאֵ֤ל אֲשֶׁר־פָּדִ֙יתָ֙ יְהֹוָ֔ה וְאַל־תִּתֵּן֙ דָּ֣ם נָקִ֔י בְּקֶ֖רֶב עַמְּךָ֣ יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וְנִכַּפֵּ֥ר לָהֶ֖ם הַדָּֽם׃ | 8 | Absolve, יהוה, Your people Israel whom You redeemed, and do not let guilt for the blood of the innocent remain among Your people Israel.” And they will be absolved of bloodguilt. |

Chasidut discusses the concept of transgression and the need for God’s salvation, highlighting the importance of relying on God for rectification. In Deuteronomy 21:8, various commentaries emphasize atonement for shedding blood, forgiveness after specific ceremonies, and divine judgment bringing about atonement. Halakhah details the decapitation of a calf for atonement, requirements for forgiveness, and the Yizkor memorial service. Midrash explores Abraham’s inheritance of the land through atonement offerings, while Mishnah prescribes rituals for unsolved murder cases. Quoting Commentary connects the heifer ritual to sacrificial practices for atonement. Talmud discusses the prohibition of benefiting from the heifer and confession rituals during the ceremony. Targum highlights the kohanim asking for forgiveness and atonement through the heifer’s blood. Tosefta emphasizes the importance of individual statements in various contexts.

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| וְאַתָּ֗ה תְּבַעֵ֛ר הַדָּ֥ם הַנָּקִ֖י מִקִּרְבֶּ֑ךָ כִּֽי־תַעֲשֶׂ֥ה הַיָּשָׁ֖ר בְּעֵינֵ֥י יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 9 | Thus you will remove from your midst guilt for the blood of the innocent, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of יהוה. |

The text emphasizes the importance of proper judicial action to remove guilt for innocent blood, highlighting the necessity of punishing the guilty party rather than relying on divine intervention. It stresses the significance of doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord to prevent further shedding of innocent blood and promote peace. The mitzvah of eglah arufah symbolizes the community’s responsibility for each other and the prevention of unjust punishment, while various texts from the Talmud discuss the prohibition of certain items and actions, such as the heifer whose neck is broken in a murder ritual. The Mishneh Torah discusses the obligation to follow the middle path in character traits, emulating God’s good and just ways, and the appointment of a king is seen as a means of expedited administration during emergencies, allowing for the right to ignore certain Biblical laws.

# **49**: כי תצא|Ki Teitzei (Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19)

## Deuteronomy 21

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| כִּֽי־תֵצֵ֥א לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה עַל־אֹיְבֶ֑יךָ וּנְתָנ֞וֹ יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ בְּיָדֶ֖ךָ וְשָׁבִ֥יתָ שִׁבְיֽוֹ׃ | 10 | When you [an Israelite warrior] take the field against your enemies, and your God יהוה delivers them into your power and you take some of them captive, |

In Chasidut, various texts emphasize the battle against the evil inclination, with different approaches to overcoming it. In Commentary, different commentators provide insights on the laws and limitations of war, particularly outside the borders of Israel. Jewish Thought explores various topics related to Jewish law and tradition, including marriage of captive women and wars of aggression. Midrash discusses the consequences of sin, the importance of good deeds, and the treatment of foes. In Musar, spiritual rehabilitation is achieved through repentance, prayer, and charity, with Torah study and mitzvah observance essential for victory. Quoting Commentary, Pharaoh’s intentions towards Sarah are analyzed based on biblical text. In Talmud, the obligation to destroy non-Canaanite gentiles is discussed, with room for repentance and acceptance in Eretz Yisrael. Targum elaborates on the scenario of war and taking prisoners as delivered by God.

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| וְרָאִ֙יתָ֙ בַּשִּׁבְיָ֔ה אֵ֖שֶׁת יְפַת־תֹּ֑אַר וְחָשַׁקְתָּ֣ בָ֔הּ וְלָקַחְתָּ֥ לְךָ֖ לְאִשָּֽׁה׃ | 11 | and you see among the captives a beautiful woman and you desire her and would take her [into your household] as your wife, |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of recognizing and reclaiming holiness taken by the evil inclination, leading to deeper repentance and repair of past transgressions. Halakhah details the procedure for a yefat to’ar, a beautiful captive woman, including a mourning period before marriage and waiting 90 days before marrying her captor. Jewish Thought discusses the events surrounding the Midianites and the victory over them. Liturgy highlights the complexity and mystery of divine laws, showcasing how what is forbidden can become permitted. Midrash explains God’s permission of certain alternatives to forbidden things and the consequences of transgression. Musar discusses the subjugation and rehabilitation of Lilith and Machalat through harsh measures and conveying knowledge about God’s goodness. Talmud debates whether the first act of intercourse with a captive woman is permitted, with Rav and Shmuel disagreeing on the matter. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 21:11 allows a man to take a beautiful woman among prisoners of war as his wife if he desires her.

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| וַהֲבֵאתָ֖הּ אֶל־תּ֣וֹךְ בֵּיתֶ֑ךָ וְגִלְּחָה֙ אֶת־רֹאשָׁ֔הּ וְעָשְׂתָ֖ה אֶת־צִפׇּרְנֶֽיהָ׃ | 12 | you shall bring her into your household, and she shall trim her hair, pare her nails, |

The text discusses the commandment to remove external appearances of beauty to reveal inner goodness, regulations regarding a captive woman to eliminate previous influences, relations with a yefat toar only permitted in captivity, importance of showing regard to all creatures, and the interconnectedness of good deeds and transgressions in the Torah. Rashi explains the significance of letting nails grow in Deuteronomy 21:12, and Targum translations of shaving the head and growing nails in Deuteronomy 21:12 are discussed. Rav and Shmuel have differing opinions on the first act of intercourse with a female convert, and there is a debate between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva on the meaning of “do her nails” in relation to a beautiful female prisoner of war.

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| וְהֵסִ֩ירָה֩ אֶת־שִׂמְלַ֨ת שִׁבְיָ֜הּ מֵעָלֶ֗יהָ וְיָֽשְׁבָה֙ בְּבֵיתֶ֔ךָ וּבָ֥כְתָ֛ה אֶת־אָבִ֥יהָ וְאֶת־אִמָּ֖הּ יֶ֣רַח יָמִ֑ים וְאַ֨חַר כֵּ֜ן תָּב֤וֹא אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙ וּבְעַלְתָּ֔הּ וְהָיְתָ֥ה לְךָ֖ לְאִשָּֽׁה׃ | 13 | and discard her captive’s garb. She shall spend a month’s time in your household lamenting her father and mother; after that you may come to her and thus become her husband, and she shall be your wife. |

The text discusses the process outlined in Deuteronomy for a Jewish soldier who desires a beautiful captive woman, emphasizing the importance of mourning for her parents, waiting for her conversion to Judaism, and ensuring her acceptance of the faith before marriage. The Midrash teaches that the woman should be dressed in widows’ weeds to eliminate her previous beauty and connection to idolatry. Ramban and Ibn Ezra explain that the rituals of mourning, shaving her head, and paring her nails are meant to facilitate her conversion and make her less attractive to her captor. The Talmud and Tosefta provide additional details on the waiting period before marriage and the process for a woman to remarry after divorce or widowhood.

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| וְהָיָ֞ה אִם־לֹ֧א חָפַ֣צְתָּ בָּ֗הּ וְשִׁלַּחְתָּהּ֙ לְנַפְשָׁ֔הּ וּמָכֹ֥ר לֹא־תִמְכְּרֶ֖נָּה בַּכָּ֑סֶף לֹא־תִתְעַמֵּ֣ר בָּ֔הּ תַּ֖חַת אֲשֶׁ֥ר עִנִּיתָֽהּ׃ | 14 | Then, should you no longer want her, you must release her outright. You must not sell her for money: since you had your will of her, you must not enslave her. |

The text discusses the release of a captive woman in war, emphasizing that she cannot be sold or mistreated, and the captor must wait three months before marrying her. In Jewish thought, it is recommended to free a maidservant before cohabiting with her, and there are conditions to consider before taking a woman of beautiful appearance as a wife. The Midrash highlights the importance of not mistreating others, even if they were once powerful. Commandment 533 prohibits selling a prisoner of war once she becomes the soldier’s wife, as stated in Deuteronomy 21:14.

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| כִּֽי־תִהְיֶ֨יןָ לְאִ֜ישׁ שְׁתֵּ֣י נָשִׁ֗ים הָאַחַ֤ת אֲהוּבָה֙ וְהָאַחַ֣ת שְׂנוּאָ֔ה וְיָֽלְדוּ־ל֣וֹ בָנִ֔ים הָאֲהוּבָ֖ה וְהַשְּׂנוּאָ֑ה וְהָיָ֛ה הַבֵּ֥ן הַבְּכֹ֖ר לַשְּׂנִיאָֽה׃ | 15 | If a householder has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, but the first-born is the son of the unloved one— |

The Babylonian Talmud discusses the law that if a man has two wives and one is loved and the other hated, the firstborn son of the hated wife is entitled to a double portion of the inheritance, even if he is not the favorite son, based on Deuteronomy 21:15-17. The Mishnah in Bekhorot outlines that a son born by Cesarean section or the son born after him are not considered “the firstborn,” as sons must be sons from the moment of birth according to Deuteronomy 21:15. Hushai questions David’s marriage to a ‘beautiful woman’ taken captive in war in connection to rebellious offspring in Deuteronomy 21:18, emphasizing the Torah’s concession to human frailty but lack of approval for such unions. The Talmud discusses various scenarios regarding the firstborn son’s entitlement to inheritance, including cases of caesarean section births and multiple sons. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that the firstborn son will belong to the hated wife in a marriage with two wives according to Deuteronomy 21:15.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה בְּיוֹם֙ הַנְחִיל֣וֹ אֶת־בָּנָ֔יו אֵ֥ת אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶ֖ה ל֑וֹ לֹ֣א יוּכַ֗ל לְבַכֵּר֙ אֶת־בֶּן־הָ֣אֲהוּבָ֔ה עַל־פְּנֵ֥י בֶן־הַשְּׂנוּאָ֖ה הַבְּכֹֽר׃ | 16 | when he wills his property to his sons, he may not treat as first-born the son of the loved one in disregard of the son of the unloved one who is older. |

The Torah prohibits favoring a beloved son over a hated son in inheritance, with exceptions for misconduct. The firstborn inherits the bequeather, and a double portion is granted even to a mamzer. Jewish thought prioritizes equity in inheritance, with laws favoring closest relatives. The Midrash discusses Jacob recognizing Reuben as his firstborn despite his shortcomings. Mishnah highlights the importance of proper judgment in inheritance cases, while Talmud discusses the timing of court trials. Tanakh mentions Haran’s death in Ur of the Chaldeans, and Targum emphasizes equal inheritance rights for sons. Tosefta addresses specific cases affecting firstborn status for inheritance and redemption.

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| כִּי֩ אֶת־הַבְּכֹ֨ר בֶּן־הַשְּׂנוּאָ֜ה יַכִּ֗יר לָ֤תֶת לוֹ֙ פִּ֣י שְׁנַ֔יִם בְּכֹ֥ל אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵ֖א ל֑וֹ כִּי־הוּא֙ רֵאשִׁ֣ית אֹנ֔וֹ ל֖וֹ מִשְׁפַּ֥ט הַבְּכֹרָֽה׃ | 17 | Instead, he must accept the first-born, the son of the unloved one, and allot to him a double portion of all he possesses; since he is the first fruit of his vigor, the birthright is his due. |

Yaakov penalized Reuven for his sin by depriving him of the rights of the firstborn, while Yosef gained the rights by guarding the brit. The firstborn son is entitled to a double portion of the father’s inheritance based on what is held in possession at the time of his death, with specific details outlined in Halakhah. The Mishnah discusses various scenarios related to inheritance rights, including the credibility of a father claiming his son is a mamzer and the distribution of property based on biblical laws. The Talmud explores rules of inheritance for firstborn sons and the credibility of individuals in identifying a firstborn. In the Tanakh, it is stated that a man must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the rights of the firstborn.

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| כִּֽי־יִהְיֶ֣ה לְאִ֗ישׁ בֵּ֚ן סוֹרֵ֣ר וּמוֹרֶ֔ה אֵינֶ֣נּוּ שֹׁמֵ֔עַ בְּק֥וֹל אָבִ֖יו וּבְק֣וֹל אִמּ֑וֹ וְיִסְּר֣וּ אֹת֔וֹ וְלֹ֥א יִשְׁמַ֖ע אֲלֵיהֶֽם׃ | 18 | If a householder has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, |

The text discusses the execution of a stubborn and rebellious son, focusing on the father’s emotions and God’s involvement, highlighting the purpose of the law as a deterrent for future wrongdoing based on the son’s potential actions rather than current deeds. The judgment process involves bringing the son to court with witnesses testifying to theft and disobedience, leading to lashes and possible stoning, within three months of maturity. The Law aims to reduce human desires to prevent intemperance, with capital punishment reserved for serious crimes. The Torah alludes to the celestial tribunal in dealing with the wayward son, emphasizing the importance of waging war against the evil urge.

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| וְתָ֥פְשׂוּ ב֖וֹ אָבִ֣יו וְאִמּ֑וֹ וְהוֹצִ֧יאוּ אֹת֛וֹ אֶל־זִקְנֵ֥י עִיר֖וֹ וְאֶל־שַׁ֥עַר מְקֹמֽוֹ׃ | 19 | his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the public place of his community. |

The Torah allows for dealing with a rebellious son only if both parents testify against him, with forgiveness from either parent resulting in the son going free. Specific criteria must be met for the son to be considered rebellious, and if a parent is disabled, the son cannot be punished. The Talmud discusses the criteria for a rebellious son, including the involvement of elders in the process, while the Tosefta outlines the warning process before witnesses and the execution of rebellious individuals on a holiday.

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| וְאָמְר֞וּ אֶל־זִקְנֵ֣י עִיר֗וֹ בְּנֵ֤נוּ זֶה֙ סוֹרֵ֣ר וּמֹרֶ֔ה אֵינֶ֥נּוּ שֹׁמֵ֖עַ בְּקֹלֵ֑נוּ זוֹלֵ֖ל וְסֹבֵֽא׃ | 20 | They shall say to the elders of his town, “This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.” |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 21:20 discusses the characteristics of a rebellious son, such as being a glutton and a drunkard, leading to impoverishment and violence, with punishment including lashes or stoning. The Oral Tradition outlines specific conditions for a rebellious son to be liable for stoning, involving stealing, eating meat and wine ravenously, and being part of base individuals, with requirements for parental consent and physical disabilities. The Law aims to curb excessive desires, including eating and drinking, to prevent moral decay, with commandments designed to counteract lustful behavior. Mishnah details the specific amounts of meat and wine that make a son rebellious, with conditions for parental consent and physical disabilities exempting the son from punishment. The Talmud clarifies that a stubborn son must disobey his parents, not just God, and must be physically capable of being brought to the elders. Proverbs 23:20 warns against excessive consumption of wine and meat.

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| וּ֠רְגָמֻ֠הוּ כׇּל־אַנְשֵׁ֨י עִיר֤וֹ בָֽאֲבָנִים֙ וָמֵ֔ת וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּ֑ךָ וְכׇל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל יִשְׁמְע֥וּ וְיִרָֽאוּ׃ | 21 | Thereupon his town’s council shall stone him to death. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst: all Israel will hear and be afraid. |

Chasidut emphasizes self-education to nurture the divine soul and subdue the animal soul, highlighting the importance of obedience to Torah and authority figures to avoid rebelliousness. The law of the rebellious son aims to maintain societal order and teach obedience, with specific criteria and age limits to prevent disputes. Rav Moshe discusses the prohibition of smoking for those who started after 1981, linking it to the prohibition of indulging in frivolous pleasures. The story of the rebellious son in Deuteronomy underscores the importance of serving God out of love, contrasting Saul’s errors with David’s obedience. The Midrash discusses the consequences of marrying for beauty, the impact of good and bad deeds, and the significance of various commandments. The Mishnah lists crimes punishable by stoning, emphasizing preventive punishment for societal harm. Moses established the punishment for the rebellious son to remove evil from the community, highlighting the need to purge base tendencies. The Talmud discusses criteria for adulthood and other offenses punishable by stoning, while the Targum emphasizes the warning of stoning the rebellious son to instill fear and obedience.

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| וְכִֽי־יִהְיֶ֣ה בְאִ֗ישׁ חֵ֛טְא מִשְׁפַּט־מָ֖וֶת וְהוּמָ֑ת וְתָלִ֥יתָ אֹת֖וֹ עַל־עֵֽץ׃ | 22 | If any party is guilty of a capital offense and is put to death, and you impale the body on a stake, |

Reish Lakish discusses the power of teshuva, explaining that intentional sins can become like unintentional sins or even merits, depending on the motivation behind the repentance. Hanging those who have been stoned is a form of degradation towards God and the king, with exceptions for the blasphemer and idolator. The Halakhah commands that those liable for hanging should be hanged, with the corpses of blasphemers and idolaters to be hung after execution. The Mishnah discusses halakhic differences between men and women, including actions related to leprosy, naziriteship, betrothal, and punishment for theft. The Talmud states that a man is hanged but a woman is not hanged, with differing opinions on this practice. Moses commanded the Israelites to stone a blasphemer outside the camp, which they did as commanded by יהוה. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 21:22 all mention the act of hanging a man on a beam or crucifix after being guilty of a capital offense and condemned to death.

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| לֹא־תָלִ֨ין נִבְלָת֜וֹ עַל־הָעֵ֗ץ כִּֽי־קָב֤וֹר תִּקְבְּרֶ֙נּוּ֙ בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֔וּא כִּֽי־קִלְלַ֥ת אֱלֹהִ֖ים תָּל֑וּי וְלֹ֤א תְטַמֵּא֙ אֶת־אַדְמָ֣תְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָֽה׃ | 23 | you must not let the corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury it the same day. For an impaled body is an affront to God: you shall not defile the land that your God יהוה is giving you to possess. |

The text discusses the requirement to bury the body of a hanged person immediately to prevent defilement of the land and maintain human dignity, as stated in Deuteronomy 21:22-23. The Halakhah mandates the immediate burial of executed individuals to uphold respect for the deceased, with the prohibition against leaving a corpse hanging overnight applying to both Jews and non-Jews. The Mishnah describes the process of hanging a person after execution, emphasizing the importance of burying the body the same day to avoid desecrating the name of Heaven. The Talmud explores the sanctity of burial and the duty to honor the dead promptly, highlighting the significance of avoiding desecration of God’s name.

## Deuteronomy 22

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| לֹֽא־תִרְאֶה֩ אֶת־שׁ֨וֹר אָחִ֜יךָ א֤וֹ אֶת־שֵׂיוֹ֙ נִדָּחִ֔ים וְהִתְעַלַּמְתָּ֖ מֵהֶ֑ם הָשֵׁ֥ב תְּשִׁיבֵ֖ם לְאָחִֽיךָ׃ | 1 | If you see your fellow Israelite’s ox or sheep gone astray, do not ignore it; you must take it back to your peer. |

The text discusses the importance of returning lost items to their owners, emphasizing personal repentance and interconnectedness within the Jewish community. It highlights the obligation to help restore lost holiness in others and the spiritual lessons that can be learned from returning lost property. The commandment to return lost items extends to various scenarios, including animals, garments, and vessels, with exemptions based on circumstances and the nature of the finder and the item found. This obligation reflects the values of mercy, kindness, and social responsibility among the Jewish people, emphasizing the importance of justice and the ultimate restoration of lost property to their original owners.

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| וְאִם־לֹ֨א קָר֥וֹב אָחִ֛יךָ אֵלֶ֖יךָ וְלֹ֣א יְדַעְתּ֑וֹ וַאֲסַפְתּוֹ֙ אֶל־תּ֣וֹךְ בֵּיתֶ֔ךָ וְהָיָ֣ה עִמְּךָ֗ עַ֣ד דְּרֹ֤שׁ אָחִ֙יךָ֙ אֹת֔וֹ וַהֲשֵׁבֹת֖וֹ לֽוֹ׃ | 2 | If your fellow Israelite does not live near you or you do not know who [the owner] is, you shall bring it home and it shall remain with you until your peer claims it; then you shall give it back. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of seeking a sage to reclaim lost items, contingent on the person’s honesty. Commentary discusses the obligation to return lost items only when the owner seeks them, with measures to prevent fraudulent claims. Halakhah focuses on identifying lost objects and providing medical care, while Mishnah highlights the importance of returning lost animals. The Talmud addresses the obligation to save lives and return lost items based on identifying marks, with a need to scrutinize claimants. Midrash emphasizes the importance of rain and returning lost items even to unknown individuals, while Targum stresses the duty to keep lost items until the owner claims them.

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| וְכֵ֧ן תַּעֲשֶׂ֣ה לַחֲמֹר֗וֹ וְכֵ֣ן תַּעֲשֶׂה֮ לְשִׂמְלָתוֹ֒ וְכֵ֣ן תַּעֲשֶׂ֗ה לְכׇל־אֲבֵדַ֥ת אָחִ֛יךָ אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאבַ֥ד מִמֶּ֖נּוּ וּמְצָאתָ֑הּ לֹ֥א תוּכַ֖ל לְהִתְעַלֵּֽם׃ | 3 | You shall do the same with that person’s ass; you shall do the same with that person’s garment; and so too shall you do with anything that your fellow Israelite loses and you find: you must not remain indifferent. |

The concept of returning lost items to their rightful owners is emphasized in various Jewish texts, including the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud, with obligations detailed for different scenarios and items. Failure to return lost items is considered a serious offense, with consequences such as reincarnation and impeding the arrival of Redemption. The importance of maintaining social capital and trust within a society is highlighted, with the duty to return lost items contributing to a good neighborhood and society.

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| לֹא־תִרְאֶה֩ אֶת־חֲמ֨וֹר אָחִ֜יךָ א֤וֹ שׁוֹרוֹ֙ נֹפְלִ֣ים בַּדֶּ֔רֶךְ וְהִתְעַלַּמְתָּ֖ מֵהֶ֑ם הָקֵ֥ם תָּקִ֖ים עִמּֽוֹ׃ | 4 | If you see your fellow Israelite’s ass or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must raise it together. |

Chasidut emphasizes developing empathy and strength to help others, while the duty of loading refers to reloading fallen burdens (Rashi), assisting a brother in need maintains brotherhood among Jews (Tur HaArokh), and the Torah commands helping unload and reload burdens from animals (Ibn Ezra, Ramban). The Torah underscores compassion and assistance towards others, regardless of distinctions, and emphasizes moderation in all aspects of life. The commandment to help a fellow Jew with a fallen animal includes both loading and unloading, with unloading being the primary focus (Midrash). It is forbidden to cause pain to living creatures and one must display empathy towards others, even enemies, by helping them in times of need (Musar). The Talmud discusses differing opinions on the Torah obligation to help load animals, with Rabbi Simeon ben Ioḥai asserting such an obligation, and addresses the concept of being remunerated for helping load animals (Talmud). Additionally, in Exodus 23:5, it is instructed to help lift the burden of your enemy’s struggling donkey (Tanakh). The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 22:4 all stress the importance of assisting one’s brother in need (Targum).

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| לֹא־יִהְיֶ֤ה כְלִי־גֶ֙בֶר֙ עַל־אִשָּׁ֔ה וְלֹא־יִלְבַּ֥שׁ גֶּ֖בֶר שִׂמְלַ֣ת אִשָּׁ֑ה כִּ֧י תוֹעֲבַ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ כׇּל־עֹ֥שֵׂה אֵֽלֶּה׃ | 5 | A woman must not put on man’s apparel, nor shall a man wear woman’s clothing; for whoever does these things is abhorrent to your God יהוה. |

The prohibition against women wearing men’s clothing and vice versa in Deuteronomy 22:5 is aimed at preventing immorality and illicit sexual relations, with the prohibition extending to articles, ornaments, and accessories associated with the opposite gender, including cosmetic procedures. The prohibition serves to maintain divisions between men and women, prevent opportunities for marital infidelity, and maintain modesty. The Talmud discusses the prohibition of men removing hair for beautification purposes and addresses divorce and remarriage, while the Targum commentary emphasizes that wearing clothing or adornments of the opposite gender is considered an abomination before God.

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| כִּ֣י יִקָּרֵ֣א קַן־צִפּ֣וֹר ׀ לְפָנֶ֡יךָ בַּדֶּ֜רֶךְ בְּכׇל־עֵ֣ץ ׀ א֣וֹ עַל־הָאָ֗רֶץ אֶפְרֹחִים֙ א֣וֹ בֵיצִ֔ים וְהָאֵ֤ם רֹבֶ֙צֶת֙ עַל־הָֽאֶפְרֹחִ֔ים א֖וֹ עַל־הַבֵּיצִ֑ים לֹא־תִקַּ֥ח הָאֵ֖ם עַל־הַבָּנִֽים׃ | 6 | If, along the road, you chance upon a bird’s nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. |

The commandment in Deuteronomy 22:6 prohibits taking a mother bird with its young to prevent cruelty and promote compassion towards animals, emphasizing the importance of respecting all living creatures. Various interpretations of this law emphasize the significance of maintaining spiritual balance and connection with the divine, as well as the importance of developing good character traits to avoid insensitivity and cruelty. The legislation aims to guide individuals towards righteousness and prevent the internalization of cruelty as a character trait, with the underlying purpose of promoting compassion towards all living beings.

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| שַׁלֵּ֤חַ תְּשַׁלַּח֙ אֶת־הָאֵ֔ם וְאֶת־הַבָּנִ֖ים תִּֽקַּֽח־לָ֑ךְ לְמַ֙עַן֙ יִ֣יטַב לָ֔ךְ וְהַאֲרַכְתָּ֖ יָמִֽים׃ | 7 | Let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life. |

The text from Chasidut emphasizes the importance of following Torah principles and balancing worldly benefits with spiritual cleanliness, particularly through mitzvot like sending away the mother bird. Various commentaries discuss the compassion and rewards associated with this commandment, highlighting the significance of showing concern for all living beings. The Mishnah and Talmud delve into the details of this mitzvah, with Rabbi Judah and the Sages differing on the punishment for transgressions. The Mishnah also connects this commandment to others, emphasizing understanding the rewards for each mitzvah and the importance of belief in the resurrection of the dead. Additionally, the text explores the symbolism and significance of fulfilling commandments in Jewish thought, Kabbalah, liturgy, and Musar, showcasing the profound impact of individual actions on the community and the spiritual pleasures of the World to Come.

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| כִּ֤י תִבְנֶה֙ בַּ֣יִת חָדָ֔שׁ וְעָשִׂ֥יתָ מַעֲקֶ֖ה לְגַגֶּ֑ךָ וְלֹֽא־תָשִׂ֤ים דָּמִים֙ בְּבֵיתֶ֔ךָ כִּֽי־יִפֹּ֥ל הַנֹּפֵ֖ל מִמֶּֽנּוּ׃ | 8 | When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone should fall from it. |

The Torah commands building a protective railing around a new house’s roof as a reminder of gratitude towards God, emphasizing the importance of charity and good deeds over material wealth. Failing to do so violates both a positive and negative commandment, with the obligation extending to maintaining a safe environment beyond just the roof. The commandments apply to every aspect of man’s life, guiding him in all matters, while righteous individuals are urged to strive for love, awe, fear, and humility in their relationship with God. Men are obligated to perform all mitzvot of a father with regard to his son, while women are exempt, and both must perform positive mitzvot that are not time-bound. The duty to avoid exposing oneself and others to danger, such as through negligence in safeguarding a house, is discussed based on the command to put a parapet around the roof in Deuteronomy 22:8.

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| לֹא־תִזְרַ֥ע כַּרְמְךָ֖ כִּלְאָ֑יִם פֶּן־תִּקְדַּ֗שׁ הַֽמְלֵאָ֤ה הַזֶּ֙רַע֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּזְרָ֔ע וּתְבוּאַ֖ת הַכָּֽרֶם׃ | 9 | You shall not sow your vineyard with a second kind of seed, else the crop—from the seed you have sown—and the yield of the vineyard may not be used. |

Chasidut explains that the souls of all nations, unclean animals, forbidden foods, and actions prohibited by Jewish law come from the same spiritual source. The prohibition of sowing vineyards with mixed seeds includes mixing wheat and barley with grape seeds, is based on the sanctity of the land, and reflects the importance of abiding by God’s laws. The prohibition not to eat mixed species planted in a vineyard is derived from Deuteronomy 22:9, and mixing species in a vineyard is more severe than in a field. The purpose of God’s commandments is debated among theologians, with some believing they serve a specific aim while others see them as ordinances with unknown purposes. The Midrash discusses various mitzvot and their significance, emphasizing the importance of performing these commandments and their link to blessings and curses. The Talmud delves into the prohibition of sowing diverse kinds in a vineyard, outlining specific requirements and consequences, while Leviticus 19:19 commands following God’s laws, including not allowing cattle to mate with different kinds and not sowing fields with two types of seed. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan also prohibit planting mixed species in vineyards to avoid impurity and the obligation to burn the mixed seed and produce.

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| לֹֽא־תַחֲרֹ֥שׁ בְּשׁוֹר־וּבַחֲמֹ֖ר יַחְדָּֽו׃ | 10 | You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of fulfilling commandments before enjoying the fruits of labor, with Balak fearing the influence of successful Israelite converts on his people. Halakhah prohibits working with different species of animals together to prevent cruelty, reflecting a concern for animal welfare. Kabbalistic texts discuss the symbolism of the ox and donkey as representing demons that should not be joined together to prevent harm. Mishnah details various scenarios where multiple sets of lashes can be received for plowing in prohibited ways, including during the Sabbatical Year and on a Festival. Tanakh and Targum agree that plowing with animals of different species is forbidden due to the cruelty it imposes on the animals.

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| לֹ֤א תִלְבַּשׁ֙ שַֽׁעַטְנֵ֔ז צֶ֥מֶר וּפִשְׁתִּ֖ים יַחְדָּֽו׃ | 11 | You shall not wear cloth combining wool and linen. |

The prohibition of wearing sha’atnez applies to clothing made of wool and linen but not to non-clothing items, with the positive commandment of tzitzit requiring fringes on garments. Mishnah details the liability for wearing forbidden garments and multiple sets of lashes for certain actions. The Midrash emphasizes the importance of following commandments related to clothing to remind oneself of all commandments, while Musar discusses exceptions to laws such as wearing mixed fabrics in certain circumstances. The Talmud explores the prohibition of wearing diverse fibers and the obligation of ritual fringes, with different interpretations provided by rabbis. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 22:11 as a prohibition against wearing garments of mixed wool and linen fibers.

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| גְּדִלִ֖ים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּ֑ךְ עַל־אַרְבַּ֛ע כַּנְפ֥וֹת כְּסוּתְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תְּכַסֶּה־בָּֽהּ׃ | 12 | You shall make tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself. |

The biblical commandment prohibits wearing garments made of wool and linen together and requires wearing fringes on the four corners of clothing, with specific rules regarding materials, twisting, and number of strings. Tzitzit serve as a reminder of divine commandments, exempting wearers from the prohibition of mixing fabrics, and are associated with priesthood and holiness. The Talmud discusses the obligations of priests, exemptions for certain garments, and the use of diverse materials in ritual fringes, while the Tanakh emphasizes the significance of fringes as a reminder of God’s commandments and liberation from Egypt.

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| כִּֽי־יִקַּ֥ח אִ֖ישׁ אִשָּׁ֑ה וּבָ֥א אֵלֶ֖יהָ וּשְׂנֵאָֽהּ׃ | 13 | A householder takes a woman [as his wife] and cohabits with her. Then he takes an aversion to her |

The text discusses the consequences of a man marrying a wife and later claiming she was not a virgin, emphasizing the importance of avoiding forbidden relationships and maintaining the sanctity of marriage to ensure the presence of the Divine. The concept of virginity in relation to marriage and adultery is explored, highlighting the sanctity of marriage and the importance of maintaining purity and loyalty. The Halakhah states that sexual relations within marriage must be conducted in the presence of witnesses to make the woman a wife, and divorce can only take place through a formal document. In Jewish law, the principle of marriage is based on the husband acquiring the wife’s services, with the ability to divorce being solely in the hands of the husband. The importance of sanctifying marriage through the husband’s behavior during sexual intercourse is discussed, symbolizing the union between different emanations and ultimately the union between the concept of Israel and God.

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| וְשָׂ֥ם לָהּ֙ עֲלִילֹ֣ת דְּבָרִ֔ים וְהוֹצִ֥א עָלֶ֖יהָ שֵׁ֣ם רָ֑ע וְאָמַ֗ר אֶת־הָאִשָּׁ֤ה הַזֹּאת֙ לָקַ֔חְתִּי וָאֶקְרַ֣ב אֵלֶ֔יהָ וְלֹא־מָצָ֥אתִי לָ֖הּ בְּתוּלִֽים׃ | 14 | and makes up charges against her and defames her, saying, “This is the party I took [to wife]; but when I approached her, I found that she was not a virgin.” |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 22:14 emphasizes the importance of presenting accusations in the presence of the opposing party, the requirement of two witnesses for an accusation, and the consequences of falsely accusing a woman of not being a virgin. In the Midrash, Moses receives God’s attributes of compassion and grace, while the Talmud discusses the penalties for falsely accusing a wife of not being a virgin and the involvement of false witnesses. Additionally, Leviticus 19:17 commands not to hate one’s kinsfolk but to reprove them without incurring guilt, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 22:14 discusses a situation where a man falsely accuses a woman of not being a virgin.

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| וְלָקַ֛ח אֲבִ֥י הַֽנַּעֲרָ֖ וְאִמָּ֑הּ וְהוֹצִ֜יאוּ אֶת־בְּתוּלֵ֧י הַֽנַּעֲרָ֛ אֶל־זִקְנֵ֥י הָעִ֖יר הַשָּֽׁעְרָה׃ | 15 | In such a case, the girl’s father and mother shall produce the evidence of the girl’s virginity before the elders of the town at the gate. |

In cases of false slander against a Jewish maiden, the slanderer faces punishment by lashing and must pay the girl’s father 100 sela’im of pure silver, unless the girl is below the age of majority or a bogeret. If a husband and wife cannot live in peace, the husband can issue a divorce document to prevent misunderstandings. Moses required a payment of fifty shekels of silver from those who worshipped the golden calf, based on laws concerning a violated woman. The Mishnah discusses cases where a virgin’s vows are upheld and cannot be annulled, including if she is married as a minor and later becomes a widow or divorced, if she becomes an orphan, or if she reaches adulthood. In cases of rape of young women of flawed lineage, the Gemara questions the liability to pay a fine, citing verses from Deuteronomy to determine eligibility for payment. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that the girl’s parents must present evidence of her virginity before the city judges in the court or the door of the beth din.

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| וְאָמַ֛ר אֲבִ֥י הַֽנַּעֲרָ֖ אֶל־הַזְּקֵנִ֑ים אֶת־בִּתִּ֗י נָתַ֜תִּי לָאִ֥ישׁ הַזֶּ֛ה לְאִשָּׁ֖ה וַיִּשְׂנָאֶֽהָ׃ | 16 | And the girl’s father shall say to the elders, “To this party I gave my own daughter to wife, but he has taken an aversion to her; |

The father has the right to consecrate his daughter without her knowledge, making her forbidden to marry others until she becomes a bogeret, and his word is accepted in court regarding her consecration and marriage. The Mishnah and Talmud discuss the father’s authority to betroth his daughter, while the Targum emphasizes the father’s role in informing judges of his daughter’s marriage.

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| וְהִנֵּה־ה֡וּא שָׂם֩ עֲלִילֹ֨ת דְּבָרִ֜ים לֵאמֹ֗ר לֹֽא־מָצָ֤אתִי לְבִתְּךָ֙ בְּתוּלִ֔ים וְאֵ֖לֶּה בְּתוּלֵ֣י בִתִּ֑י וּפָֽרְשׂוּ֙ הַשִּׂמְלָ֔ה לִפְנֵ֖י זִקְנֵ֥י הָעִֽיר׃ | 17 | so he has made up charges, saying, ‘I did not find your daughter a virgin.’ But here is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity!” And they shall spread out the cloth before the elders of the town. |

The spreading of the cloth in Deuteronomy 22:17 is interpreted figuratively by Rashi, literally by Nachmanides, and Rabbeinu Bahya, with the purpose of proving the daughter’s virginity before the elders of the city, as explained in Steinsaltz’s commentary. Mishneh Torah details laws regarding a husband’s claim of a bride’s adultery after consecration, while the Kabbalah likens the Torah to virginity and warns against speaking ill of its authenticity. In the Midrash, spreading a garment before the elders signifies the need for clarity, and the Talmud discusses cases of husbands accusing wives of not being virgins. The Targum states that evidence of a woman’s virginity must be presented before city judges.

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| וְלָ֥קְח֛וּ זִקְנֵ֥י הָֽעִיר־הַהִ֖וא אֶת־הָאִ֑ישׁ וְיִסְּר֖וּ אֹתֽוֹ׃ | 18 | The elders of that town shall then take that party and flog him, |

The punishment of flogging for a man who falsely accuses his wife of adultery is discussed in Jewish law, with references to lashing, financial restitution, and the importance of respecting one’s wife in marriage. The Mishneh Torah states that a person who slanders a Jewish maiden should be punished by lashing and financial restitution, while the Shulchan Arukh details laws surrounding flogging as a form of punishment. In the Talmud, lashes are administered to a stubborn son and those who commit transgressions punishable with lashes and monetary payment, with additional discussions on payment for eating heave and the father’s interest in his daughter’s money. The judges and sages are responsible for carrying out the punishment of flogging for the man’s wrongdoing.

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| וְעָנְשׁ֨וּ אֹת֜וֹ מֵ֣אָה כֶ֗סֶף וְנָתְנוּ֙ לַאֲבִ֣י הַֽנַּעֲרָ֔ה כִּ֤י הוֹצִיא֙ שֵׁ֣ם רָ֔ע עַ֖ל בְּתוּלַ֣ת יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וְלֽוֹ־תִהְיֶ֣ה לְאִשָּׁ֔ה לֹא־יוּכַ֥ל לְשַׁלְּחָ֖הּ כׇּל־יָמָֽיו׃ | 19 | and they shall fine him a hundred [shekels of] silver and give it to the girl’s father; for [that householder] has defamed a virgin in Israel. Moreover, she shall remain his wife; he shall never have the right to divorce her. |

The text discusses the struggle between the divine and natural souls, urging for the divine soul to rule over the mundane desires. The punishment for falsely accusing a bride includes a fine and being unable to divorce her. The consequences for a man who falsely accuses his wife of not being a virgin on their wedding night include fines, chastisement, and being married to her for life. The Halakhah states that a man who slanders his wife is forbidden to divorce her and must remain married to her for his entire life. The Talmud explores various laws related to marriage, rape, and defamation, including the obligation for a rapist to marry his victim and distinctions in punishments for different offenses.

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| וְאִם־אֱמֶ֣ת הָיָ֔ה הַדָּבָ֖ר הַזֶּ֑ה לֹא־נִמְצְא֥וּ בְתוּלִ֖ים לַֽנַּעֲרָֽ׃ | 20 | But if the charge proves true, the girl was found not to have been a virgin, |

In Jewish law, witnesses and legal warning are required to prove accusations of adultery against a bride, ensuring the punishment is justified (Deuteronomy 22:20:1, Siftei Chakhamim). In cases of a husband accusing his wife of adultery, witnesses play a crucial role in determining guilt, with penalties for false testimony (Halakhah). The written Torah is represented by two arms, symbolized by the two tablets given to Moses, with Zayin shape representing virginity-signs by mouth (oral Torah) (Kabbalah). The Midrash distinguishes between natural and unnatural coitus in relation to prohibitions (Midrash). In Musar, the term נערה is often used for girls, linked to the significance of נער in Pardes Rimonim. Rebbi Jehudah ben Pazi discusses the consequences of a definitively married woman entering different rooms before consummating the marriage in the Talmud, while the Gemara in Arakhin 15a:7 discusses the severity of defamation compared to actions. In Targum, if the accusation of adultery is proven true without witnesses to the girl’s virginity, she may face stoning.

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| וְהוֹצִ֨יאוּ אֶת־הַֽנַּעֲרָ֜ אֶל־פֶּ֣תַח בֵּית־אָבִ֗יהָ וּסְקָל֩וּהָ֩ אַנְשֵׁ֨י עִירָ֤הּ בָּאֲבָנִים֙ וָמֵ֔תָה כִּֽי־עָשְׂתָ֤ה נְבָלָה֙ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל לִזְנ֖וֹת בֵּ֣ית אָבִ֑יהָ וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 21 | then the girl shall be brought out to the entrance of her father’s house, and her town’s council shall stone her to death; for she did a shameful thing in Israel, committing fornication while under her father’s authority. Thus you will sweep away evil from your midst. |

Various commentaries and texts discuss the punishment of stoning for adultery, detailing different aspects such as the location of the stoning, signs of virginity, the impact on family and society, and the public nature of the punishment to deter future transgressions. The Mishnah explains different punishments for adultery based on circumstances, including the distinction between a woman who converts before or after giving birth. The Talmud and Targum analyze specific linguistic and legal aspects related to adultery and punishment, emphasizing the severity of the consequences for such actions.

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| כִּֽי־יִמָּצֵ֨א אִ֜ישׁ שֹׁכֵ֣ב ׀ עִם־אִשָּׁ֣ה בְעֻֽלַת־בַּ֗עַל וּמֵ֙תוּ֙ גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶ֔ם הָאִ֛ישׁ הַשֹּׁכֵ֥ב עִם־הָאִשָּׁ֖ה וְהָאִשָּׁ֑ה וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 22 | If a man is found lying with another man’s wife, both of them—the man and the woman with whom he lay—shall die. Thus you will sweep away evil from Israel. |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 22:22 discuss the meaning of “gam shneihem” in cases of adultery, with interpretations including the offspring of the adulterers, those who commit adultery with the pair after them, unnatural sexual acts, or minors involved. Chukkim emphasize respect for all beings as God’s possessions, with individuals called to fulfill the holy purpose of the human race. The Sifrei Devarim discusses liability for the death penalty in cases of a man found with a betrothed woman, while the Mishnah and Magen Avraham detail punishments for sins like rape and defamation. The Talmud addresses betrothal through sexual intercourse, punishment for adultery, and various scenarios related to sexual relations and marriage. Tanakh verses prohibit murder, adultery, and false witness, while Targum interpretations call for death for both parties in adultery cases.

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| כִּ֤י יִהְיֶה֙ נַעֲרָ֣ בְתוּלָ֔ה מְאֹרָשָׂ֖ה לְאִ֑ישׁ וּמְצָאָ֥הּ אִ֛ישׁ בָּעִ֖יר וְשָׁכַ֥ב עִמָּֽהּ׃ | 23 | In the case of a virgin who is engaged to someone —if another man comes upon her in town and lies with her, |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 22:23-27 discusses the scenario of witnesses seeing a man and a maiden in the city, with different interpretations on the woman’s guilt based on her location. Halakhah details the laws regarding consuming a limb cut off from a living animal, the punishment for a consecrated maiden committing adultery, and the consequences of false accusations of adultery. Kabbalah mentions the erasure of the male if male and female are not together. Midrash explains the conditions for a man to be liable to stoning. Musar discusses the Jewish servant maid leaving her employ under certain circumstances. Quoting commentary includes explanations on the creation of luminaries, the consequences of falsely accusing a wife, and the order of Festivals. Talmud provides explanations on the punishment of stoning for certain scenarios involving young women. Targum discusses the scenario of a virgin girl being encountered by another man in the city.

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| וְהוֹצֵאתֶ֨ם אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶ֜ם אֶל־שַׁ֣עַר ׀ הָעִ֣יר הַהִ֗וא וּסְקַלְתֶּ֨ם אֹתָ֥ם בָּאֲבָנִים֮ וָמֵ֒תוּ֒ אֶת־הַֽנַּעֲרָ֗ עַל־דְּבַר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־צָעֲקָ֣ה בָעִ֔יר וְאֶ֨ת־הָאִ֔ישׁ עַל־דְּבַ֥ר אֲשֶׁר־עִנָּ֖ה אֶת־אֵ֣שֶׁת רֵעֵ֑הוּ וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 24 | you shall take the two of them out to the gate of that town and stone them to death: the girl because she did not cry for help in the town, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s wife. Thus you will sweep away evil from your midst. |

Various texts and commentaries explore the concept of calling out for help, consent during assault, and the punishment of stoning for transgressions such as adultery or idolatry. Laws and commandments are discussed in relation to historical events, ethical principles, and spiritual connection with God. The Mishnah addresses the nullification of vows by a yavam, while the Talmud examines prior warning before punishment, methods of execution, and reasons for a solar eclipse. The Tanakh discusses the annulment of vows for a betrothed woman, while the Targums emphasize the importance of eliminating evil from the community through punishment.

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| וְֽאִם־בַּשָּׂדֶ֞ה יִמְצָ֣א הָאִ֗ישׁ אֶת־הַֽנַּעֲרָ֙ הַמְאֹ֣רָשָׂ֔ה וְהֶחֱזִֽיק־בָּ֥הּ הָאִ֖ישׁ וְשָׁכַ֣ב עִמָּ֑הּ וּמֵ֗ת הָאִ֛ישׁ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁכַ֥ב עִמָּ֖הּ לְבַדּֽוֹ׃ | 25 | But if the man comes upon the engaged girl in the open country, and the man lies with her by force, only the party who lay with her shall die, |

The Torah distinguishes between rape in a city and rape in a field, with different considerations for each scenario, including the presence of witnesses and the victim’s ability to cry out for help. Betrothal creates a connection and mutual obligation between a couple, but a full marriage requires a wedding ceremony. The Midrash connects Esau’s transgressions to the downfall of his family and the destruction of God’s house. Radak explains the term ויעניה in Genesis 34:2 as implying a gentle seduction rather than violent rape. The Talmud discusses punishments for rape, false accusations, and intercourse with betrothed individuals, with differing opinions on the age of the victim. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that only the man who violates a married woman in the field should be punished with death.

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| וְלַֽנַּעֲרָ֙ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה דָבָ֔ר אֵ֥ין לַֽנַּעֲרָ֖ חֵ֣טְא מָ֑וֶת כִּ֡י כַּאֲשֶׁר֩ יָק֨וּם אִ֤ישׁ עַל־רֵעֵ֙הוּ֙ וּרְצָח֣וֹ נֶ֔פֶשׁ כֵּ֖ן הַדָּבָ֥ר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 26 | but you shall do nothing to the girl. The girl did not incur the death penalty, for this case is like that of one party attacking and murdering another. |

The Torah and Halakhah emphasize the innocence of a woman who is raped, likening her to a murder victim and permitting any means necessary to save her, even if it involves killing the perpetrator. Various commentaries and texts discuss the exemption from punishment for those forced to sin, the duty to prefer death over committing certain crimes, and the obligation to save those in danger, as derived from verses in Deuteronomy. The Talmud further elaborates on the principle of choosing death over forbidden acts, even in cases of coercion.

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| כִּ֥י בַשָּׂדֶ֖ה מְצָאָ֑הּ צָעֲקָ֗ה הַֽנַּעֲרָ֙ הַמְאֹ֣רָשָׂ֔ה וְאֵ֥ין מוֹשִׁ֖יעַ לָֽהּ׃ | 27 | He came upon her in the open; though the engaged girl cried for help, there was no one to save her. |

Chasidut emphasizes prioritizing not harming others over hearing Kedushah and Barchu, with the chazzan able to fulfill obligations for those under duress, similar to fulfilling obligations in the fields. Commentary on Deuteronomy 22:27 stresses aiding those in need, even with extreme measures. Halakhah discusses the obligation to prevent harm, including the possibility of killing a pursuer to save a victim. Mishnah details when individuals pursuing certain sins may be killed to prevent transgressions. Talmud delves into the circumstances regarding a raped woman’s status, with distinctions for different situations.

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| כִּֽי־יִמְצָ֣א אִ֗ישׁ נַעֲרָ֤ בְתוּלָה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־אֹרָ֔שָׂה וּתְפָשָׂ֖הּ וְשָׁכַ֣ב עִמָּ֑הּ וְנִמְצָֽאוּ׃ | 28 | If a man comes upon a virgin who is not engaged and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are discovered, |

Deuteronomy 22:28 addresses rape of a young virgin who is not betrothed as adultery, with differing laws for seduction. The Babylonian Talmud states that a man who seduces such a woman must pay her father and marry her, while Mishneh Torah specifies fines for rapists based on the age of the victim. Midrash discusses interpretations of the law, while Mishnah outlines penalties for seducers and rapists. Ramban explains seduction as winning over someone by falsehood, with different penalties for seducers and rapists. The Talmud and Jerusalem Talmud debate who receives fines for raping young women, and Targum translations describe the act in Deuteronomy 22:28.

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| וְ֠נָתַ֠ן הָאִ֨ישׁ הַשֹּׁכֵ֥ב עִמָּ֛הּ לַאֲבִ֥י הַֽנַּעֲרָ֖ חֲמִשִּׁ֣ים כָּ֑סֶף וְלֽוֹ־תִהְיֶ֣ה לְאִשָּׁ֗ה תַּ֚חַת אֲשֶׁ֣ר עִנָּ֔הּ לֹא־יוּכַ֥ל שַׁלְּחָ֖הּ כׇּל־יָמָֽיו׃ | 29 | the party who lay with her shall pay the girl’s father fifty [shekels of] silver, and she shall be his wife. Because he has violated her, he can never have the right to divorce her. |

The text discusses the Biblical law that if a man seduces a virgin and is discovered, he must pay a fine to the girl’s father and marry her, with no option for divorce. This law is found in Deuteronomy 22:28-29. The Mishnah outlines the penalties and fines for rape and seduction, including a 50-shekel fine for the rapist or seducer, additional payments for shame and injury, and the requirement for the rapist to marry the victim and pay compensatory damages. The Talmud discusses various laws related to rape and seduction, citing specific verses from Deuteronomy 22:29 to support these laws, such as the requirement for a rapist to pay fifty shekels of silver and marry the victim, as well as the need for additional compensation for humiliation and degradation beyond the fine.

## Deuteronomy 23

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| לֹא־יִקַּ֥ח אִ֖ישׁ אֶת־אֵ֣שֶׁת אָבִ֑יו וְלֹ֥א יְגַלֶּ֖ה כְּנַ֥ף אָבִֽיו׃ | 1 | No householder shall take his father’s former wife [as his own wife], so as to remove his father’s garment. |

Rashi explains that a man cannot legally marry his father’s wife, Ibn Ezra clarifies this refers to a woman his father raped, Rashbam notes the offspring would be a mamzer, and Chizkuni emphasizes this law applies to avoid mamzerim. Halakhah prohibits a eunuch from marrying a Jewish woman, Ibn Ganaḥ interprets “kenaf” as “concealing,” while Kabbalah warns against uncovering one’s father’s skirt. The Midrash discusses marrying a ravished wife of one’s father, Mishnah details lineage following the father, and Second Temple texts expel eunuchs and polytheists. The Talmud delves into marriage prohibitions, Tanakh forbids uncovering family members’ nakedness, and Targum warns against marrying a woman violated by one’s father.

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| לֹֽא־יָבֹ֧א פְצֽוּעַ־דַּכָּ֛א וּכְר֥וּת שׇׁפְכָ֖ה בִּקְהַ֥ל יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 2 | No man whose testes are crushed or whose member is cut off shall be admitted into the congregation of יהוה. |

Various commentaries, Halakhic rulings, Jewish thought, Midrashim, Mishnah discussions, Musar teachings, and Talmudic interpretations explore the implications of Deuteronomy 23:2, which prohibits certain individuals with genital injuries from marrying Jewish women. The law applies to those with maimed testicles, severed members, and other reproductive system impairments, with exceptions for marrying converts or freed slaves. The prohibition aims to maintain the sanctity of the Jewish community by excluding those unable to fulfill the procreative purpose of marriage, as outlined in the Torah and elaborated upon in subsequent Jewish texts.

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| לֹא־יָבֹ֥א מַמְזֵ֖ר בִּקְהַ֣ל יְהֹוָ֑ה גַּ֚ם דּ֣וֹר עֲשִׂירִ֔י לֹא־יָ֥בֹא ל֖וֹ בִּקְהַ֥ל יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 3 | No one misbegotten shall be admitted into the congregation of יהוה; no descendant of such, even in the tenth generation, shall be admitted into the congregation of יהוה. |

A mamzer, born from forbidden relationships, is excluded from marrying an Israelite but can marry a convert. The prohibition against mamzerim entering the assembly of the Lord extends for generations. Specific laws in the Mishnah address the criteria for mamzer status and other forbidden relationships, with rabbis differing on the permissibility of certain marriages. The Torah emphasizes the importance of maintaining purity within the community to ensure divine protection. Additionally, the Talmud discusses the lineage of mamzerim and their marriage eligibility, with varying opinions on their status.

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| לֹֽא־יָבֹ֧א עַמּוֹנִ֛י וּמוֹאָבִ֖י בִּקְהַ֣ל יְהֹוָ֑ה גַּ֚ם דּ֣וֹר עֲשִׂירִ֔י לֹא־יָבֹ֥א לָהֶ֛ם בִּקְהַ֥ל יְהֹוָ֖ה עַד־עוֹלָֽם׃ | 4 | No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of יהוה; no descendants of such, even in the tenth generation, shall ever be admitted into the congregation of יהוה, |

The fear of the Moabites towards the Israelites in Numbers led to concerns about potential conversion to Judaism. The Torah prohibits Ammonites and Moabites from joining the congregation of the Lord due to past actions, with male Ammonites and Moabites forbidden from marrying Israelite women forever, while female members are allowed to convert and marry Israelite men. Maimonides grouped prohibitions together to reach the required number of negative commandments, despite objections. The Talmud discusses disqualifications for entering the assembly of the Lord, including Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, Idumeans, and others. Ruth’s marriage to Boaz highlights changes in the law regarding Moabite women marrying Israelites.

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| עַל־דְּבַ֞ר אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹא־קִדְּמ֤וּ אֶתְכֶם֙ בַּלֶּ֣חֶם וּבַמַּ֔יִם בַּדֶּ֖רֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶ֣ם מִמִּצְרָ֑יִם וַאֲשֶׁר֩ שָׂכַ֨ר עָלֶ֜יךָ אֶת־בִּלְעָ֣ם בֶּן־בְּע֗וֹר מִפְּת֛וֹר אֲרַ֥ם נַהֲרַ֖יִם לְקַֽלְלֶֽךָּ׃ | 5 | because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey after you left Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor, from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse you.— |

The nations of Ammon and Moab are forbidden from marrying into Bnei Yisrael due to their lack of connection and attempts to harm Bnei Yisrael, as seen in their failure to greet with bread and water and hiring Bilam to curse. Hashem’s protection of Bnei Yisrael from Bilam’s curse resulted in a blessing for them and a curse rebounding onto Ammon and Moab. The exclusion only applies to the males of these nations, as it is customary for men to offer food and water, while women are busy in their homes. Ammonite and Moabite converts are permanently prohibited from entering the congregation and marrying Jewish women, while their female counterparts are permitted immediately. Lot’s descendants were compared to Sodom and Gomorrah, facing destruction for their actions. The Talmud discusses the prohibition for Ammonite or Moabite men to enter the congregation but not women, with Rabbi Yehuda deriving the halakha from the masculine form of the terms, while Rabbi Shimon focuses on the reason for the prohibition.

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| וְלֹֽא־אָבָ֞ה יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ לִשְׁמֹ֣עַ אֶל־בִּלְעָ֔ם וַיַּהֲפֹךְ֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֧יךָ לְּךָ֛ אֶת־הַקְּלָלָ֖ה לִבְרָכָ֑ה כִּ֥י אֲהֵֽבְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 6 | But your God יהוה refused to heed Balaam; instead, your God יהוה turned the curse into a blessing for you, for your God יהוה loves you.— |

The text emphasizes the importance of seeking the prayers of tzaddikim, contrasting haughty individuals who do not ask for them. God’s love for the Israelites is shown by turning curses into blessings, as seen in the case of Balaam. The Sefer HaChinukh prohibits marriage with Ammonites and Moabites, even after conversion, while laws of mourning allow curses to be transformed into blessings through prayer. The Midrash highlights the power of speech, the consequences of cursing or blessing others, and the influence of divine intervention on bodily functions. Musar discusses how curses can be turned into blessings through repentance and G-d’s love, as seen in the case of Balaam’s failed curse. The Talmud and Tanakh also illustrate instances where curses were transformed into blessings by God’s intervention.

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| לֹא־תִדְרֹ֥שׁ שְׁלֹמָ֖ם וְטֹבָתָ֑ם כׇּל־יָמֶ֖יךָ לְעוֹלָֽם׃ | 7 | You shall never concern yourself with their welfare or benefit as long as you live. |

The verse in Deuteronomy 23:7 prohibits seeking peace with the Ammonites and Moabites, allowing for war and capture of their cities. This prohibition is rooted in a broken covenant of brotherhood, with similar restrictions placed on the Egyptians and Edomites. Onkelos attempted to convert through witchcraft, seeking advice from Balaam, who warned against joining Israel. Honoring the wicked for peace is considered flattery, except in cases like Haman. Balaam warned against seeking peace with the Jewish people, and is punished in the afterlife for causing licentious behavior. The Ammonite officials questioned David’s intentions, while Hanun showed some goodness in purging the land. Targum translations emphasize the prohibition of seeking peace and benefit from certain nations forever.

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| לֹֽא־תְתַעֵ֣ב אֲדֹמִ֔י כִּ֥י אָחִ֖יךָ ה֑וּא לֹא־תְתַעֵ֣ב מִצְרִ֔י כִּי־גֵ֖ר הָיִ֥יתָ בְאַרְצֽוֹ׃ | 8 | You shall not abhor an Edomite, for such is your kin. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in that land. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 23:8 highlights reasons not to abhor the Edomites and Egyptians, emphasizing familial ties, acts of kindness, and gratitude. Halakhah permits third-generation descendants of Edomites and Egyptians to marry among the Jewish people, while the Talmud discusses prohibitions and exceptions for intermarriage with different nations. The Torah emphasizes the importance of treating others kindly, extending moral obligations to strangers, as seen in the commandments regarding the Edomites and Egyptians. In Kabbalah, Yitzchak’s decision to give Esav blessings was to protect the Jewish people from harsh judgment by heathen nations. The Midrash stresses hospitality and kindness towards strangers, while Musar discusses the historical development of Abraham’s descendants and the refinement of the Jewish people in Egypt. Ramban clarifies the lineage of Esau’s descendants, while Ibn Ezra explains the concept of a “generation” in biblical contexts. Tanakh traces the lineage of Esau, known as Edom, and Targum emphasizes not despising the Edomites and Egyptians as they are considered brothers.

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| בָּנִ֛ים אֲשֶׁר־יִוָּלְד֥וּ לָהֶ֖ם דּ֣וֹר שְׁלִישִׁ֑י יָבֹ֥א לָהֶ֖ם בִּקְהַ֥ל יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 9 | Children born to them may be admitted into the congregation of יהוה in the third generation. |

The prohibition against marrying Egyptians and Edomites who convert to Judaism applies to the first and second generations, with the third generation permitted to marry within the Jewish people. The Mishnah discusses various scenarios where individuals affect the eligibility of women to partake in teruma, including non-priests who commit sexual offenses or slaves who engage in intercourse. The Talmud examines lineage restrictions on proselytes from specific nations, with a focus on the third generation being allowed to enter the congregation. Additionally, the Mishnah outlines eternal prohibitions on mamzerim and Gibeonites from marrying Jewish women.

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| כִּֽי־תֵצֵ֥א מַחֲנֶ֖ה עַל־אֹיְבֶ֑יךָ וְנִ֨שְׁמַרְתָּ֔ מִכֹּ֖ל דָּבָ֥ר רָֽע׃ | 10 | When you [men] go out as a troop against your enemies, be on your guard against anything untoward. |

The text emphasizes the importance of protecting oneself from the evil inclination during battles, highlighting the need to devote all desires to Hashem’s will and value small merits. It warns against committing sins during war to maintain purity and holiness, with specific guidelines for dealing with impurity. The prohibition against impure thoughts and actions is underscored, with a focus on avoiding evil behaviors like adultery. The sin of emitting semen in vain is discussed as damaging the Brit and associated with impurity, emphasizing the importance of studying Torah before sleeping to prevent negative thoughts. The text also touches on lineage requirements for roles within the community, highlighting the importance of purity and sanctity.

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| כִּֽי־יִהְיֶ֤ה בְךָ֙ אִ֔ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֛ר לֹא־יִהְיֶ֥ה טָה֖וֹר מִקְּרֵה־לָ֑יְלָה וְיָצָא֙ אֶל־מִח֣וּץ לַֽמַּחֲנֶ֔ה לֹ֥א יָבֹ֖א אֶל־תּ֥וֹךְ הַֽמַּחֲנֶֽה׃ | 11 | If anyone among you has been rendered impure by a nocturnal emission, he must leave the camp, and he must not reenter the camp. |

The text discusses the importance of guarding oneself from evil when going out to war, emphasizing the need to stay away from areas of study that are not one’s portion and connects impurity from a nocturnal emission to looking into words of Torah not meant for the individual. The prohibition of impure individuals from entering the camp of the Levites is outlined, paralleling the Temple Mount for all time, with various sources reiterating this commandment and addressing the implications of seminal emissions on purity and participation in religious activities. Amalek is compared to an evil serpent seeking to defile both the Temple above and the people below, and Rabbinical teachings emphasize the importance of speaking clean language and avoiding impure words. The text warns against impure thoughts leading to impurity, discusses the differentiation between impurity laws for menstruation and abnormal blood flow, and explains the prohibition of thinking sexual thoughts at night, deriving warnings from Deuteronomy 23:11. Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai discuss ritual purity in relation to the eighty-first day, interpretations of the verse in Deuteronomy 23:11 are discussed, and the need for impure individuals due to nocturnal emissions to stay outside the camp is explained. In Numbers 5:2, the Israelites are instructed to remove anyone with an eruption, discharge, or defiled by a corpse from camp, while Leviticus 15:16 details the purification process for a man with an emission of semen. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 23:11 state that a man unclean due to a nocturnal incident must leave the camp and not enter the tents.

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| וְהָיָ֥ה לִפְנֽוֹת־עֶ֖רֶב יִרְחַ֣ץ בַּמָּ֑יִם וּכְבֹ֣א הַשֶּׁ֔מֶשׁ יָבֹ֖א אֶל־תּ֥וֹךְ הַֽמַּחֲנֶֽה׃ | 12 | Toward evening he shall bathe in water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp. |

Rashi explains that immersion after a seminal emission should be close to sunset, while Ibn Ezra elaborates on the timing of “when evening cometh on.” Halakhah states that those obligated to immerse may do so during the day, except for a nidah and a woman after childbirth, who must immerse at night. The law concerning preparing a place outside the camp aims to maintain holiness and prevent immoral behavior, emphasizing the importance of serving God and maintaining a good social order. The Talmud discusses the purification process for a zav who experiences a seminal emission, with a dispute between the first tanna and Rabbi Yosei. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 23:12 emphasize the need to wash with water in the evening before entering the camp.

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| וְיָד֙ תִּהְיֶ֣ה לְךָ֔ מִח֖וּץ לַֽמַּחֲנֶ֑ה וְיָצָ֥אתָ שָּׁ֖מָּה חֽוּץ׃ | 13 | Further, there shall be an area for you outside the camp, where you may relieve yourself. |

Chasidut emphasizes valuing small merits and good deeds to repair actions, performing mitzvot to counteract evil inclination, and atonement through permissible actions. Halakhah mandates setting up a designated place outside the camp for bodily needs to prevent impurity, with the Torah remaining pure despite physical filth. Musar interprets the punishment of manna as an act of mercy from God, while Second Temple uses the metaphor of a shovel to represent reason controlling passions. Talmud debates waste disposal in the camp and covering excrement outside, while Tanakh instructs removing defiled individuals from the camp. Ibn Ezra and Chizkuni interpret “large enough” as “large places,” and Targum mentions the need for a designated place outside the camp for excretion.

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| וְיָתֵ֛ד תִּהְיֶ֥ה לְךָ֖ עַל־אֲזֵנֶ֑ךָ וְהָיָה֙ בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ֣ ח֔וּץ וְחָפַרְתָּ֣ה בָ֔הּ וְשַׁבְתָּ֖ וְכִסִּ֥יתָ אֶת־צֵאָתֶֽךָ׃ | 14 | With your gear you shall have a spike, and when you have squatted you shall dig a hole with it and cover up your excrement. |

Soldiers in the Jewish camp were required to have a shovel or peg to bury excrement for cleanliness and holiness, as commanded in Deuteronomy 23:14. The presence of excrement is considered unclean, and reciting sacred prayers like the Shema must not be done in its presence. Scholars see affinities between the nazarite and a warrior, highlighting special conduct for special tasks. The ideal state of assimilation was shown in the desert when the Israelites consumed manna without producing excrement. Bar Kappara suggests putting fingers in ears to avoid hearing unseemly things, emphasizing the importance of holiness in engaging with Torah and prayer. The Tosefta stresses showing respect to elders and provides guidelines for relieving oneself in different locations.

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| כִּי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ מִתְהַלֵּ֣ךְ ׀ בְּקֶ֣רֶב מַחֲנֶ֗ךָ לְהַצִּֽילְךָ֙ וְלָתֵ֤ת אֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙ לְפָנֶ֔יךָ וְהָיָ֥ה מַחֲנֶ֖יךָ קָד֑וֹשׁ וְלֹֽא־יִרְאֶ֤ה בְךָ֙ עֶרְוַ֣ת דָּבָ֔ר וְשָׁ֖ב מֵאַחֲרֶֽיךָ׃ | 15 | Since your God יהוה moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you, let your camp be holy; let [God] not find anything unseemly among you and turn away from you. |

Chasidut emphasizes maintaining purity to ensure God’s presence among the Israelites during times of war. Halakhah prohibits reciting sacred matters in impure settings and addresses conduct in intimate relations. Jewish Thought highlights divine presence among soldiers in war and the importance of upholding Torah teachings. Kabbalah focuses on the Divine quality of Kingship-Malchut in Yehudah and the holiness of the land of Israel. Musar stresses the importance of cleanliness in body and speech to maintain holiness, while the Talmud discusses Hanukkah lights, Divine Presence withdrawal due to sin, and reasons for exile. The Targum explains that God’s presence in the camp protects against enemies, emphasizing the need for holiness and cleanliness.

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| לֹא־תַסְגִּ֥יר עֶ֖בֶד אֶל־אֲדֹנָ֑יו אֲשֶׁר־יִנָּצֵ֥ל אֵלֶ֖יךָ מֵעִ֥ם אֲדֹנָֽיו׃ | 16 | You shall not turn over to the master a slave who seeks refuge with you from that master. |

The commandment not to deliver an escaped slave to his master, whether Israelite or gentile, ensures the slave’s freedom and protection, reflecting a concern for human dignity and international humanitarian values. Halakhah prohibits returning a slave who fled to Eretz Yisrael to his master in the Diaspora, requiring the slave to be freed. The law concerning the first-born of man and cattle prescribes acts of mercy and protection for the poor, while the Talmud discusses the prohibition against delivering a slave to his master in cases where emancipation was intended. The legislation highlights the sanctity of the land of Israel, with the freed slave allowed to live anywhere except Jerusalem.

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| עִמְּךָ֞ יֵשֵׁ֣ב בְּקִרְבְּךָ֗ בַּמָּק֧וֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַ֛ר בְּאַחַ֥ד שְׁעָרֶ֖יךָ בַּטּ֣וֹב ל֑וֹ לֹ֖א תּוֹנֶֽנּוּ׃ | 17 | Such individuals shall live with you in any place they may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever they please; you must not ill-treat them. |

Deuteronomy 23:17 prohibits mistreating foreign residents, emphasizing fair treatment and the opportunity to earn a livelihood. The Halakhah prohibits oppressing fleeing slaves and emphasizes not wronging converts and slaves who have accepted the Torah. The Talmud discusses the conditions for gentiles to dwell in Eretz Yisrael and the treatment of Hebrew slaves and ger toshav. The Targum commentary emphasizes teaching foreigners the commandments and providing them with opportunities for employment and education.

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| לֹא־תִהְיֶ֥ה קְדֵשָׁ֖ה מִבְּנ֣וֹת יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וְלֹֽא־יִהְיֶ֥ה קָדֵ֖שׁ מִבְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 18 | No Israelite woman shall be a prostitute, nor shall any Israelite man be a prostitute. |

The prohibition against k’deishah and kadeish in Deuteronomy 23:18 emphasizes the importance of maintaining holiness and propriety within the Jewish community, with k’deishah referring to women who engage in illicit intercourse and kadeish to men involved in such activities, including pederasty. The Halakhah prohibits sexual relations without a marriage contract and ceremony, male homosexuality, relations with forbidden women, offering certain animals as sacrifices, and sexual relations with a mamzer. In Jewish Thought, the importance of justice and moral behavior is highlighted through comparisons to the sins of Sodom and Givah, and the need for purification from sin before punitive actions. Kabbalah considers idol worship, homosexual intercourse, and prostitution as abominations, while the Midrash discusses punishments for illicit relations, emphasizing the severity of these actions. Musar interprets punishments for sins as a means of cleansing and benefiting the sinner, guiding individuals towards repentance and improvement. The Talmud addresses the prohibition of homosexual intercourse, bestiality, and meat cooked in milk, deriving the basis for these prohibitions from various verses in the Torah. The Tanakh warns against degrading daughters and causing them to become harlots, while the Targum emphasizes the prohibition against Israelites engaging in prostitution or sexual immorality.

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| לֹא־תָבִיא֩ אֶתְנַ֨ן זוֹנָ֜ה וּמְחִ֣יר כֶּ֗לֶב בֵּ֛ית יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לְכׇל־נֶ֑דֶר כִּ֧י תוֹעֲבַ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶֽם׃ | 19 | You shall not bring the fee of a whore or the pay of a dog into the house of your God יהוה in fulfillment of any vow, for both are abhorrent to your God יהוה. |

The Torah prohibits bringing the earnings from prostitution or the price of a dog into the House of God for any vow, as they are considered abominations, and this extends to their processed products. Interest is warned against as it leads to moral degradation, and women are cautioned against negative traits. The Shekhinah removes itself from Israel due to slander but appears when charity is given. Rabbi Elazar was exonerated after a misunderstanding regarding a Torah verse, and the Mishnah states that animals born from certain contexts are invalid for sacrifice. The Talmud debates the use of animals given as payment to a prostitute or in exchange for a dog as offerings in the Temple, with differing opinions on their status.

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| לֹא־תַשִּׁ֣יךְ לְאָחִ֔יךָ נֶ֥שֶׁךְ כֶּ֖סֶף נֶ֣שֶׁךְ אֹ֑כֶל נֶ֕שֶׁךְ כׇּל־דָּבָ֖ר אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִשָּֽׁךְ׃ | 20 | You shall not deduct interest from loans to your fellow Israelites, whether in money or food or anything else that can be deducted as interest; |

The text prohibits lending money with interest to fellow Jews, with blessings promised for following this commandment. Halakhah prohibits borrowing with interest, forbids Israelites from lending or borrowing with interest but allows it with gentiles, and outlines additional restrictions during loans. The Midrash emphasizes the negative consequences of charging interest and praises Torah scholars. The Mishnah details how various parties involved in loans can violate prohibitions of interest, while the Talmud discusses the broader application of interest to loans of money and food. The Tanakh prohibits charging interest to the poor among God’s people, and Targum translations also prohibit usury on loans to one’s neighbor.

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| לַנׇּכְרִ֣י תַשִּׁ֔יךְ וּלְאָחִ֖יךָ לֹ֣א תַשִּׁ֑יךְ לְמַ֨עַן יְבָרֶכְךָ֜ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ בְּכֹל֙ מִשְׁלַ֣ח יָדֶ֔ךָ עַל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 21 | but you may deduct interest from loans to foreigners. Do not deduct interest from loans to your fellow Israelites, so that your God יהוה may bless you in all your undertakings in the land that you are about to enter and possess. |

The Torah permits charging interest to gentiles but prohibits it among fellow Jews, emphasizing brotherly love and avoiding desecrating God’s name. It is a positive commandment to lend money to gentiles at interest, as stated in Deuteronomy 23:21, and prohibited to delay in paying vows to charity. Lending with interest is seen as fair with non-Jews and a form of charity within the Jewish community. Maimonides’ view on charging interest to Gentiles as a positive commandment is discussed, contrasting with the prohibition within the Jewish community. The lending of charity-funds upon a definite rate of interest is not permitted, as charity-funds are considered money belonging to “thy brother.” Interest taken by a Jew from a gentile will ultimately reach the government treasury, with the Talmud discussing the implications for the lender, borrower, guarantor, and witness.

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| כִּֽי־תִדֹּ֥ר נֶ֙דֶר֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לֹ֥א תְאַחֵ֖ר לְשַׁלְּמ֑וֹ כִּֽי־דָרֹ֨שׁ יִדְרְשֶׁ֜נּוּ יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ מֵֽעִמָּ֔ךְ וְהָיָ֥ה בְךָ֖ חֵֽטְא׃ | 22 | When you make a vow to your God יהוה, do not put off fulfilling it, for your God יהוה will require it of you, and you will have incurred guilt; |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of making a Unification before performing a mitzvah to ensure prompt fulfillment. Commentary highlights the consequences of delaying vows to God, with punishment potentially including loss of loved ones or possessions. Halakhah stresses the need to fulfill vows and pledges promptly to avoid transgressions, with violations of the Torah’s commands resulting from delays. Jewish Thought discusses the importance of respecting all beings as God’s possessions and fulfilling duties towards oneself, others, and God. Midrash warns against delaying vows, with severe consequences such as death or transgressions. Mishnah establishes different New Year dates and addresses rules for vows and offerings. Musar emphasizes the need to promptly fulfill vows and charity to avoid punishment, with vows only to be made in times of distress. Quoting Commentary highlights the importance of fulfilling vows promptly, with consequences for delays. Talmud discusses the prohibition against delaying vows and offerings, and the ability of fathers and husbands to nullify vows made by daughters and wives. Tanakh outlines offerings to be made to God at specified times. Targum emphasizes the accountability individuals have for fulfilling vows to God promptly. Tosefta specifies that vows must be fulfilled within a year, with festivals observed in order.

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| וְכִ֥י תֶחְדַּ֖ל לִנְדֹּ֑ר לֹֽא־יִהְיֶ֥ה בְךָ֖ חֵֽטְא׃ | 23 | whereas you incur no guilt if you refrain from vowing. |

The text discusses the consequences of making vows to God and the importance of fulfilling them to avoid sin. It is advised to avoid making vows altogether to prevent negative outcomes, as unfulfilled vows can lead to various sins. The Law allows for sacrifices in place of vows, emphasizing the importance of promptly fulfilling obligations. The Sages dissolved four types of vows without the need for a halakhic authority, and it is better not to vow at all to avoid sin and negligence. Fulfilling vows and charity promptly is emphasized, as delays can result in punishment.

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| מוֹצָ֥א שְׂפָתֶ֖יךָ תִּשְׁמֹ֣ר וְעָשִׂ֑יתָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֨ר נָדַ֜רְתָּ לַיהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ נְדָבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבַּ֖רְתָּ בְּפִֽיךָ׃ | 24 | You must fulfill what has crossed your lips and perform what you have voluntarily vowed to your God יהוה, having made the promise with your own mouth. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of guarding speech, Torah study, and charity in forming the holy mouth of the tzaddik. Halakhah stresses the fulfillment of verbal commitments, including vows, sacrifices, and charity, as commanded in Deuteronomy 23:24. The Mishnah discusses nuances of vow offerings and gift offerings, while Musar emphasizes sanctifying the mouth and upholding one’s word. The Talmud delves into the significance of fulfilling verbal commitments and the intentions behind them, citing Deuteronomy 23:24. Jephthah’s vow in Judges 11:30-31 exemplifies the seriousness of vows, while Targum Jonathan expands on the importance of keeping promises made to God.

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| כִּ֤י תָבֹא֙ בְּכֶ֣רֶם רֵעֶ֔ךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ֧ עֲנָבִ֛ים כְּנַפְשְׁךָ֖ שׇׂבְעֶ֑ךָ וְאֶֽל־כֶּלְיְךָ֖ לֹ֥א תִתֵּֽן׃ | 25 | When you enter a fellow [Israelite]’s vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you want, until you are full, but you must not put any in your vessel. |

The text discusses the metaphor of entering a friend’s vineyard to eat grapes as representing intellectual engagement with Torah, emphasizing learning for the purpose of serving Hashem rather than for intellectual pleasure, aligning with the mitzvah of not muzzling an ox on the threshing floor to elevate our animalistic soul and material possessions through service to Hashem. Workers hired to harvest grapes are allowed to eat while working but not excessively or take any home, respecting boundaries and obligations in relation to property rights and labor agreements. Laborers are entitled to eat while working in the field, specifically from what grows from the ground and only during the task at hand, with the Mishnah detailing the conditions under which a worker may eat. The Talmud discusses the halakha that laborers may eat from produce attached to the ground based on Deuteronomy 23:25, exploring interpretations and rights of the laborer to eat from the produce. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 23:25 discuss the permissibility of eating grapes while working in a neighbor’s vineyard until satisfaction but prohibiting taking any home in a container.

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| כִּ֤י תָבֹא֙ בְּקָמַ֣ת רֵעֶ֔ךָ וְקָטַפְתָּ֥ מְלִילֹ֖ת בְּיָדֶ֑ךָ וְחֶרְמֵשׁ֙ לֹ֣א תָנִ֔יף עַ֖ל קָמַ֥ת רֵעֶֽךָ׃ | 26 | When you enter a fellow [Israelite]’s field of standing grain, you may pluck ears with your hand; but you must not put a sickle to your neighbor’s grain. |

Workers hired to work with produce can eat from it while working, exempting them from tithing, as stated in Deuteronomy 23:25-26. The Torah emphasizes actively seeking peace and pursuing it, as seen in Israel’s actions in seeking peaceful passage through Sichon’s land. The Mishnah and Talmud discuss the rights of laborers to eat from the produce they work with, with different perspectives on who is allowed to eat and when, based on specific verses in Deuteronomy 23:26. The law of not muzzling an ox while it is treading grain is paralleled by a similar law for humans working in fields, emphasizing the importance of allowing workers and animals to benefit from the food they are working with.

## Deuteronomy 24

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| כִּֽי־יִקַּ֥ח אִ֛ישׁ אִשָּׁ֖ה וּבְעָלָ֑הּ וְהָיָ֞ה אִם־לֹ֧א תִמְצָא־חֵ֣ן בְּעֵינָ֗יו כִּי־מָ֤צָא בָהּ֙ עֶרְוַ֣ת דָּבָ֔ר וְכָ֨תַב לָ֜הּ סֵ֤פֶר כְּרִיתֻת֙ וְנָתַ֣ן בְּיָדָ֔הּ וְשִׁלְּחָ֖הּ מִבֵּיתֽוֹ׃ | 1 | A man takes a woman [into his household as his wife] and becomes her husband. She fails to please him because he finds something obnoxious about her, and he writes her a bill of divorcement, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house; |

Chasidut discusses the use of a “sefer of separation” and bitter waters in Jewish divorce proceedings, while Commentary emphasizes the respect for women in the divorce process. Guides and Halakhah detail the requirements for a valid bill of divorce, while Jewish Thought discusses the importance of love and mutual assistance in relationships. Midrash explores scenarios leading to divorce, Mishnah outlines various rules and scenarios related to divorce, and Musar emphasizes the spiritual significance of divorce. Quoting Commentary and Talmud provide further interpretations of divorce requirements, and Targum explains the process of divorce based on biblical texts.

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| וְיָצְאָ֖ה מִבֵּית֑וֹ וְהָלְכָ֖ה וְהָיְתָ֥ה לְאִישׁ־אַחֵֽר׃ | 2 | she leaves his household and becomes [the wife] of another man ; |

Various Jewish commentaries, Halakhah, and Talmudic texts explore the implications of divorce, marriage, and adultery based on Deuteronomy 24:2. Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe emphasizes the reasons for divorce, while Mishnah Ketubot and Kiddushin detail the process of acquiring and dissolving marriage bonds. Jewish thought highlights the partnership between man and woman, and Midrashic texts discuss consequences of adultery. The Talmud discusses the mitzva of divorcing a wife found to have done something unseemly, and Targum interpretations allow a woman to leave her husband’s home to marry another man. Rabbi Meir’s Tosefta compares attitudes towards women to food reactions, emphasizing the importance of following Torah commands to prevent negative consequences.

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| וּשְׂנֵאָהּ֮ הָאִ֣ישׁ הָאַחֲרוֹן֒ וְכָ֨תַב לָ֜הּ סֵ֤פֶר כְּרִיתֻת֙ וְנָתַ֣ן בְּיָדָ֔הּ וְשִׁלְּחָ֖הּ מִבֵּית֑וֹ א֣וֹ כִ֤י יָמוּת֙ הָאִ֣ישׁ הָאַחֲר֔וֹן אֲשֶׁר־לְקָחָ֥הּ ל֖וֹ לְאִשָּֽׁה׃ | 3 | then this latter man rejects her, writes her a bill of divorcement, hands it to her, and sends her away from his household; or the man dies who had last taken her as his wife. |

Chasidut emphasizes the power of prayer to change decrees, leading Moses to pray for himself. Commentary delves into the implications of divorce, with specific requirements for valid documents. Halakhah outlines the process of divorce, a positive commandment for separation. Midrash explores redemption through money, consequences of adultery, and the severity of the act. Mishnah details invalid bills of divorce and differing opinions on pre-written documents. Quoting Commentary discusses defilement during divorce, women’s exemption from certain mitzvot, and requirements for divorce documents. Responsa addresses double indecision in Jewish law. Talmud clarifies the rules for inheritance and bills of divorce, while Targum and Tosefta offer additional insights on divorce and consequences for mistreating one’s wife.

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| לֹא־יוּכַ֣ל בַּעְלָ֣הּ הָרִאשׁ֣וֹן אֲשֶֽׁר־שִׁ֠לְּחָ֠הּ לָשׁ֨וּב לְקַחְתָּ֜הּ לִהְי֧וֹת ל֣וֹ לְאִשָּׁ֗ה אַחֲרֵי֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר הֻטַּמָּ֔אָה כִּֽי־תוֹעֵבָ֥ה הִ֖וא לִפְנֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֑ה וְלֹ֤א תַחֲטִיא֙ אֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָֽה׃ | 4 | Then the first husband who divorced her shall not take her [into his household] to become his wife again, since she has been defiled —for that would be abhorrent to יהוה. You must not bring sin upon the land that your God יהוה is giving you as a heritage. |

The verse in Deuteronomy 24:4 prohibits a husband from remarrying his divorced wife if she had committed adultery or been defiled by another man to prevent wife exchange and maintain marriage sanctity. Various laws related to marriage and divorce prohibit certain relationships and encourage holiness. The Law aims to balance extremes and guide the soul towards moderation and virtue. Mishnah discusses offspring from forbidden marriages, while Musar draws parallels between taking back a remarried wife and soul reincarnation. The Talmud explores scenarios of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, including cases where a woman remarries her first husband after marrying another. Jeremiah 3:1 questions if a man can return to his wife after she marries another, likening it to defilement, and Targum states that a defiled divorced woman cannot remarry her first husband.

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| כִּֽי־יִקַּ֥ח אִישׁ֙ אִשָּׁ֣ה חֲדָשָׁ֔ה לֹ֤א יֵצֵא֙ בַּצָּבָ֔א וְלֹא־יַעֲבֹ֥ר עָלָ֖יו לְכׇל־דָּבָ֑ר נָקִ֞י יִהְיֶ֤ה לְבֵיתוֹ֙ שָׁנָ֣ה אֶחָ֔ת וְשִׂמַּ֖ח אֶת־אִשְׁתּ֥וֹ אֲשֶׁר־לָקָֽח׃ | 5 | When a man has newly taken a woman [into his household as his wife], he shall not go out with the army or be assigned to it for any purpose; he shall be exempt one year for the sake of his household, to give happiness to the woman he has taken. |

Chasidut discusses two levels of righteous people serving God out of awe or love, as mentioned in the Zohar. Halakhah mandates a groom to focus on his new wife for a year, exempting him from military service. The Midrash tells a story of a widow saved by her understanding of this exemption. The Talmud explores blessings at weddings, exemptions from military service for various reasons, and the punishment of King Asa. The Tosefta discusses laws regarding betrothal and marriage, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling marital obligations within a specific timeframe.

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| לֹא־יַחֲבֹ֥ל רֵחַ֖יִם וָרָ֑כֶב כִּי־נֶ֖פֶשׁ ה֥וּא חֹבֵֽל׃ | 6 | A handmill or an upper millstone shall not be taken in pawn, for that would be taking someone’s life in pawn. |

The Torah prohibits taking a man’s life as collateral, including the lower or upper millstone, as stated in Deuteronomy 24:6. This prohibition extends to items used in food preparation, with each utensil taken as collateral considered independently liable for transgression. The Law serves to create humility, perpetuate memory of past events, and promote kindness and mercy towards others. Mishnah Bava Metzia expands on this, stating that anything necessary for food, like a millstone, cannot be taken as a pledge. The Gemara addresses the liability for each individual item taken as collateral separately.

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| כִּי־יִמָּצֵ֣א אִ֗ישׁ גֹּנֵ֨ב נֶ֤פֶשׁ מֵאֶחָיו֙ מִבְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל וְהִתְעַמֶּר־בּ֖וֹ וּמְכָר֑וֹ וּמֵת֙ הַגַּנָּ֣ב הַה֔וּא וּבִֽעַרְתָּ֥ הָרָ֖ע מִקִּרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 7 | If a party is found to have kidnapped—and then enslaved or sold—a fellow Israelite, that kidnapper shall die; thus you will sweep out evil from your midst. |

The Torah specifies that a man found stealing a person among his brethren of the children of Israel must be witnessed and warned before being liable to the death penalty, treating the victim as a slave is necessary for the penalty to apply, and the victim must be healthy enough to grow up to be a man for the legislation to apply, excluding babies under 30 days old. The Babylonian Talmud states that if a man steals a fellow Israelite and treats him as a slave or sells him, the thief shall be put to death to eliminate evil from the community. The Mishnah in Sanhedrin 11:1 lists the transgressors who are subject to the court-imposed death penalty by strangulation, including those who abduct Jewish individuals. Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis have differing opinions on certain cases, such as abduction of a half-slave half-freeman. Rashi explains that both men and women who steal and sell a person are punishable by death. The Talmud discusses the liability for one who abducts slaves or half-slave half-freemen, as well as the distinction between “of the Children of Israel” and “of his brothers” in relation to liability for abduction.

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| הִשָּׁ֧מֶר בְּנֶֽגַע־הַצָּרַ֛עַת לִשְׁמֹ֥ר מְאֹ֖ד וְלַעֲשׂ֑וֹת כְּכֹל֩ אֲשֶׁר־יוֹר֨וּ אֶתְכֶ֜ם הַכֹּהֲנִ֧ים הַלְוִיִּ֛ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוִּיתִ֖ם תִּשְׁמְר֥וּ לַעֲשֽׂוֹת׃ | 8 | In cases of a skin affection be most careful to do exactly as the levitical priests instruct you. Take care to do as I have commanded them. |

The Torah emphasizes the importance of following the instructions of the priests, particularly in dealing with leprosy, with circumcision being a significant mitzvah that supersedes the prohibition against removing signs of tzara’at. Slander is considered a severe sin, leading to leprosy as seen in the case of Miriam, highlighting the need to guard one’s tongue against evil speech. Mishnah discusses different restrictions and rules regarding cleanliness and uncleanness, while the Talmud explores various prohibitions related to leprosy and the importance of following instructions from the priests. Tanakh instructs reporting skin afflictions to the priests for examination, emphasizing the divine origin of these instructions.

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| זָכ֕וֹר אֵ֧ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֛ה יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לְמִרְיָ֑ם בַּדֶּ֖רֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶ֥ם מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 9 | Remember what your God יהוה did to Miriam on the journey after you left Egypt. |

The positive commandment to remember Miriam’s punishment for speaking slander serves as a warning against engaging in harmful speech, highlighting the consequences of lashon hara. Various afflictions like tzara’at are linked to speaking negatively about others, cautioning against gatherings of wicked individuals who engage in undesirable speech. The importance of guarding one’s speech and avoiding slander is underscored throughout the commentary, emphasizing the power of words to heal or harm. Miriam’s punishment serves as a lesson on the severity of gossiping and speaking lashon hara, with specific reminders to avoid slander as it can lead to severe consequences both in this world and the next.

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| כִּֽי־תַשֶּׁ֥ה בְרֵֽעֲךָ֖ מַשַּׁ֣את מְא֑וּמָה לֹא־תָבֹ֥א אֶל־בֵּית֖וֹ לַעֲבֹ֥ט עֲבֹטֽוֹ׃ | 10 | When you make a loan of any sort to your compatriot, you must not enter the house to seize the pledge. |

Rashi explains “כי תשה ברעך” as exacting a debt, while Ibn Ezra interprets “משאת מאומה” as any type of debt. Sforno emphasizes the inclusion of compensating for small tasks, while Rabbeinu Bahya stresses the dignity of borrowers by prohibiting lenders from entering their homes for collateral. Halakhah prohibits taking collateral by force and requires its return promptly, while the Talmud debates various scenarios related to debt collection and collateral. The Responsa detail conflicting opinions on forcefully taking possession of a debtor’s valuables. The Mishnah explains the consequences of transgressing negative commandments without fulfilling corresponding positive ones.

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| בַּח֖וּץ תַּעֲמֹ֑ד וְהָאִ֗ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֤ר אַתָּה֙ נֹשֶׁ֣ה ב֔וֹ יוֹצִ֥יא אֵלֶ֛יךָ אֶֽת־הַעֲב֖וֹט הַחֽוּצָה׃ | 11 | You must remain outside, while the party to whom you made the loan brings the pledge out to you. |

The Halakhah prohibits taking surety from a debtor by force, requiring a judge’s command for this action, and warns against entering a debtor’s home to seize property. The Mishnah states that a creditor can only take collateral through a court-appointed agent, not on his own, and cannot take essential items like a pillow or plow. The Talmud discusses the rules for collecting collateral, with Torah law allowing collection from inferior-quality land and the Sages permitting collection from intermediate-quality land to encourage lending. Rashbam emphasizes that a pledge should not be something the debtor cannot do without, and Bartenura explains that only the lowest quality land should be collected as payment.

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| וְאִם־אִ֥ישׁ עָנִ֖י ה֑וּא לֹ֥א תִשְׁכַּ֖ב בַּעֲבֹטֽוֹ׃ | 12 | If that party is needy, you shall not go to sleep in that pledge; |

The text discusses the prohibition of a creditor sleeping with a debtor’s pledge, especially if the debtor is poor and has no alternative pledge, in which case the creditor must return one of two similar items used as security. The collateral must be returned to the owner when needed, as stated in Deuteronomy 24:12, with failure to do so violating multiple negative commandments, including “Do not sleep with his collateral.” Utilizing the Daughter of a Voice leads to wealth, even for the poor who engage in hidden wisdom according to Kabbalah. In Mishnah Gittin 5:1, it is stated that the court appraises superior-quality land for payment to injured parties, while a creditor can collect a debt from the debtor’s intermediate-quality land. The failure to return a pledge when needed may provoke the angel of death into making a “mistake” in returning souls to God, as seen in the example of the nursery teacher, highlighting the importance of treating debtors fairly, especially in cases involving poor individuals according to Musar.

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| הָשֵׁב֩ תָּשִׁ֨יב ל֤וֹ אֶֽת־הַעֲבוֹט֙ כְּב֣וֹא הַשֶּׁ֔מֶשׁ וְשָׁכַ֥ב בְּשַׂלְמָת֖וֹ וּבֵֽרְכֶ֑ךָּ וּלְךָ֙ תִּהְיֶ֣ה צְדָקָ֔ה לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 13 | you must return the pledge at sundown, that its owner may sleep in the cloth and bless you; and it will be to your merit before your God יהוה. |

The importance of promptly returning collateral to a borrower is emphasized in various texts, highlighting acts of righteousness and compassion towards debtors. Different sources discuss the significance of returning pledges at appropriate times, such as sunset or sunrise, to ensure the well-being of the borrower and avoid hindering God’s generosity. The concept of tzedaka is portrayed as more than legal justice, emphasizing kindness and moral duties towards others, with the focus on spiritual growth over material wealth. Various blessings and rewards for righteousness are highlighted, with the importance of returning collateral to debtors promptly to show compassion for the poor. The Talmud explores the obligations of a creditor in returning collateral to a debtor, emphasizing acts of righteousness and the nuances of different types of collateral based on specific situations and verses in the Torah. King Munbaz’s example of storing treasures in heaven through charity and lovingkindness is presented as a model for all, regardless of social status, to fulfill their moral duties towards others.

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| לֹא־תַעֲשֹׁ֥ק שָׂכִ֖יר עָנִ֣י וְאֶבְי֑וֹן מֵאַחֶ֕יךָ א֧וֹ מִגֵּרְךָ֛ אֲשֶׁ֥ר בְּאַרְצְךָ֖ בִּשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 14 | You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow Israelite or a stranger in one of the communities of your land. |

The text emphasizes the importance of not wronging poor, needy, or hired workers, extending the law to all workers, including strangers, widows, and orphans. The prohibition against exploitation includes withholding owed wages from a worker, as stated in Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:14, with transgressors facing consequences equivalent to robbers. Justice is highlighted as the first requisite for living in a Divine world, respecting all beings as creations of God and fulfilling their rightful claims. The severity of holding back wages from hired laborers is discussed in various texts, emphasizing fair treatment and prompt payment.

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| בְּיוֹמוֹ֩ תִתֵּ֨ן שְׂכָר֜וֹ וְֽלֹא־תָב֧וֹא עָלָ֣יו הַשֶּׁ֗מֶשׁ כִּ֤י עָנִי֙ ה֔וּא וְאֵלָ֕יו ה֥וּא נֹשֵׂ֖א אֶת־נַפְשׁ֑וֹ וְלֹֽא־יִקְרָ֤א עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ אֶל־יְהֹוָ֔ה וְהָיָ֥ה בְךָ֖ חֵֽטְא׃ | 15 | You must pay out the wages due on the same day, before the sun sets, for the worker is needy and urgently depends on it; else a cry to יהוה will be issued against you and you will incur guilt. |

The importance of paying wages promptly to hired laborers is emphasized in various texts, including Chasidut, Commentary, Guides, Halakhah, Jewish Thought, Midrash, Mishnah, Musar, Quoting Commentary, Responsa, Talmud, and Targum. The texts highlight the significance of timely payment to ensure the well-being of the worker, avoid exploitation, and fulfill obligations according to Jewish law, with references to biblical passages and rabbinic teachings supporting this principle. Failure to pay on time is considered a violation, risking harm to the worker and potential sin.

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| לֹֽא־יוּמְת֤וּ אָבוֹת֙ עַל־בָּנִ֔ים וּבָנִ֖ים לֹא־יוּמְת֣וּ עַל־אָב֑וֹת אִ֥ישׁ בְּחֶטְא֖וֹ יוּמָֽתוּ׃ | 16 | Parents shall not be put to death for children, nor children be put to death for parents: they shall each be put to death only for their own crime. |

The Zohar emphasizes consoling mourners with truthful words, while the Talmud addresses theodicy by stating that the prosperity of the righteous indicates their righteousness. The Torah prohibits punishing fathers for children’s sins, and vice versa, with a focus on individual accountability. Mishnah Sanhedrin discusses disqualifying relatives from serving as witnesses, while Musar highlights the importance of raising an orphan for the right reasons. Various commentaries and texts explore the consequences of parental actions on children, emphasizing divine justice and individual responsibility. The Talmud and Tanakh reinforce the principle that each person is accountable for their own actions, not those of their family members.

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| לֹ֣א תַטֶּ֔ה מִשְׁפַּ֖ט גֵּ֣ר יָת֑וֹם וְלֹ֣א תַחֲבֹ֔ל בֶּ֖גֶד אַלְמָנָֽה׃ | 17 | You shall not subvert the rights of the stranger or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow’s garment in pawn. |

The texts emphasize the importance of justice and fairness, prohibiting the taking of collateral from widows and highlighting the vulnerability of the defenseless, as seen in Deuteronomy 24:17. The Mishnah and Talmud discuss specific laws and consequences related to these prohibitions, with a focus on protecting widows from potential harm to their reputation and dignity. Additionally, the texts stress the acceptance of divine authority and the yoke of Torah as essential for fulfilling one’s obligations and avoiding servitude.

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| וְזָכַרְתָּ֗ כִּ֣י עֶ֤בֶד הָיִ֙יתָ֙ בְּמִצְרַ֔יִם וַֽיִּפְדְּךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ מִשָּׁ֑ם עַל־כֵּ֞ן אָנֹכִ֤י מְצַוְּךָ֙ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֶת־הַדָּבָ֖ר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 18 | Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that your God יהוה redeemed you from there; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment. |

The text emphasizes the importance of remembering past slavery in Egypt to cultivate empathy, compassion, and observance of God’s statutes, even at a financial cost. The Halakhah specifies the mixing of wine with water for the four cups, emphasizing the importance of freedom in its consumption. Jewish Thought stresses the equal treatment and love for strangers, rejecting xenophobia and hatred towards outsiders. The Midrash interprets Psalm 18:19 as referencing Pharaoh and Amalek, with support from God for the righteous. Rabbeinu Bahya explains the prohibition of cutting fruit-bearing trees as essential for human life and livelihood. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 24:18 underscores the importance of remembering past slavery in Egypt and God’s redemption.

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| כִּ֣י תִקְצֹר֩ קְצִֽירְךָ֨ בְשָׂדֶ֜ךָ וְשָֽׁכַחְתָּ֧ עֹ֣מֶר בַּשָּׂדֶ֗ה לֹ֤א תָשׁוּב֙ לְקַחְתּ֔וֹ לַגֵּ֛ר לַיָּת֥וֹם וְלָאַלְמָנָ֖ה יִהְיֶ֑ה לְמַ֤עַן יְבָרֶכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכֹ֖ל מַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יָדֶֽיךָ׃ | 19 | When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow—in order that your God יהוה may bless you in all your undertakings. |

Rashi explains that forgotten sheaves in the field should be left for the poor, bringing blessings from God, while Rav Hirsch emphasizes the importance of sharing with others. Halakhah prohibits taking forgotten sheaves and applies to grapes and underdeveloped clusters, with specific guidelines for various scenarios. Jewish Thought emphasizes kindness and compassion in fulfilling mitzvot, while the Mishnah discusses rules for forgotten sheaves and gifts for the poor. The Talmud clarifies obligations for proselytes regarding gleanings and forgotten sheaves, and the Tosefta discusses scenarios where forgotten produce does not qualify as Shikcha, highlighting the importance of fulfilling commandments.

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| כִּ֤י תַחְבֹּט֙ זֵֽיתְךָ֔ לֹ֥א תְפַאֵ֖ר אַחֲרֶ֑יךָ לַגֵּ֛ר לַיָּת֥וֹם וְלָאַלְמָנָ֖ה יִהְיֶֽה׃ | 20 | When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. |

Various commentaries, halakhic discussions, Midrash teachings, Mishnah laws, and Talmudic debates emphasize the importance of leaving some produce for the poor, not mistreating trees, and promoting peace in agricultural practices. The Targum commentary highlights the significance of leaving fruit for the less fortunate when harvesting olive trees.

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| כִּ֤י תִבְצֹר֙ כַּרְמְךָ֔ לֹ֥א תְעוֹלֵ֖ל אַחֲרֶ֑יךָ לַגֵּ֛ר לַיָּת֥וֹם וְלָאַלְמָנָ֖ה יִהְיֶֽה׃ | 21 | When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. |

Rashi explains that ollelot are grape clusters without arms or drippings, belonging to the vineyard owner, not the poor, while Siftei Chakhamim clarifies which grapes go to the poor. The poor are entitled to three clusters that will produce a revi’it of wine, and the obligation to leave incompletely formed grape clusters and the corner of the vineyard is derived from Deuteronomy 24:21. Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva have differing opinions on defective clusters, with Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel disagreeing on the laws of the added fifth and removal. Leviticus 19:10 emphasizes leaving some produce for the poor and strangers, reflecting generosity and consideration for those in need.

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| וְזָ֣כַרְתָּ֔ כִּי־עֶ֥בֶד הָיִ֖יתָ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם עַל־כֵּ֞ן אָנֹכִ֤י מְצַוְּךָ֙ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֶת־הַדָּבָ֖ר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 22 | Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment. |

Ibn Ezra notes Deuteronomy 24:22 is about helping strangers, not widows or orphans. Sforno stresses the importance of remembering past neediness, even for unripe grapes. Steinsaltz points out the Torah’s reminder of slavery in Egypt to understand and fulfill the commandment of helping the impoverished. The text instructs leaving parts of the harvest for the alien, fatherless, and widow as a reminder of slavery in Egypt and a command to show compassion. The rationale is supported by Exodus 22:23-24. The Targum commentary emphasizes the Israelites’ slavery in Egypt as the reason for following certain laws.

## Deuteronomy 25

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| כִּֽי־יִהְיֶ֥ה רִיב֙ בֵּ֣ין אֲנָשִׁ֔ים וְנִגְּשׁ֥וּ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּ֖ט וּשְׁפָט֑וּם וְהִצְדִּ֙יקוּ֙ אֶת־הַצַּדִּ֔יק וְהִרְשִׁ֖יעוּ אֶת־הָרָשָֽׁע׃ | 1 | When there is a dispute between two parties and they go to law, and a decision is rendered declaring the one in the right and the other in the wrong— |

Ramban explains that stripes are for transgressions, not civil cases, while Rashi highlights negative consequences of quarrels. Ibn Ezra and Tur HaArokh discuss judgment in quarrel cases, and Rav Hirsch details laws on lashes. Siftei Chakhamim interprets texts for lash punishments. Halakhah dictates punishment for collusive witnesses. Jewish Thought stresses respect for all beings. Midrash shows quarrels’ negative impact, Mishnah details slave acquisition and lash judgments, Musar warns against quarrels leading to strife. Quoting Commentary analyzes Noah and Yehudah. Talmud discusses flogging conspiring witnesses. Tanakh warns against association with the wicked. Targum explains dispute resolution through courts.

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| וְהָיָ֛ה אִם־בִּ֥ן הַכּ֖וֹת הָרָשָׁ֑ע וְהִפִּיל֤וֹ הַשֹּׁפֵט֙ וְהִכָּ֣הוּ לְפָנָ֔יו כְּדֵ֥י רִשְׁעָת֖וֹ בְּמִסְפָּֽר׃ | 2 | if the guilty one is to be flogged, the magistrate shall have the person lie down and shall supervise the giving of lashes, by count, as warranted by the offense. |

Chasidut emphasizes the significance of reciting thirty-nine words in a verse as a symbol of God’s compassion reducing punishment, particularly the thirty-nine lashes. Halakhah commands the whipping of the wicked, with lashes given based on the severity of transgressions and not exceeding forty. Mishnah outlines regulations for flogging, including the position of the person receiving lashes and the strength of the administration. Talmud discusses the derivation of the halakha for flogging conspiring witnesses, the exemption from payment for those liable to receive lashes, and the requirement for twenty-three judges in cases concerning lashes.

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| אַרְבָּעִ֥ים יַכֶּ֖נּוּ לֹ֣א יֹסִ֑יף פֶּן־יֹסִ֨יף לְהַכֹּת֤וֹ עַל־אֵ֙לֶּה֙ מַכָּ֣ה רַבָּ֔ה וְנִקְלָ֥ה אָחִ֖יךָ לְעֵינֶֽיךָ׃ | 3 | The guilty one may be given up to forty lashes, but not more, lest being flogged further, to excess, your peer be degraded before your eyes. |

The repetition of “Tabernacle, the Tabernacle” in Exodus 38:21 corresponds to the thirty-nine works deduced from the construction of the Tabernacle, with guarding the brit resulting in works akin to the Tabernacle when built up, while defiling the brit leads to works akin to the Tabernacle when destroyed. Faith in the sages is emphasized, even when their actions may seem to go against the Torah, as they have the authority to interpret it. The square is concealed within the circle, with the main power of the samekh coming from the mem in the aspect of “give him forty lashes” in Deuteronomy 25:3. The custom of reciting thirty-nine words instead of forty in the verse with thirteen Hebrew words is seen as an expression of God’s compassion reducing the punishment from forty lashes to thirty-nine. The Torah prohibits exceeding forty lashes when administering punishment, with the number of lashes being a heavenly decree and not based on the judge’s discretion. The lashes are to be administered to the chest and back, with each blow being significant and symbolic, as the guilty party must endure the exact number of lashes without adding more to avoid humiliation. The guilty party is referred to as “your brother” after receiving the lashes, and the lashes serve as an atonement for sin, with the number 39 having symbolic significance. The Torah emphasizes not degrading the guilty party and not exceeding the prescribed number of lashes. The exile to a city of refuge for an unwitting murderer serves as a form of atonement, protection, and punishment. The punishment of lashes is reserved for those who intentionally violate a prohibition by Torah law, serving as a means of punishment, deterrence, and atonement. The public administration of lashes adds humiliation to the physical pain, serving as a deterrent, while also allowing for the transgressor to be reintegrated into the community as atonement for their sins, even for severe transgressions punishable by excision from the World-to-Come [karet]. Restoring rabbinic ordination is seen as a way to restore the atonement aspect of the lashes. The prohibition against adding lashes when whipping a person liable for punishment is derived from Deuteronomy 25:3. The Torah also prohibits striking a father or mother, with an emphasis on not exceeding the prescribed number of lashes. The judge must assess the ability of the person being lashed to endure the punishment. The Torah prohibits excessive flogging, and even striking a righteous person should not exceed the appropriate punishment. The prohibition against adding lashes applies to all Israelites, not just those liable for punishment. The Torah also prohibits injuring oneself or another person, with a focus on not causing harm beyond what is necessary. The Sanhedrin administers lashes according to the strength of the person, ensuring that the number of lashes does not exceed the prescribed limit. The Torah emphasizes the importance of not causing harm to others, even unintentionally, and the need for proper assessment before administering punishment. In the Guide for the Perplexed, Maimonides categorizes the precepts of the Law based on the punishment for their transgression into four classes, ranging from death sentences to no punishment at all for certain transgressions that involve no act. In Akeidat Yitzchak, it is explained that the honor due to Torah is primary in nature, but the honor due to the Torah scholar is primary in terms of study, as the scholar is the one who enlightens. The Talmud points out the importance of honoring Torah scholars over the Torah itself, as the benefits of Torah come through contact with the scholar. The number forty symbolizes punishment and completion in

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| לֹא־תַחְסֹ֥ם שׁ֖וֹר בְּדִישֽׁוֹ׃ | 4 | You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing. |

The prohibition of muzzling animals while working, as outlined in Deuteronomy 25:4, applies to all animals and beasts to ensure their benefit. This prohibition is discussed in various commentaries, including the importance of compassion towards animals and the consequences of violating this law. The Mishnah and Talmud elaborate on the rules for laborers eating from produce, the types of animals used for labor, and the application of lashes for violations. The law of not muzzling an ox while threshing grain parallels other laws allowing workers to eat from their neighbor’s fields, emphasizing the importance of treating animals and humans with kindness.

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| כִּֽי־יֵשְׁב֨וּ אַחִ֜ים יַחְדָּ֗ו וּמֵ֨ת אַחַ֤ד מֵהֶם֙ וּבֵ֣ן אֵֽין־ל֔וֹ לֹֽא־תִהְיֶ֧ה אֵֽשֶׁת־הַמֵּ֛ת הַח֖וּצָה לְאִ֣ישׁ זָ֑ר יְבָמָהּ֙ יָבֹ֣א עָלֶ֔יהָ וּלְקָחָ֥הּ ל֛וֹ לְאִשָּׁ֖ה וְיִבְּמָֽהּ׃ | 5 | When brothers dwell together and one of them dies and leaves no offspring, the wife of the deceased shall not become that of another party, outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall unite with her: he shall take her as his wife and perform the levir’s duty. |

The Zohar emphasizes the importance of true comfort for mourners over simply speaking the truth, while the Talmud discusses theodicy and the idea that a righteous person who suffers may not be perfectly righteous. Levirate marriage is a requirement in cases where a man dies childless, with the Torah specifying that the brother-in-law must marry the widow, and the Mishnah covers various scenarios related to levirate marriage, inheritance, and impurity. The prohibition of marrying a brother’s wife is biblical, and the law in Leviticus prohibits uncovering the nakedness of one’s brother’s wife.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה הַבְּכוֹר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תֵּלֵ֔ד יָק֕וּם עַל־שֵׁ֥ם אָחִ֖יו הַמֵּ֑ת וְלֹֽא־יִמָּחֶ֥ה שְׁמ֖וֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 6 | The first child that she bears shall be accounted to the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out in Israel. |

The commentary discusses the laws of Chaliza and Levirate marriage, as outlined in Deuteronomy 25:5-6, and how they apply in various situations, such as childless widows, barren women, and the inheritance rights of the levir. The Talmud addresses cases of forbidden women in levirate marriage, including exemptions for aylonit and the rights of inheritance for the brother who consummates the marriage. In the Tanakh, Boaz fulfills the role of kinsman-redeemer for Ruth’s deceased husband, while the Targum emphasizes the importance of the firstborn ensuring the deceased brother’s name is not forgotten.

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| וְאִם־לֹ֤א יַחְפֹּץ֙ הָאִ֔ישׁ לָקַ֖חַת אֶת־יְבִמְתּ֑וֹ וְעָלְתָה֩ יְבִמְתּ֨וֹ הַשַּׁ֜עְרָה אֶל־הַזְּקֵנִ֗ים וְאָֽמְרָה֙ מֵאֵ֨ן יְבָמִ֜י לְהָקִ֨ים לְאָחִ֥יו שֵׁם֙ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל לֹ֥א אָבָ֖ה יַבְּמִֽי׃ | 7 | But if that party does not want to take his brother’s widow [to wife], his brother’s widow shall appear before the elders in the gate and declare, “My husband’s brother refuses to establish a name in Israel for his brother; he will not perform the duty of a levir.” |

Chasidut explains the different ways G’d’s largesse is manifested in the universe, with Jewish people receiving it directly while other nations receive it through nature. The Torah contrasts the development of Ishmael’s descendants with the Jewish people, highlighting the Jewish people’s connection to G’d’s will. In the Halakhah, the Chalitsah ceremony involves specific steps, including the recitation of certain texts and the removal of a shoe, with the order being important for validity. The Mishnah discusses various aspects of the mitzvah of ḥalitza, such as the procedure, requirements for valid ḥalitza, and cases where ḥalitza is not applicable. The Talmud addresses the proper order of the ceremony, eligibility of individuals for levirate marriage and ḥalitza, the role of the court in conducting ḥalitza, and the language in which the ceremony must be conducted.

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| וְקָֽרְאוּ־ל֥וֹ זִקְנֵי־עִיר֖וֹ וְדִבְּר֣וּ אֵלָ֑יו וְעָמַ֣ד וְאָמַ֔ר לֹ֥א חָפַ֖צְתִּי לְקַחְתָּֽהּ׃ | 8 | The elders of his town shall then summon him and talk to him. If he insists, saying, “I do not want to take her,” |

The Chalitsah ceremony involves specific steps such as the removal of the shoe, spitting, and statements, with the yavam stating his refusal to marry the yevamah, and the ceremony being invalid if either party is mute or a minor. The Mishnah states that certain recitations, including during the ḥalitza ritual, must be said in Hebrew, with Rabbi Hyrkanus establishing the custom of reciting the entire Torah passage during ḥalitza. In the Talmud, discussions include whether a man must stand during ḥalitza, the advice of Elders in cases of levirate marriage, and the process of ḥalitza involving specific verses in Hebrew and the removal of the shoe. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention that the judges of the city will call the man to speak with him in Deuteronomy 25:8.

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| וְנִגְּשָׁ֨ה יְבִמְתּ֣וֹ אֵלָיו֮ לְעֵינֵ֣י הַזְּקֵנִים֒ וְחָלְצָ֤ה נַעֲלוֹ֙ מֵעַ֣ל רַגְל֔וֹ וְיָרְקָ֖ה בְּפָנָ֑יו וְעָֽנְתָה֙ וְאָ֣מְרָ֔ה כָּ֚כָה יֵעָשֶׂ֣ה לָאִ֔ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־יִבְנֶ֖ה אֶת־בֵּ֥ית אָחִֽיו׃ | 9 | his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, pull the sandal off his foot, spit in his face, and make this declaration: Thus shall be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house! |

The levirate ceremony involves spitting in the face of the brother-in-law who refuses to marry the widow to symbolize the lack of offspring and blessings left behind by the deceased husband, as outlined in Chasidut and Commentary. The act of chalitzah, removing the brother-in-law’s shoe, and spitting before him is a public shaming meant to emphasize the importance of family ties and inheritance within the community, as seen in the story of Ruth and Boaz. The Mishneh Torah, Shulchan Arukh, and Talmud detail the regulations and procedures for chalitzah, including the significance of spitting in the ceremony. The Tosefta mentions the visibility of certain substances in purification waters and the spittle of a Yevama to the Elders.

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| וְנִקְרָ֥א שְׁמ֖וֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל בֵּ֖ית חֲל֥וּץ הַנָּֽעַל׃ | 10 | And he shall go in Israel by the name of “the family of the unsandaled one.” |

The chalitzah ceremony involves the removal of the shoe by the brother’s wife in the presence of elders, condemning the refusal to marry a deceased brother’s wife, and is a significant halachic procedure. The law of marrying a deceased brother’s wife is explained in Deuteronomy 25:5, perpetuated by custom and the Torah, and the ceremony of haliẓah was introduced to avoid disgrace. In Kabbalistic interpretation, the act of removing the shoe symbolizes unity with the Shekhinah. The Mishnah discusses various scenarios related to marriage contracts and levirate marriage, with consequences outlined for women who remarry based on invalid bills of divorce. The Gemara discusses the consequences of ancestral sin and the importance of righteous acts. In Deuteronomy 25:10, different Targums refer to the House of the Unshod or the House of him whose shoe was loosed in the chalitzah ceremony.

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| כִּֽי־יִנָּצ֨וּ אֲנָשִׁ֤ים יַחְדָּו֙ אִ֣ישׁ וְאָחִ֔יו וְקָֽרְבָה֙ אֵ֣שֶׁת הָֽאֶחָ֔ד לְהַצִּ֥יל אֶת־אִישָׁ֖הּ מִיַּ֣ד מַכֵּ֑הוּ וְשָׁלְחָ֣ה יָדָ֔הּ וְהֶחֱזִ֖יקָה בִּמְבֻשָֽׁיו׃ | 11 | If two parties are fighting—one man with another—and the wife of one comes up to save her husband from his antagonist and puts out her hand and seizes him by his genitals, |

The text discusses the snake tempting Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge, leading to Adam’s failure, emphasizing the importance of not shaming others for their deficiencies. The Torah warns against quarrels and violence, with a focus on the consequences of indiscreet behavior and the need for self-control. Compensation for harm done to animals and humans is based on the principle of “an eye for an eye,” emphasizing retribution and justice. Mishnah Bava Kamma outlines liability for injury, including compensation for damage, pain, medical costs, loss of livelihood, and humiliation, with specific rules for different circumstances. Rabbi Yehuda’s opinion on humiliation payment excludes slaves, while the Sages include Canaanite slaves in the halakhot of compensation. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 25:11 focus on a scenario where a woman intervenes in a fight by grabbing the attacker’s genitals to shame and stop them.

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| וְקַצֹּתָ֖ה אֶת־כַּפָּ֑הּ לֹ֥א תָח֖וֹס עֵינֶֽךָ׃ | 12 | you shall cut off her hand; show no pity. |

Various commentaries, including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni, interpret the punishment of cutting off a woman’s hand for intervening in a fight as a form of compensation rather than a literal penalty. Halakhah emphasizes the obligation to save a pursued person from a pursuer, even if it involves injuring or killing the pursuer. The Mishnah outlines the liability for compensation in cases of injury, including damage, pain, medical costs, loss of livelihood, and humiliation. Rekanati explains the concept of “eye for an eye” as financial compensation for harm caused to another’s body. The Talmud distinguishes between payment for unintentional and intentional acts of injury and clarifies that cutting off a woman’s hand is symbolic restitution. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan agree that the punishment should be carried out without compassion.

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| לֹֽא־יִהְיֶ֥ה לְךָ֛ בְּכִֽיסְךָ֖ אֶ֣בֶן וָאָ֑בֶן גְּדוֹלָ֖ה וּקְטַנָּֽה׃ | 13 | You shall not have in your pouch alternate weights, larger and smaller. |

The commentary discusses the prohibition of using deceptive weights in business transactions, emphasizing the importance of honest measurements and the consequences of dishonesty. Halakhah emphasizes the prohibition of possessing deficient weights and measures, even if not used for commercial purposes, to avoid potential deceit. Jewish Thought stresses justice in all interactions and treating every being with respect. Midrash highlights the prohibition of using alternative weights and measures and the consequences of false measures. Ibn Ezra explains the significance of the bag in a balance, and the Talmud explains that using diverse weights leads to poverty, while using a just weight leads to wealth. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret the prohibition against using dishonest weights for buying and selling goods.

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| לֹא־יִהְיֶ֥ה לְךָ֛ בְּבֵיתְךָ֖ אֵיפָ֣ה וְאֵיפָ֑ה גְּדוֹלָ֖ה וּקְטַנָּֽה׃ | 14 | You shall not have in your house alternate measures, a larger and a smaller. |

The Torah prohibits possessing false weights and measures, even if not used for buying and selling, as it can lead to temptation and wrongdoing. This prohibition includes various types of measures and extends to acting deceitfully regarding measurements, emphasizing the importance of just weights. The settlement of the Holy Land, particularly Jerusalem, must be based on equal measures for all to bring about peace and prosperity, as taught by the Sages. The Midrash warns that fraudulent scales and dishonesty in measures will lead to consequences such as disgrace and attacks from the empire. Rav Yehuda of Sura interprets the prohibition as a warning against using unfair business practices that lead to poverty. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 25:14 all emphasize the prohibition against using dishonest measures in trade.

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| אֶ֣בֶן שְׁלֵמָ֤ה וָצֶ֙דֶק֙ יִֽהְיֶה־לָּ֔ךְ אֵיפָ֧ה שְׁלֵמָ֛ה וָצֶ֖דֶק יִֽהְיֶה־לָּ֑ךְ לְמַ֙עַן֙ יַאֲרִ֣יכוּ יָמֶ֔יךָ עַ֚ל הָֽאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 15 | You must have completely honest weights and completely honest measures, if you are to endure long on the soil that your God יהוה is giving you. |

Chasidut emphasizes the layers of the Torah and the revelation of light through intellectual explanations, while Halakhah stresses the importance of just weights and measures. Jewish Thought connects justice to the settlement of the Holy Land, Kabbalah discusses the symbolic representation of balance and justice, and Midrash highlights the consequences of using just measures. Quoting Commentary explains the significance of dispatching the mother bird, while Second Temple focuses on the importance of true and just weights and measures. Talmud provides guidelines for using scales and measuring vessels, Tanakh warns against false scales, and Amos 8:5 condemns cheating in business dealings. Targum emphasizes the importance of accurate weights and measures for long life.

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| כִּ֧י תוֹעֲבַ֛ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ כׇּל־עֹ֣שֵׂה אֵ֑לֶּה כֹּ֖ל עֹ֥שֵׂה עָֽוֶל׃ | 16 | For everyone who does those things, everyone who deals dishonestly, is abhorrent to your God יהוה. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of refining behavior to prevent corruption and maintain a higher spiritual state. Halakhah prohibits deception in measurements towards both Jews and gentiles, highlighting the severity of such actions. Jewish Thought explores the harshness of forgetting Hashem’s will despite the strong connection between God and His people. Midrash warns against fraudulent measures, stating that dishonesty is more severe than incest. Musar condemns deception in measurements and mixing fruits from different fields as abominable. Quoting Commentary and Targum both stress the abomination of falsifying weights and measures in serving God properly. In the Second Temple period, Moses emphasizes the importance of fair measures and weights for justice and peace, while the Talmud argues that false measures carry a more severe punishment than forbidden sexual relations.

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| זָכ֕וֹר אֵ֛ת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֥ה לְךָ֖ עֲמָלֵ֑ק בַּדֶּ֖רֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶ֥ם מִמִּצְרָֽיִם׃ | 17 | Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt— |

The text emphasizes the importance of remembering what Amalek did to the Israelites, connecting it to the sin of false weights and measures, educating future generations to prevent similar sins, and upholding ethical standards in business practices. Special Torah readings on occasions like Parshat Zachor are designated to remember historical events and prepare for upcoming festivals. The Torah commands to remember and obliterate the memory of Amalek, with specific instructions on when to read Torah portions related to this command. Amalek’s attacks are linked to blemishes in the Name HaShem, emphasizing the need to repair this blemish through daily recitation of the Torah portion of Remember-Zachor. The Liturgy calls for the remembrance of Amalek’s atrocities and appeals to God for vengeance and justice. The Mishnah details the Torah portions read on specific Shabbatot, including the portion about remembering Amalek. Amalek represents impurity of the body and is spiritually connected to Samael, aiming to undermine the sanctity of the Covenant of circumcision. The Torah commands the Israelites to remember Amalek’s actions as they left Egypt, emphasizing the importance of verbalizing these memories to ensure they are not forgotten. Esther’s request to include her book in the Bible was denied, as the battle with Amalek is already mentioned three times in the Bible. Moses is instructed by יהוה to record the promise to blot out the memory of Amalek and build an altar named Adonai-nissi. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan stress the importance of remembering Amalek’s actions against the Israelites. The Talmud discusses the remembrance of Amalek and the Megillah, with three mitzvot commanded to the Jewish people upon entering Eretz Yisrael. The oracles warn of an Amalek-like character attacking the weaker part of the soul.

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| אֲשֶׁ֨ר קָֽרְךָ֜ בַּדֶּ֗רֶךְ וַיְזַנֵּ֤ב בְּךָ֙ כׇּל־הַנֶּחֱשָׁלִ֣ים אַֽחֲרֶ֔יךָ וְאַתָּ֖ה עָיֵ֣ף וְיָגֵ֑עַ וְלֹ֥א יָרֵ֖א אֱלֹהִֽים׃ | 18 | how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. |

Chasidut emphasizes resisting evil influences through Torah study and prayer, exploring the connection between Amalek and the destruction of Jerusalem. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, and others highlight Amalek’s attack on the weak Israelites. Jewish Thought discusses the desecration of God’s name by Amalek and contrasts Saul and David’s dedication to God. Kabbalah compares Amalek to an evil serpent seeking to defile the Temple and the people. Midrash discusses Joshua’s lineage, the Israelites’ experience with manna, David’s commitment to building the Temple, and encounters with Amalek. The Mishnah details regulations for irrigation during Festivals and the Sabbatical Year. Quoting Commentary interprets various verses related to Amalek, prayer, and God’s attributes. Second Temple commentary contrasts Abraham’s return from battle with Amalek’s attack. Talmudic discussions on payment for errors and choosing between possibilities are detailed. Targum translations describe the attack of Dan and Amalek on the weary Israelites who strayed from God’s word.

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| וְהָיָ֡ה בְּהָנִ֣יחַ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֣יךָ ׀ לְ֠ךָ֠ מִכׇּל־אֹ֨יְבֶ֜יךָ מִסָּבִ֗יב בָּאָ֙רֶץ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יְהֹוָה־אֱ֠לֹהֶ֠יךָ נֹתֵ֨ן לְךָ֤ נַחֲלָה֙ לְרִשְׁתָּ֔הּ תִּמְחֶה֙ אֶת־זֵ֣כֶר עֲמָלֵ֔ק מִתַּ֖חַת הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם לֹ֖א תִּשְׁכָּֽח׃ | 19 | Therefore, when your God יהוה grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that your God יהוה is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget! |

The commandment to wipe out the memory of Amalek includes destroying all people and livestock associated with them, ensuring no remembrance remains even in connection with animals. This commandment becomes obligatory after Israel inherits the land and is at rest from surrounding wars, with the goal of completely eradicating the memory of Amalek to prevent any future threats and to exact revenge against them for being the first ideological enemy of Israel. The obligation to remember what Amalek did to Israel is fulfilled by reading Parshat Zakhor before Purim, as it juxtaposes the mitzva of remembering Amalek with the celebration of Purim. The Torah commands to remember and obliterate the memory of Amalek, with the obligation being specifically addressed in Deuteronomy 25:17-19. The reading of Parshat Zakhor is considered a Torah commandment, and the haftarah for this reading is from I Samuel 15. The obligation to remember Amalek is fulfilled by reading from a Torah scroll that follows the Ashkenazic tradition, as supported by archaeological evidence. The commandment to blot out the seed of Amalek includes males, females, old, and young, as stated in Deuteronomy 25:19.

# **50**: כי תבוא|Ki Tavo (Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8)

## Deuteronomy 26

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| וְהָיָה֙ כִּֽי־תָב֣וֹא אֶל־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לְךָ֖ נַחֲלָ֑ה וִֽירִשְׁתָּ֖הּ וְיָשַׁ֥בְתָּ בָּֽהּ׃ | 1 | When you enter the land that your God יהוה is giving you as a heritage, and you possess it and settle in it, |

The text discusses two levels of righteous people: those who serve God out of awe during the week and out of love on Shabbat, and those who serve God out of love both during the week and on Shabbat. The latter is referred to as Shabbat, as they are always at the level of love and are consistently connected to God. The Israelites were not obligated to bring first fruits until they had conquered and divided the land, and various commandments were to be observed upon entering the land, including offering first fruits. The Mishneh Torah explains the prohibition of prostrating on stones outside the Temple and the importance of Torah in meriting the Land. The Gaon interpreted the command to use a perfect and just weight as indicating his mission as the light of Mashiach ben Yosef. The Midrash discusses the importance of performing mitzvot upon entering the land and emphasizes prayer and obedience to God’s commands. Rashi explains that the law of “Challah” applies as soon as the Israelites enter the land, and the Tanna of the school of Rabbi Yishmael argues that the verses regarding a king and first fruits are linked. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize that the land is given by God for the Israelites to possess and dwell in. First fruits are not presented before Pentecost according to the Tosefta.

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| וְלָקַחְתָּ֞ מֵרֵאשִׁ֣ית ׀ כׇּל־פְּרִ֣י הָאֲדָמָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר תָּבִ֧יא מֵֽאַרְצְךָ֛ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָ֖ךְ וְשַׂמְתָּ֣ בַטֶּ֑נֶא וְהָֽלַכְתָּ֙ אֶל־הַמָּק֔וֹם אֲשֶׁ֤ר יִבְחַר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לְשַׁכֵּ֥ן שְׁמ֖וֹ שָֽׁם׃ | 2 | you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that your God יהוה is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the place where your God יהוה will choose to establish the divine name. |

The commandment of bringing first-fruits to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem applies to the seven chief kinds of produce from the Land of Israel, designated while still in the field and brought in a suitable vessel. The first-fruits must come from the best soil and the best of each fruit category, with only a portion needed to fulfill the obligation. Specific vessels and procedures are involved in bringing the first fruits to the Temple in a dignified manner, with the obligation becoming binding immediately after the conquest and division of the Land.

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| וּבָאתָ֙ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵ֔ן אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִהְיֶ֖ה בַּיָּמִ֣ים הָהֵ֑ם וְאָמַרְתָּ֣ אֵלָ֗יו הִגַּ֤דְתִּי הַיּוֹם֙ לַיהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ כִּי־בָ֙אתִי֙ אֶל־הָאָ֔רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֧ע יְהֹוָ֛ה לַאֲבֹתֵ֖ינוּ לָ֥תֶת לָֽנוּ׃ | 3 | You shall go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, “I acknowledge this day before your God יהוה that I have entered the land that יהוה swore to our fathers to assign us.” |

The text emphasizes the significance of bringing first-fruit offerings to the Cohen in the Holy Temple with sanctity, the role of the tzaddik in elevating prayers, and the importance of following current religious authority’s rulings. Halakhah details the commandments and procedures regarding first fruits and gifts to priests outside the sanctuary, while the Midrash discusses priestly lineage and who is excluded from the mitzvah of bikkurim. Mishnah outlines rules for reciting the declaration of bikkurim in Hebrew, and Musar stresses giving thanks to Hashem and showing love towards the needy. Quoting commentary offers various interpretations on first fruits and their significance, and the Talmud debates scenarios related to priestly lineage and the obligations when bringing first fruits. Tanakh highlights the connection between the story of Lavan the Aramean and the first-fruits declaration, while Targum emphasizes acknowledging God’s role in fulfilling the covenant when bringing offerings to the priest.

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| וְלָקַ֧ח הַכֹּהֵ֛ן הַטֶּ֖נֶא מִיָּדֶ֑ךָ וְהִ֨נִּיח֔וֹ לִפְנֵ֕י מִזְבַּ֖ח יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 4 | The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of your God יהוה. |

The act of offering first fruits to God involves waving the basket before the altar, symbolizing dedication to God and fulfilling Torah laws. The first fruits must be brought to the Temple by the person themselves, placed at the side of the altar, and accompanied by a declaration. The rich bring first fruits in silver and gold baskets, while the poor use wicker baskets, emphasizing the importance of listening to the Torah, studying, and following commandments. The Mishnah establishes the order of precedence for offerings, stating that first fruits must be given before terumah and tithe. Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov argue that first fruits require waving before the altar, as indicated in Deuteronomy 26:4 and 26:10. In Leviticus 7:30, offerings to Yahweh are to be presented by fire with the fat and breast being elevated. The priest receives the basket of early fruits from the person’s hand and places it before the altar of the Lord.

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| וְעָנִ֨יתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ֜ לִפְנֵ֣י ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אֲרַמִּי֙ אֹבֵ֣ד אָבִ֔י וַיֵּ֣רֶד מִצְרַ֔יְמָה וַיָּ֥גׇר שָׁ֖ם בִּמְתֵ֣י מְעָ֑ט וַֽיְהִי־שָׁ֕ם לְג֥וֹי גָּד֖וֹל עָצ֥וּם וָרָֽב׃ | 5 | You shall then recite as follows before your God יהוה: “My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. |

The text delves into various aspects related to the recital of the first fruits declaration in Deuteronomy 26:5, emphasizing the history of the Jewish people, Laban’s intentions towards Jacob, the importance of Torah study, and the significance of divine protection and blessings. Additionally, the text discusses the connection between Jacob’s message to Esau and Laban’s sorcery, highlighting Jacob’s ability to resist Laban with divine assistance. The Targums also mention Laban’s attempts to harm Jacob but God’s protection, leading to the growth of Jacob’s descendants into a powerful nation in Egypt.

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| וַיָּרֵ֧עוּ אֹתָ֛נוּ הַמִּצְרִ֖ים וַיְעַנּ֑וּנוּ וַיִּתְּנ֥וּ עָלֵ֖ינוּ עֲבֹדָ֥ה קָשָֽׁה׃ | 6 | The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. |

The Egyptians mistreated the Jewish people through hard labor, suspicion of disloyalty, and treating them as slaves, leading to their oppression and exile. The importance of producing complete stones through prayer, the humble beginnings of the Jewish people in Egypt, and the afflictions endured by Joseph and Israel are highlighted in various commentaries and Midrashim. The Egyptians justified their oppression by accusing the Israelites of wrongdoing, causing suffering rather than benefiting from their labor, as seen in the repetition of God’s name in prayers and the mandatory nature of building an altar of stones for God.

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| וַנִּצְעַ֕ק אֶל־יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵ֣י אֲבֹתֵ֑ינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ אֶת־קֹלֵ֔נוּ וַיַּ֧רְא אֶת־עׇנְיֵ֛נוּ וְאֶת־עֲמָלֵ֖נוּ וְאֶֽת־לַחֲצֵֽנוּ׃ | 7 | We cried to יהוה, the God of our ancestors, and יהוה heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. |

Chasidut emphasizes that the Jewish people’s spiritual elevation leads to God’s largesse, with Israel’s spiritual accomplishments credited anew each day. The affliction of the Israelites in Egypt included lack of wealth, toil in building cities, and oppression by taskmasters, leading to prayers accepted by God without words. The Amidah prayer highlights God’s mercy, acceptance of prayers, and the importance of approaching Him with humility, while also praising Him for hearing prayers. The Pesach Haggadah notes the Israelites’ multiplication and strength in Egypt, while Midrash warns against lewd behavior and excessive drinking, emphasizing the importance of upholding justice. The Gemara challenges Rabbi Yishmael’s view by discussing affliction in Egypt related to the prevention of conjugal relations, distinct from affliction caused by God or through His mitzvot. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight the Israelites’ prayers and God’s acknowledgment of their suffering, labor, and oppression.

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| וַיּוֹצִאֵ֤נוּ יְהֹוָה֙ מִמִּצְרַ֔יִם בְּיָ֤ד חֲזָקָה֙ וּבִזְרֹ֣עַ נְטוּיָ֔ה וּבְמֹרָ֖א גָּדֹ֑ל וּבְאֹת֖וֹת וּבְמֹפְתִֽים׃ | 8 | יהוה freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents, |

Deuteronomy 26:8 describes God freeing the Israelites from Egypt with signs and wonders, inspiring awe and fear. The Haggadah emphasizes the suffering and oppression in Egypt, while the Maggid connects Laban to the Exodus story. The Mishnah outlines questions for the Passover Seder, including the significance of Pesach, matzah, and bitter herbs, and Rabbi Yehuda discusses waving first fruits. The Israelites, once oppressed, were brought out of Egypt by God’s mighty hand and outstretched arm, as interpreted by both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan.

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| וַיְבִאֵ֖נוּ אֶל־הַמָּק֣וֹם הַזֶּ֑ה וַיִּתֶּן־לָ֙נוּ֙ אֶת־הָאָ֣רֶץ הַזֹּ֔את אֶ֛רֶץ זָבַ֥ת חָלָ֖ב וּדְבָֽשׁ׃ | 9 | bringing us to this place and giving us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. |

Various commentators, including Rashi, Sforno, Steinsaltz, Chizkuni, and Rav Hirsch, emphasize the connection between the Temple and the Land of Israel as the never-before-possessed homeland of the Israelites. In the Haggadah, a fifth verse from Deuteronomy 26:9 is not discussed during the seder table despite Mishnaic instruction. R. Yossi Haglili notes the mention of “a land flowing with milk and honey” in both Exodus and Deuteronomy, referring to the Promised Land and the presence of five nations. Ramban, Sifre Rabbis, and Rashi discuss the significance of the term “Canaanite” and the land flowing with milk and honey, with differing interpretations. In the Talmud, Rebbi Yose, Rebbi Simeon ben Laqish, and Rebbi Jonah debate the specific location and extent of the Land flowing with milk and honey, with varying opinions on its size and boundaries. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 26:9 as describing God bringing the Israelites to a land abundant with milk and honey.

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| וְעַתָּ֗ה הִנֵּ֤ה הֵבֵ֙אתִי֙ אֶת־רֵאשִׁית֙ פְּרִ֣י הָאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַ֥תָּה לִּ֖י יְהֹוָ֑ה וְהִנַּחְתּ֗וֹ לִפְנֵי֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְהִֽשְׁתַּחֲוִ֔יתָ לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 10 | Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, יהוה, have given me.” You shall leave it before your God יהוה and bow low before your God יהוה. |

The ritual of presenting first fruits before God is an act of gratitude for His blessings, acknowledging that land and wealth are gifts from God. The priests and their households may fulfill their obligation with matzot made from Challah or terumah, and a person may fulfill his obligation with matzah made from ma’aser sheni if in Jerusalem. The Israelites offer first fruits to God as a thanksgiving for His help in overcoming challenges. The Mishnah details specific verses and rituals for bringing first fruits to the Temple, and a convert must bring an offering but does not read the passage from Deuteronomy 26:5-10. The Talmud discusses differing opinions on first fruits declarations and requirements, while Tanakh commands the declaration of one’s history before presenting first fruits. The Targum emphasizes the presentation of first fruits as an act of worship and gratitude, and the Tosefta states that first fruits should not be brought before Shavuot.

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| וְשָׂמַחְתָּ֣ בְכׇל־הַטּ֗וֹב אֲשֶׁ֧ר נָֽתַן־לְךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ וּלְבֵיתֶ֑ךָ אַתָּה֙ וְהַלֵּוִ֔י וְהַגֵּ֖ר אֲשֶׁ֥ר בְּקִרְבֶּֽךָ׃ | 11 | And you shall enjoy, together with the [family of the] Levite and the stranger in your midst, all the bounty that your God יהוה has bestowed upon you and your household. |

Chasidut suggests bringing gifts to Torah scholars, reciting bikkurim, learning Talmud, and minimizing the study of Aggadah as a segulah for having daughters. The Halakhah discusses the requirements for bringing first fruits to priests and emphasizes including family members, the poor, and the despondent in festival celebrations. Jewish Thought focuses on fulfilling divine laws, connecting with the Divine Influence, and striving for spiritual growth. The Talmud addresses obligations regarding produce and sharecroppers, while the Targum emphasizes rejoicing in God’s blessings. Rebbi Meir in the Tosefta states the importance of blessing God for both good and bad things.

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| כִּ֣י תְכַלֶּ֞ה לַ֠עְשֵׂ֠ר אֶת־כׇּל־מַעְשַׂ֧ר תְּבוּאָתְךָ֛ בַּשָּׁנָ֥ה הַשְּׁלִישִׁ֖ת שְׁנַ֣ת הַֽמַּעֲשֵׂ֑ר וְנָתַתָּ֣ה לַלֵּוִ֗י לַגֵּר֙ לַיָּת֣וֹם וְלָֽאַלְמָנָ֔ה וְאָכְל֥וּ בִשְׁעָרֶ֖יךָ וְשָׂבֵֽעוּ׃ | 12 | When you have set aside in full the tenth part of your yield—in the third year, the year of the tithe —and have given it to the [family of the] Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat their fill in your settlements, |

The text discusses the obligation to leave over a corner of the field for the poor and the stranger, the laws regarding the separation of tithes, and the specific amounts of produce to be given to the poor. It also details the requirements for declaring the removal of sacred substances from one’s home and the regulations for giving gifts to the poor. The Bible contains laws for income redistribution in an agricultural economy, including setting aside portions of the harvest for the poor and remitting debts every seven years. In the Talmud, various aspects related to tithing are discussed, including the confession over tithes and special offerings, the prohibition of deriving benefit from the poor man’s tithe, and the requirement to set aside the poor man’s tithe in the third year.

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| וְאָמַרְתָּ֡ לִפְנֵי֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ בִּעַ֧רְתִּי הַקֹּ֣דֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּ֗יִת וְגַ֨ם נְתַתִּ֤יו לַלֵּוִי֙ וְלַגֵּר֙ לַיָּת֣וֹם וְלָאַלְמָנָ֔ה כְּכׇל־מִצְוָתְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֣ר צִוִּיתָ֑נִי לֹֽא־עָבַ֥רְתִּי מִמִּצְוֺתֶ֖יךָ וְלֹ֥א שָׁכָֽחְתִּי׃ | 13 | you shall declare before your God יהוה: “I have cleared out the consecrated portion from the house; and I have given it to the [family of the] Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, just as You commanded me; I have neither transgressed nor neglected any of Your commandments: |

Chasidut emphasizes remembering God as the source of all things and sanctifying possessions for Him, while the declaration in Deuteronomy 26:13 outlines the proper sequence and order of giving tithes and offerings. Halakhah details the obligation to declare the removal of tithes and priestly tithes before God, and Jewish Thought highlights the observant Jew’s adherence to divine, social, and ethical laws. The Midrash discusses the treatment of Jewish proselytes and the importance of tithing, while the Mishnah covers laws related to tithing, confession, and rituals. Quoting Commentary explains the Removal of Seventh-year produce and differing opinions on who can eat it, and the Talmud addresses the declaration of tithes and the requirements for various tithes. Tanakh emphasizes that all tithes belong to God and are holy to Him, and Targum stresses the importance of giving tithes as commanded by God. In Tosefta, R. Yosé specifically mentions removing holy produce.

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| לֹא־אָכַ֨לְתִּי בְאֹנִ֜י מִמֶּ֗נּוּ וְלֹא־בִעַ֤רְתִּי מִמֶּ֙נּוּ֙ בְּטָמֵ֔א וְלֹא־נָתַ֥תִּי מִמֶּ֖נּוּ לְמֵ֑ת שָׁמַ֗עְתִּי בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהָ֔י עָשִׂ֕יתִי כְּכֹ֖ל אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוִּיתָֽנִי׃ | 14 | I have not eaten of it while in mourning, I have not cleared out any of it while I was impure, and I have not deposited any of it with the dead. I have obeyed my God יהוה; I have done just as You commanded me. |

Chasidut emphasizes Moshe Rabbeinu’s role in imbuing holiness in the Jewish people’s hearts, creating a direct connection to God for all generations. Halakhah prohibits eating impure second tithe, consuming it in mourning, or using its proceeds for anything other than food and drink, with consequences for non-compliance. Jewish Thought stresses obedience to God’s commandments and the importance of following His instructions, promising supremacy over all nations. The Talmud discusses the destruction of ritually impure teruma oil, the prohibition of consuming second tithe in a state of impurity, and the declaration of tithes in the Temple. Targum interpretations of Deuteronomy 26:14 highlight adherence to God’s commands and avoidance of impurity or mourning while consuming offerings.

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| הַשְׁקִ֩יפָה֩ מִמְּע֨וֹן קׇדְשְׁךָ֜ מִן־הַשָּׁמַ֗יִם וּבָרֵ֤ךְ אֶֽת־עַמְּךָ֙ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל וְאֵת֙ הָאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖תָּה לָ֑נוּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֤ר נִשְׁבַּ֙עְתָּ֙ לַאֲבֹתֵ֔ינוּ אֶ֛רֶץ זָבַ֥ת חָלָ֖ב וּדְבָֽשׁ׃ | 15 | Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the soil You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.” |

Chasidut discusses God’s individual inspection of each person, with the essence of tzedakah linked to God’s Providence. Halakhah details laws of second tithes and priestly blessings. Jewish Thought explores the promise of milk and honey in the Land of Israel and the concept of the yetzer hara. Liturgy includes prayers for blessings and divine intervention, while Midrash delves into blessings and the importance of following divine guidance. Mishnah describes the Torah portion read by the king and the blessings recited. Musar discusses blessings turning curses into blessings. Quoting Commentary highlights the acknowledgment of God’s ownership of the soil. Talmud emphasizes the importance of following rituals related to tithing and agricultural produce. Tanakh and Targum focus on God’s blessings for following laws and commandments, while Tosefta discusses blessings from offerings and the merit of the tribes.

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| הַיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֗ה יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ מְצַוְּךָ֧ לַעֲשׂ֛וֹת אֶת־הַחֻקִּ֥ים הָאֵ֖לֶּה וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֑ים וְשָׁמַרְתָּ֤ וְעָשִׂ֙יתָ֙ אוֹתָ֔ם בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 16 | Your God יהוה commands you this day to observe these laws and rules; observe them faithfully with all your heart and soul. |

Chasidut emphasizes daily renewal through prayer and connection to Hashem, Moses stresses the importance of observing commandments with dedication, Jewish Thought discusses finding joy in spiritual growth, Midrash highlights seeking counsel from the Torah and Torah study’s importance, Musar encourages approaching commandments as if given anew each day, Rambam connects vidui maaser to verses in various books, Talmud explains recitation practices, Tanakh emphasizes following God’s laws, and Targum underscores observing statutes and laws wholeheartedly.

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| אֶת־יְהֹוָ֥ה הֶאֱמַ֖רְתָּ הַיּ֑וֹם לִהְיוֹת֩ לְךָ֨ לֵֽאלֹהִ֜ים וְלָלֶ֣כֶת בִּדְרָכָ֗יו וְלִשְׁמֹ֨ר חֻקָּ֧יו וּמִצְוֺתָ֛יו וּמִשְׁפָּטָ֖יו וְלִשְׁמֹ֥עַ בְּקֹלֽוֹ׃ | 17 | You have affirmed this day that יהוה is your God, in whose ways you will walk, whose laws and commandments and rules you will observe, and whom you will obey. |

Chasidut emphasizes that all events are ultimately for the good and an expression of God’s love, with Israel’s spiritual state determining divine largesse. Halakhah discusses the requirements for consecrating a yevamah and the classification of defensive wars as milḥemet mizvah. Jewish Thought explores allegorical visions in prophets and the symbolism of t’fillin, while Midrash highlights the importance of Torah study and devotion to God. Musar stresses instilling Torah values in children and emulating God’s traits, with references to lashon hara. Quoting Commentary delves into linguistic nuances in biblical verses, while Talmud emphasizes the unique relationship between Israel and God. Targum underscores the commitment to God and the acceptance of His rulership.

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| וַֽיהֹוָ֞ה הֶאֱמִֽירְךָ֣ הַיּ֗וֹם לִהְי֥וֹת לוֹ֙ לְעַ֣ם סְגֻלָּ֔ה כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּר־לָ֑ךְ וְלִשְׁמֹ֖ר כׇּל־מִצְוֺתָֽיו׃ | 18 | And יהוה has affirmed this day that you are, as promised, God’s treasured people who shall observe all the divine commandments, |

Chasidut texts emphasize that blemishes in the soul affect the Shekhinah, God takes pride in His children, and events are ultimately for good. Jewish people are chosen by God to be His treasured nation, observing His commandments. The importance of fulfilling conditions of slavehood to designate G-d as master is discussed in Jewish Thought, while Midrash highlights the suffering of the blind and the special relationship between God and Israel. Musar compares the relationship between God and Israel to a groom and bride, emphasizing their mutual bond of love and loyalty. Talmud stresses the loyalty of Israel to God and the reciprocal relationship between them, while Tanakh and Targum affirm that Israel is God’s treasured possession among all peoples. Rabbi Yochanan ben Berokah and Rabbi Elazar ben Hisma discuss the significance of the commandment of Hakhel in Tosefta.

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| וּֽלְתִתְּךָ֣ עֶלְי֗וֹן עַ֤ל כׇּל־הַגּוֹיִם֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֔ה לִתְהִלָּ֖ה וּלְשֵׁ֣ם וּלְתִפְאָ֑רֶת וְלִֽהְיֹתְךָ֧ עַם־קָדֹ֛שׁ לַיהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֵּֽר׃ | 19 | and that [God] will set you, in fame and renown and glory, high above all the nations that [God] has made; and that you shall be, as promised, a holy people to your God יהוה. |

The text discusses the exaltation of the Jewish people above all nations by God, highlighting their special status and deep-rooted bond with Him. This unique relationship is eternal, not dependent on observance of the covenant, and is associated with praise, splendor, and sanctification. The Jewish people are praised for their connection to God, who is their glory and strength, and are called to fulfill their purpose in life to justify their existence. Israel’s sacrifice for the Torah and sanctification of God’s name lead to blessings and exaltation above all nations, with a constant call for redemption to be sought. The stones at Deuteronomy 27:8:1 are believed to contain the entire Torah or a summary of mitzvot and prohibitions, symbolizing the unity of the Jewish people and their future redemption. Rav Ashi explains that Israel is a great nation close to God, saved by the Lord, and elevated above all nations to be a holy people. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize that God will elevate the Israelites above all other nations, giving them praise, renown, and glory to sanctify them before Him.

## Deuteronomy 27

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| וַיְצַ֤ו מֹשֶׁה֙ וְזִקְנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אֶת־הָעָ֖ם לֵאמֹ֑ר שָׁמֹר֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הַמִּצְוָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 1 | Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying: Observe all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day. |

Moses and the elders of Israel emphasized the importance of following all the commandments of the Torah, instructing the people to do so by inscribing the Torah on stones and placing them on Mount Eyval. In cases of unsolved murder, a ritual with a heifer whose neck is broken is prescribed by the Torah, with Rabbi Yehuda specifying the number of judges involved. The thirteenth principle of repentance stresses the seriousness of seemingly minor transgressions, warning against the dangers of repeated sins leading to more serious offenses. Ramban explains that the commandments were inscribed in multiple languages on stones, while the German Commentary on Mishnah Sotah 9:1:2 discusses the importance of speaking in Hebrew during certain rituals.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה בַּיּוֹם֮ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תַּעַבְר֣וּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן֒ אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֣ן לָ֑ךְ וַהֲקֵמֹתָ֤ לְךָ֙ אֲבָנִ֣ים גְּדֹל֔וֹת וְשַׂדְתָּ֥ אֹתָ֖ם בַּשִּֽׂיד׃ | 2 | As soon as you have crossed the Jordan into the land that your God יהוה is giving you, you shall set up large stones. Coat them with plaster |

In Deuteronomy, Moses and the elders are commanded to write Words of Torah on stones for the nations to understand, while Israel learns from the consequences of evil. The stones were set up in three different sites, coated with plaster to withstand rain, and large enough to engrave the commandments. The altar in Shiloh was made of stones, and the Israelites were instructed to set up large stones covered with whitewash when crossing the Jordan River. The blessings and curses pronounced by Israel were carried by priests in three instances, with three sets of stones mentioned in different locations.

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| וְכָתַבְתָּ֣ עֲלֵיהֶ֗ן אֶֽת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֛י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את בְּעׇבְרֶ֑ךָ לְמַ֡עַן אֲשֶׁר֩ תָּבֹ֨א אֶל־הָאָ֜רֶץ אֲֽשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֣יךָ ׀ נֹתֵ֣ן לְךָ֗ אֶ֣רֶץ זָבַ֤ת חָלָב֙ וּדְבַ֔שׁ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר דִּבֶּ֛ר יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֵֽי־אֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ לָֽךְ׃ | 3 | and inscribe upon them all the words of this Teaching. When you cross over to enter the land that your God יהוה is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as יהוה, the God of your ancestors, promised you— |

Various commentators had different interpretations of the commandment to inscribe the Torah on stones upon entering the Land of Israel. The purpose was to give thanks for inheriting the land, remind the people to keep the Torah, and tie their conquest of the land to fulfilling the commandments. Ramban explained that expanding the borders and inheriting the lands of the ten nations promised to Abraham was contingent on keeping all the commandments forever, with the goal of achieving a perfect and everlasting love for God. The Gemara drew parallels between the Torah written on stones and the writing of a mezuzah, while Targum emphasized the importance of writing the Torah on stones before entering the promised land.

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| וְהָיָה֮ בְּעׇבְרְכֶ֣ם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן֒ תָּקִ֜ימוּ אֶת־הָאֲבָנִ֣ים הָאֵ֗לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֜י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֛ם הַיּ֖וֹם בְּהַ֣ר עֵיבָ֑ל וְשַׂדְתָּ֥ אוֹתָ֖ם בַּשִּֽׂיד׃ | 4 | upon crossing the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, about which I charge you this day, on Mount Ebal, and coat them with plaster. |

Moses commanded the Israelites to set up stones on Mount Eival for offerings. The ceremony of blessings and curses took place on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, with six tribes on each mountain. Rashi explains that the Israelites crossed the Jordan with stones to build an altar on Mt. Eivel. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Sheila disagree on the location and timing of setting up stones near the Jordan. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that the Israelites were commanded to set up stones on Mount Ebal and coat them with whitewash after crossing the Jordan.

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| וּבָנִ֤יתָ שָּׁם֙ מִזְבֵּ֔חַ לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ מִזְבַּ֣ח אֲבָנִ֔ים לֹא־תָנִ֥יף עֲלֵיהֶ֖ם בַּרְזֶֽל׃ | 5 | There, too, you shall build an altar to your God יהוה, an altar of stones. Do not wield an iron tool over them; |

The prohibition against using iron tools on the stones of the altar is to maintain sanctity and prevent association with idolatry, extending to the construction of the Temple. The Talmud discusses the construction of altars and the importance of peace and atonement, while the Israelites built an altar of unhewn stone as commanded by Moses. Rabbi Yochana ben Zakai emphasizes not taking credit for learning Torah.

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| אֲבָנִ֤ים שְׁלֵמוֹת֙ תִּבְנֶ֔ה אֶת־מִזְבַּ֖ח יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְהַעֲלִ֤יתָ עָלָיו֙ עוֹלֹ֔ת לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 6 | you must build the altar of your God יהוה of unhewn stones. You shall offer on it burnt offerings to your God יהוה, |

Chasidut explains that stones represent letters, with the altar of the Lord needing to be built with whole stones. Halakhah specifies that any stone with a crack or touched by iron is disqualified, and erecting a matsevah is forbidden. Kabbalah highlights the importance of producing complete stones through prayer, while the Midrash emphasizes the mandatory nature of building an altar of whole stones for promoting peace. The Mishnah details the ceremony of blessings and curses with six tribes on Mount Gerizim and six on Mount Ebal, using whole stones from Bet Kerem for the altar. The Talmud discusses the construction and materials of the altar, while the Tanakh and Targum mention the building of an altar of unhewn stones for burnt offerings and sacrifices to God.

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| וְזָבַחְתָּ֥ שְׁלָמִ֖ים וְאָכַ֣לְתָּ שָּׁ֑ם וְשָׂ֣מַחְתָּ֔ לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 7 | and you shall sacrifice there offerings of well-being and eat them, rejoicing before your God יהוה. |

Chasidut teaches that true rejoicing during festivals comes from eating meat, as stated in Deuteronomy 27:7. The Ba’al Shem Tov emphasizes that the greatest joy in heaven is when creatures serve God from earth. Halakhah mandates various aspects of celebration on festivals, including offering peace offerings, eating meat, drinking wine, and including the poor in the festivities. The Mishnah details specific rules for valid slaughter, while the Talmud discusses the fulfillment of the mitzva of rejoicing on a Festival and the use of second-tithe money for peace offerings. The Tanakh mentions the Israelites offering sacrifices of well-being to God, and Targum Jonathan emphasizes the importance of offering sacrifices and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

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| וְכָתַבְתָּ֣ עַל־הָאֲבָנִ֗ים אֶֽת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֛י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את בַּאֵ֥ר הֵיטֵֽב׃ | 8 | And on those stones you shall inscribe every word of this Teaching most distinctly. |

In Chasidut, Moses commanded the Torah to be translated into 70 languages and inscribed on stones to show permission from God for Israelites to take Canaanite lands. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, HaKtav VeHaKabalah, Siftei Chakhamim, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz provide different perspectives on the significance of writing the Torah in multiple languages. In Guides, the Israelites were instructed to set up stones inscribed with the Torah upon entering the promised land, while Midrash discusses the miracles and events surrounding the inscribing of the Torah in seventy languages. Mishnah describes the ceremony of blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, while Talmud and Quoting Commentary elaborate on the writing of the Torah on stones in multiple languages. Finally, Targum emphasizes the importance of writing the Torah in a way that can be interpreted in different languages.

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| וַיְדַבֵּ֤ר מֹשֶׁה֙ וְהַכֹּהֲנִ֣ים הַלְוִיִּ֔ם אֶ֥ל כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל לֵאמֹ֑ר הַסְכֵּ֤ת ׀ וּשְׁמַע֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל הַיּ֤וֹם הַזֶּה֙ נִהְיֵ֣יתָֽ לְעָ֔ם לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 9 | Moses and the levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying: Silence! Hear, O Israel! Today you have become the people of your God יהוה: |

Chasidut emphasizes the daily renewal of Divine service, with Torah study and asceticism best done in groups to imbue holiness. Halakhah explains the matrilineal succession in Jewish identity from the Sinaitic covenant. Kabbalah discusses the male and female aspects of divinity in the Zohar commentary. Midrash highlights the importance of Torah study in groups and the sacrifices made for devotion. Quoting Commentary emphasizes the possessions of the Holy Tabernacle and the significance of treating Torah scholars with respect. Second Temple texts stress the importance of silence and listening, while the Talmud discusses the importance of studying Torah with companions and the daily importance of Torah study. Tanakh emphasizes the importance of listening to reveal internalities and truths, and Targum highlights the commitment of the people of Israel to God.

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| וְשָׁ֣מַעְתָּ֔ בְּק֖וֹל יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ וְעָשִׂ֤יתָ אֶת־מִצְוֺתָו֙ וְאֶת־חֻקָּ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 10 | Heed your God יהוה and observe the divine commandments and laws, which I enjoin upon you this day. |

The text emphasizes the importance of obeying God’s commandments and listening to His voice, with a focus on the unity and equal importance of all the commandments. Moses instructs the people of Israel to be silent and listen to the commands of the Lord as they renew the Sinai Covenant in Deuteronomy 27:9-10, emphasizing the need to follow and obey God’s word.

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| וַיְצַ֤ו מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶת־הָעָ֔ם בַּיּ֥וֹם הַה֖וּא לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 11 | Thereupon Moses charged the people, saying: |

Moses commands the people to proclaim blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal to emphasize the importance of upholding the law as guardians of the Torah, reassuring the Israelites that they will ultimately be redeemed and blessed by God. Ibn Ezra interprets Isaiah 3:10 as emphasizing the importance of thinking or declaring in one’s heart or with the mouth, with formulaic declarations in Deuteronomy summarizing the entire Torah. The Targum states that Moses instructed the people to recite blessings and curses on the mountains.

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| אֵ֠לֶּה יַֽעַמְד֞וּ לְבָרֵ֤ךְ אֶת־הָעָם֙ עַל־הַ֣ר גְּרִזִ֔ים בְּעׇבְרְכֶ֖ם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֑ן שִׁמְעוֹן֙ וְלֵוִ֣י וִֽיהוּדָ֔ה וְיִשָּׂשכָ֖ר וְיוֹסֵ֥ף וּבִנְיָמִֽן׃ | 12 | After you have crossed the Jordan, the following shall stand on Mount Gerizim when the blessing for the people is spoken: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. |

Chasidut explains that blessings can be received immediately by following God’s instructions, even before conquering Canaan. The ceremony on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal involved six tribes on each mountain, with priests, Levites, and the Ark in between, reciting blessings and curses directed at different groups of tribes based on ancestry. The Babylonian Talmud discusses the command to give blessings on Mount Gerizim and curses on Mount Ebal upon entering Canaan, while the Mishnah specifies that certain recitations and blessings must be done in Hebrew. The Midrash explores the Priestly Blessing, the story of Balaam and Balak, and the importance of blessings and curses. Lashon hara brings curses, while refraining brings blessings. Rashi, Mishnah, Rabbeinu Bahya, Ramban, Gevia Kesef, Chizkuni, and Second Temple sources provide further insights on blessings and curses. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi discuss the placement of Levites during the ceremony, and the Tosefta details the process of reciting blessings and curses on the mountains.

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| וְאֵ֛לֶּה יַֽעַמְד֥וּ עַל־הַקְּלָלָ֖ה בְּהַ֣ר עֵיבָ֑ל רְאוּבֵן֙ גָּ֣ד וְאָשֵׁ֔ר וּזְבוּלֻ֖ן דָּ֥ן וְנַפְתָּלִֽי׃ | 13 | And for the curse, the following shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. |

Six tribes, including Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, are designated to stand on Mount Eival to pronounce curses as part of a ritual described in Deuteronomy 27:13. In various texts, it is explained that the priests and Levites were below the mountain during the blessings and curses, while the rest were on the mountain, with the Mishnah harmonizing descriptions by stating that all tribes went up while the priests and Levites remained in the middle. The ceremony on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal involved six tribes on each mountain with the Cohanim, Levites, and the ark in the middle, reciting blessings and curses, with the blessing preceding the curse, including prohibitions against making graven images.

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| וְעָנ֣וּ הַלְוִיִּ֗ם וְאָ֥מְר֛וּ אֶל־כׇּל־אִ֥ישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל ק֥וֹל רָֽם׃ | 14 | The Levites shall then proclaim in a loud voice to all the people of Israel: |

In Deuteronomy 27:14, the Levites stood between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, reciting blessings and curses in Hebrew, with the tribes divided accordingly. The Mishnah specifies that various rituals, including the blessings and curses, must be recited in Hebrew, as seen in the Torah. The Talmud discusses the requirement for Levites to speak in Hebrew during sacred ceremonies, with differing perspectives presented. The Targum mentions that the Levites were instructed to speak loudly to the people of Israel.

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| אָר֣וּר הָאִ֡ישׁ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יַעֲשֶׂה֩ פֶ֨סֶל וּמַסֵּכָ֜ה תּוֹעֲבַ֣ת יְהֹוָ֗ה מַעֲשֵׂ֛ה יְדֵ֥י חָרָ֖שׁ וְשָׂ֣ם בַּסָּ֑תֶר וְעָנ֧וּ כׇל־הָעָ֛ם וְאָמְר֖וּ אָמֵֽן׃ | 15 | Cursed be any party who makes a sculptured or molten image, abhorred by יהוה, a craftsman’s handiwork, and sets it up in secret.—And all the people shall respond, Amen. |

Sforno explains the curses in Deuteronomy 27:15 target sinners violating specific commandments in secret, mostly leaders. Halakhah details the prohibitions related to idol worship, emphasizing the treatment of idols and accessories. Jewish Thought highlights collective responsibility for preventing corruption and addressing secret sins, with blessings and curses serving as warnings. Kabbalah warns against actions contrary to the Torah, linking them to idol creation. Midrash discusses blessings and curses related to idol worship at Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, targeting adulterers leading to idolatry. Talmud explores blessings for Torah observance and curses for sins like idol worship, with distinctions between idols made by Jews and Gentiles. The Targum emphasizes not making or hiding abominable images or idols, with responses of “Amen” to blessings and curses. Tosefta describes the ceremony with tribes on both mountains and the recitation of blessings and curses, including specific and general curses related to Torah observance.

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| אָר֕וּר מַקְלֶ֥ה אָבִ֖יו וְאִמּ֑וֹ וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 16 | Cursed be the one who insults father or mother.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Various commentaries, including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, and Steinsaltz, discuss the significance of honoring parents and the consequences of cursing or shaming them, with punishments outlined in Deuteronomy 27:16. The importance of love, respect, and obedience towards parents is emphasized in Jewish thought, with Midrashic texts highlighting the consequences of disrespecting parents and the intervention of divine forces to prevent harm to the Israelites. The Musar perspective underscores the positive commandment to fear and honor parents, with specific guidelines on how to show respect. The Targum reinforces the idea that disrespect towards parents is cursed, with the community affirming this sentiment with an “Amen.”

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| אָר֕וּר מַסִּ֖יג גְּב֣וּל רֵעֵ֑הוּ וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 17 | Cursed be the one who moves a neighbor’s landmark.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

The text from Tanya prohibits printing certain materials without authority for five years, promising blessings to those who comply. In Sefat Emet, Korach’s argument against Aharon’s leadership is countered by the daily choice of Bnei Yisrael by Hashem, symbolized by Aharon’s kindness and the mitzvah of tzitzit. Deuteronomy 27:17 condemns those who move their neighbor’s boundary markers in a deceitful manner, leading the blind astray. Moses curses those who shift boundaries, likening it to leading the soul away from virtue towards passion. Deuteronomy 19:14 prohibits moving your neighbor’s landmarks, with the Targum commentaries affirming this curse.

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| אָר֕וּר מַשְׁגֶּ֥ה עִוֵּ֖ר בַּדָּ֑רֶךְ וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 18 | Cursed be the one who misdirects a blind person who is underway.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Chasidut emphasizes the mutual selection between Hashem and Yaakov, with purity attained through Hashem’s words and Torah purified through speech. The curse on those who mislead the blind refers to giving bad advice, a transgression of the commandment not to mislead the blind. Justice is emphasized in Jewish Thought, respecting all beings and their possessions as creations of God. The Midrash likens blindness to suffering and explains that the blind will be the first to be healed when the world is healed. People are warned against misleading others for personal gain in Musar, highlighting the severity of their punishment. Rashi interprets Leviticus 19:14:3 as referring to giving bad advice rather than a physical stumbling block, supported by a similar concept in Devarim 27:18. The Second Temple text discusses the importance of reason over sense perception in understanding the world, while the Targums on Deuteronomy 27:18 all state that those who mislead the blind are cursed.

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| אָר֗וּר מַטֶּ֛ה מִשְׁפַּ֥ט גֵּר־יָת֖וֹם וְאַלְמָנָ֑ה וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 19 | Cursed be the one who subverts the rights of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

The text discusses the curse on those who pervert justice for vulnerable individuals like strangers, orphans, and widows, emphasizing the importance of accountability even in secret actions. The Talmud and Torah stress the importance of treating strangers with equality and love, prohibiting mistreatment and highlighting the need for justice and compassion towards all individuals. The Targum states that those who distort justice for converts, orphans, or widows will be cursed, with the people saying Amen.

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| אָר֗וּר שֹׁכֵב֙ עִם־אֵ֣שֶׁת אָבִ֔יו כִּ֥י גִלָּ֖ה כְּנַ֣ף אָבִ֑יו וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 20 | Cursed be the [man] who lies with his father’s wife, for he has removed his father’s garment. —And all the people shall say, Amen. |

The Torah condemns sins such as uncovering a father’s skirt and marrying a woman violated by one’s father using respectful euphemisms to deter private crimes, as seen in the punishment of individuals like Asa, Uzzah, and the men of Beth Shemesh for seemingly minor transgressions not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. In the case of Reuben laying with Bilhah, interpretations suggest he did not actually sin but rearranged beds to defend his mother’s honor, leading to his repentance and atonement. Rabbeinu Bahya explains that Reuven’s sin was fully expiated when Moses ascended to God, reflected in the curse placed on anyone who slept with their father’s wife when Reuven was appointed first to utter curses, indicating that his actions were not as severe as previously thought.

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| אָר֕וּר שֹׁכֵ֖ב עִם־כׇּל־בְּהֵמָ֑ה וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 21 | Cursed be the one who lies with any beast.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Ibn Ezra and Steinsaltz explain that the curse for lying with a beast applies to both male and female animals because they cannot protest verbally. Halakhah states that an immersion without intention is valid, but a woman should prepare for purification for it to be valid. In Kabbalah, demons are described as beasts that multiply and are despised by Torah students. The Midrash advises selling possessions to marry a scholar’s daughter, while the Talmud recommends marrying the daughter of a Torah scholar and avoiding marrying an ignoramus. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan translate Deuteronomy 27:21 as stating that anyone who has intercourse with an animal is cursed.

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| אָר֗וּר שֹׁכֵב֙ עִם־אֲחֹת֔וֹ בַּת־אָבִ֖יו א֣וֹ בַת־אִמּ֑וֹ וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 22 | Cursed be the [man] who lies with his sister, whether daughter of his father or of his mother.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

The curse in Deuteronomy 27:22 is on those who sexually abuse their siblings, particularly adult brothers who may use their authority to prevent their minor sisters from objecting, leading to hidden transgressions. Leviticus 18:9 prohibits uncovering the nakedness of one’s sister, whether born into the household or outside, as incestuous. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 27:22 emphasize the curse on those engaging in incestuous relationships, with Onkelos mentioning sisters, Targum Jonathan including father or mother’s daughters, and Targum Jerusalem adding a curse for those who lie with their mother-in-law, all ending with the people responding with “Amen.”

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| אָר֕וּר שֹׁכֵ֖ב עִם־חֹֽתַנְתּ֑וֹ וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 23 | Cursed be the [man] who lies with his mother-in-law.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Deuteronomy 27:23 curses those who lie with their mother-in-law, regardless of her marital status, bringing shame to the family. The Mishnah in Yevamot 1:1 exempts certain women from levirate marriage and ḥalitza due to forbidden relationships with the surviving brother. The German commentary on Mishnah Yevamot 1:1:15 discusses the prohibition of marrying a deceased wife’s mother or deceased brother’s wife, citing Leviticus. The Targum states that those who have intercourse with their father’s-in-law’s wife or mother-in-law are cursed, with the people saying Amen.

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| אָר֕וּר מַכֵּ֥ה רֵעֵ֖הוּ בַּסָּ֑תֶר וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 24 | Cursed be the one who strikes down a fellow [Israelite] in secret.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Rashi and other commentaries explain that the curse of smiting one’s fellow secretly refers to slander, with the mention of eleven curses corresponding to the eleven tribes, excluding Simeon. Halakhah emphasizes that lashon hara brings curses, removes blessings, and is forbidden in all forms. Jewish Thought stresses the importance of justice and respect for all beings, while the Midrash shows the consequences of secret slander. Musar highlights the harm caused by lashon hara and the denial of fundamental principles of faith, while both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 27:24 as a curse against those who harm others in secret.

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| אָרוּר֙ לֹקֵ֣חַ שֹׁ֔חַד לְהַכּ֥וֹת נֶ֖פֶשׁ דָּ֣ם נָקִ֑י וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 25 | Cursed be the one who accepts a bribe in the case of the murder of an innocent person.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Ibn Ezra and Sforno interpret Deuteronomy 27:25 as referring to false witnesses and bribery to slander, with Tur HaArokh warning of perjury leading to judicial murder. The Sefer HaChinukh and Mishneh Torah prohibit judges from accepting bribes, with the obligation to return them if demanded. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan translate the verse as a curse on those who accept bribes to harm innocent individuals, with the people responding with “Amen.”

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| אָר֗וּר אֲשֶׁ֧ר לֹא־יָקִ֛ים אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַתּוֹרָֽה־הַזֹּ֖את לַעֲשׂ֣וֹת אוֹתָ֑ם וְאָמַ֥ר כׇּל־הָעָ֖ם אָמֵֽן׃ | 26 | Cursed be whoever will not uphold the terms of this Teaching and observe them.—And all the people shall say, Amen. |

Deuteronomy 27:26 curses those who do not uphold the Torah, including promoting Torah observance and repenting sincerely. Violating the prohibition of Lashon Hara and Rechilut incurs a grave sin. Karet applies to all positive commandments, including forbidden relationships. Repentance for even minor sins is crucial, and supporting Torah scholars is essential to avoid being cursed. The Talmud discusses the laws of curses in Deuteronomy 27:15-26, requiring specific recitations and detailing the number of covenants in the Torah. The people affirm curses on those who do not uphold the Torah, with tribes pronouncing blessings and curses on Mounts Gerizim and Ebal. At the recitation of blessings and curses, tribes, priests, and Levites alternate between facing the mountains, emphasizing the importance of Torah observance.

## Deuteronomy 28

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| וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמַע֙ בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֤ר לַעֲשׂוֹת֙ אֶת־כׇּל־מִצְוֺתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם וּנְתָ֨נְךָ֜ יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ עֶלְי֔וֹן עַ֖ל כׇּל־גּוֹיֵ֥י הָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 1 | Now, if you obey your God יהוה, to observe faithfully all the divine commandments which I enjoin upon you this day, your God יהוה will set you high above all the nations of the earth. |

Chasidut emphasizes the urgency of repentance and spiritual awakening, Sefat Emet stresses the importance of fully engaging in spiritual growth. Torah study is key to receiving blessings promised in Deuteronomy 28, Jewish Thought discusses Divine intervention and the moral superiority of Israel, Midrash emphasizes the rewards of maintaining a connection with God through Torah study and prayer. Ramban explains the spiritual significance of the census of the Jewish people, and the Talmud discusses the importance of being a vessel for knowledge and analyzing curses in Deuteronomy 28. Targum highlights the promise of being elevated above all nations by obeying God’s commandments.

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| וּבָ֧אוּ עָלֶ֛יךָ כׇּל־הַבְּרָכ֥וֹת הָאֵ֖לֶּה וְהִשִּׂיגֻ֑ךָ כִּ֣י תִשְׁמַ֔ע בְּק֖וֹל יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 2 | All these blessings shall come upon you and take effect, if you will but heed the word of your God יהוה: |

Chasidut explains that blessings promised to Israel will remain constant in their soul, with every good deed generating blessing that will eventually reach them. The commentary on Deuteronomy 28:2 highlights that blessings will come to the Jewish people without active pursuit, prioritizing Torah and following God’s will. The Midrash emphasizes divine protection in various aspects of life, safeguarding against harm and providing guidance. Quoting commentary and Targum Jonathan further emphasize the importance of obedience to God’s word for blessings to abide.

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| בָּר֥וּךְ אַתָּ֖ה בָּעִ֑יר וּבָר֥וּךְ אַתָּ֖ה בַּשָּׂדֶֽה׃ | 3 | Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country. |

The city will see an increase in merchandise and blessings for observing urban commandments, while the field will have blessings for farmers following laws related to growing crops. Jerusalem is considered the blessed city, and Zion the blessed field. The Kabbalah text Zohar mentions that waiting for sanctification brings blessings, even acknowledged by the wicked in Gehenom. Liturgy in Deuteronomy 28:3,4,5,6,8,12 states not to borrow. The Midrash discusses blessings in the city and field, arrival and departure, and emphasizes listening to the Torah. Musar discusses seeking vengeance, detestable in those resembling a lion, while the wise do not seek revenge. Rashi explains the promise of blessing from the Lord in Deuteronomy 28:3-12. Gemara discusses the meaning of blessing in Deuteronomy 28:3 and 28:6. Targum interprets Deuteronomy 28:3 as a blessing for prosperity in urban and rural settings, and Tosefta Maaser Sheni states that the verse “And bless your people” includes all blessings.

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| בָּר֧וּךְ פְּרִֽי־בִטְנְךָ֛ וּפְרִ֥י אַדְמָתְךָ֖ וּפְרִ֣י בְהֶמְתֶּ֑ךָ שְׁגַ֥ר אֲלָפֶ֖יךָ וְעַשְׁתְּר֥וֹת צֹאנֶֽךָ׃ | 4 | Blessed shall be your issue from the womb, your produce from the soil, and the offspring of your cattle, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock. |

The blessings in Deuteronomy 28:4 include healthy children, prosperous livestock, and abundant crops, with the fruit of the womb considered the supreme blessing. The blessing of the Lord includes protection and prosperity, extending to physical well-being, protection from evil inclinations, and even in the afterlife. Radak explains “עץ פרי” as including both the trunk and fruit of a tree, Rashi interprets “ככבש אלוף” as animals brought for slaughter, and Ramban suggests “u’mlo’oh” refers to blessings of fertility. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan mention blessings on offspring, produce, cattle, and flocks.

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| בָּר֥וּךְ טַנְאֲךָ֖ וּמִשְׁאַרְתֶּֽךָ׃ | 5 | Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. |

In Deuteronomy 28:5, various commentators interpret “blessed shall be thy basket” and “thy basket” as referring to fruits, liquids filtered through baskets, and the place where flour is placed. The Midrash emphasizes the blessings associated with performing mitzvot in different settings, while the Targum translations focus on the significance of first fruits and flour offerings for divine favor. Ramban and Rashbam provide insights into the order of blessings and curses mentioned in the text, highlighting the importance of G’d’s blessings on daily livelihood.

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| בָּר֥וּךְ אַתָּ֖ה בְּבֹאֶ֑ךָ וּבָר֥וּךְ אַתָּ֖ה בְּצֵאתֶֽךָ׃ | 6 | Blessed shall you be in your comings and blessed shall you be in your goings. |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 28:6 discuss the concept of being blessed when coming in and going out, with Rashi emphasizing sinless arrival and departure, Ibn Ezra expanding on different situations for the blessing, and Siftei Chakhamim connecting it to forgetting Torah. The priests focus on material, spiritual, and harmonious blessings from God, while Kabbalah emphasizes the oneness of God through reciting the Shema. Midrash texts discuss blessings and protections from the Lord, and Musar highlights the importance of maintaining a close relationship with God and fulfilling spiritual tasks before death. The Talmud discusses how generosity and fulfilling precepts bring blessings, while the Tanakh and Targum emphasize God’s protection and blessings during journeys and in places of learning.

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| יִתֵּ֨ן יְהֹוָ֤ה אֶת־אֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙ הַקָּמִ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ נִגָּפִ֖ים לְפָנֶ֑יךָ בְּדֶ֤רֶךְ אֶחָד֙ יֵצְא֣וּ אֵלֶ֔יךָ וּבְשִׁבְעָ֥ה דְרָכִ֖ים יָנ֥וּסוּ לְפָנֶֽיךָ׃ | 7 | יהוה will put to rout before [your army] the enemies who attack you; they will march out against you by a single road, but flee from you by many roads. |

The verse in Deuteronomy 28:7 distinguishes Israel from gentile nations by highlighting their unique ability to relate to God with both love and awe, while gentile nations can only do so with either love or fear. Various commentaries explain that Israel’s security is dependent on faithful obedience to God, and the number seven symbolizes multiplicity and perfection. The Talmud discusses the use of masculine and feminine forms in the Mishna, with Torah being feminine and war being masculine. Adonoy will defeat Israel’s enemies, causing them to scatter in seven directions.

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| יְצַ֨ו יְהֹוָ֤ה אִתְּךָ֙ אֶת־הַבְּרָכָ֔ה בַּאֲסָמֶ֕יךָ וּבְכֹ֖ל מִשְׁלַ֣ח יָדֶ֑ךָ וּבֵ֣רַכְךָ֔ בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָֽךְ׃ | 8 | יהוה will ordain blessings for you upon your barns and upon all your undertakings: you will be blessed in the land that your God יהוה is giving you. |

Chasidut explains that G’d dispenses blessings through miracles or covert means, emphasizing the distinction between Justice and Mercy. Commentary highlights the blessings coming from Israel and being a constant companion for the faithful. Jewish Thought discusses safeguards against the yetzer hara, with Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai’s students providing ways to achieve spiritual goals. Midrash emphasizes heavenly blessings, the role of Israel in bringing blessings to the world, and the relationship between blessings, curses, and patriarchal actions. Musar discusses the contradiction between blessings in hidden things and damaging spirits having dominion over excess wealth, with Hashem granting protection. Quoting Commentary, Ramban explains the progression of blessings, and Rabbeinu Bahya emphasizes diversifying investments and avoiding measuring or counting. The Talmud and Targum highlight blessings found in hidden objects and storehouses.

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| יְקִֽימְךָ֨ יְהֹוָ֥ה לוֹ֙ לְעַ֣ם קָד֔וֹשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר נִֽשְׁבַּֽע־לָ֑ךְ כִּ֣י תִשְׁמֹ֗ר אֶת־מִצְוֺת֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וְהָלַכְתָּ֖ בִּדְרָכָֽיו׃ | 9 | יהוה will establish you as God’s holy people, as was sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of your God יהוה and walk in God’s ways. |

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai’s teachings in Chasidut are essential for understanding the secrets of the Torah, emphasizing charity, Torah study, and repentance. Halakhah discusses emulating God’s traits and acting with compassion, while Jewish Thought focuses on the importance of following God’s ways and commandments. Kabbalah highlights the fear of HaShem and the removal of the shoe as symbols of a deeper connection. Mishnah details the process of flogging and the importance of observing the law and God’s mercy. Musar emphasizes acts of justice, loving-kindness, and mercy as essential for fulfilling one’s purpose in creation. Quoting Commentary sources various commentators discussing walking in God’s ways, emulating God’s attributes, and the significance of commandments. Tanakh and Targum both stress the importance of walking in God’s ways and being blameless to receive blessings.

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| וְרָאוּ֙ כׇּל־עַמֵּ֣י הָאָ֔רֶץ כִּ֛י שֵׁ֥ם יְהֹוָ֖ה נִקְרָ֣א עָלֶ֑יךָ וְיָֽרְא֖וּ מִמֶּֽךָּ׃ | 10 | And all the peoples of the earth shall see that יהוה’s name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you. |

Rav Mordechai Yosef established the fundamentals of Chasidut, emphasizing the universal application of Torah teachings to all souls. The significance of Tefillin in connecting to Hashem and meriting Torah is discussed, emphasizing self-nullification and acceptance of the Kingdom of Heaven. The nations will recognize Israel as favored by God through the symbol of Tefillin, leading to awe and fear of both Israel and God. Tefillin should be worn during the day, not at night, Sabbaths, or holidays, with the time to put them on beginning when one can see a colleague standing four cubits away. Wearing Tefillin is crucial for spiritual protection and connection to the Divine, symbolizing the presence of God’s Name and instilling fear in destructive forces and nations. Israel’s steadfast faith during various exiles is highlighted in the Midrash, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling vows and faithfulness leading to reverence from other nations. The wearing of phylacteries serves as a reminder of the miracles of the Exodus and God’s providence, establishing the Jewish people as God’s chosen ones.

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| וְהוֹתִרְךָ֤ יְהֹוָה֙ לְטוֹבָ֔ה בִּפְרִ֧י בִטְנְךָ֛ וּבִפְרִ֥י בְהֶמְתְּךָ֖ וּבִפְרִ֣י אַדְמָתֶ֑ךָ עַ֚ל הָאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֧ע יְהֹוָ֛ה לַאֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ לָ֥תֶת לָֽךְ׃ | 11 | יהוה will give you abounding prosperity in your issue from the womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil in the land that יהוה swore to your fathers to assign to you. |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 28:11 discuss God granting abundance and excess blessings to the Israelites, surpassing expectations and fulfilling promises. The Midrash emphasizes the concept of four keys held by the Holy One, not given to humans, and highlights instances where they were delivered to righteous individuals. Bartenura explains the permission to make a cavity under the public domain for bringing First Fruits, while Targum Jonathan emphasizes the blessings of offspring, animals, and produce on the promised land.

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| יִפְתַּ֣ח יְהֹוָ֣ה ׀ לְ֠ךָ֠ אֶת־אוֹצָר֨וֹ הַטּ֜וֹב אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֗יִם לָתֵ֤ת מְטַֽר־אַרְצְךָ֙ בְּעִתּ֔וֹ וּלְבָרֵ֕ךְ אֵ֖ת כׇּל־מַעֲשֵׂ֣ה יָדֶ֑ךָ וְהִלְוִ֙יתָ֙ גּוֹיִ֣ם רַבִּ֔ים וְאַתָּ֖ה לֹ֥א תִלְוֶֽה׃ | 12 | יהוה will open for you that bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season and to bless all your undertakings. You will be creditor to many nations, but debtor to none. |

The text discusses serving the Lord with reverence and awe to receive hidden pleasures in the afterlife, observing the Sabbath actively and passively for rewards, and the importance of Torah insights for creating blessings. Rain is considered a treasure crucial for survival, symbolizing wealth and blessings for prosperity. God’s acts of kindness, such as providing rain and livelihood, are out of His kindness rather than due to the righteousness of His creations. Many passages in the prophets are figurative, and blessings after meals express gratitude for sustenance provided through food and Torah. The prayer asks for mercy, the removal of barriers, sealing in the book of life, sweetening restrictions, and forgiveness of sins. Rabbi Yoḥanan asserts God controls rainfall and birthing, while the Talmud describes storehouses for snow, hail, and harmful elements with doors made of fire. Adonoy will open the sky to give rain on time and bless all endeavors, eliminating the need for borrowing. Blessings come from the heavenly storehouse of good, as indicated by looking down from the heavens and opening the storehouse of good.

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| וּנְתָֽנְךָ֨ יְהֹוָ֤ה לְרֹאשׁ֙ וְלֹ֣א לְזָנָ֔ב וְהָיִ֙יתָ֙ רַ֣ק לְמַ֔עְלָה וְלֹ֥א תִהְיֶ֖ה לְמָ֑טָּה כִּֽי־תִשְׁמַ֞ע אֶל־מִצְוֺ֣ת ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ הַיּ֖וֹם לִשְׁמֹ֥ר וְלַעֲשֽׂוֹת׃ | 13 | יהוה will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom—if only you obey and faithfully observe the commandments of your God יהוה that I enjoin upon you this day, |

The text discusses the hierarchy of abstract thought, speech, and action, emphasizing the importance of striving for the highest level of understanding and connection to God to prevent being relegated to a lower spiritual position. It highlights that Israel will be above all nations by observing God’s commandments and not turning to idols, with disobedience leading to being lower than others. The concept of “above” and “below” in holiness is connected to levels of holiness and greatness, with G-d’s greatness surpassing any holiness we can attain. The ultimate perfection of the world is debated by Maimonides and Nachmanides, with Nachmanides believing it will include both body and soul. The importance of maintaining faith and obedience to God’s commandments to remain elevated is emphasized throughout various commentaries and texts.

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| וְלֹ֣א תָס֗וּר מִכׇּל־הַדְּבָרִים֙ אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֜י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶ֛ם הַיּ֖וֹם יָמִ֣ין וּשְׂמֹ֑אול לָלֶ֗כֶת אַחֲרֵ֛י אֱלֹהִ֥ים אֲחֵרִ֖ים לְעׇבְדָֽם׃ | 14 | and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other gods. |

Ramban stresses the importance of not straying from God’s commandments to receive blessings, while Sforno and Tur HaArokh warn against introducing changes or contemplating idolatrous actions. The Oral Torah traditions, including the hue of techelet, must be followed as received from Moshe at Sinai. The Second Temple text equates the royal road with the word of God, emphasizing the importance of following it without deviation. The curse on the Jewish people in Deuteronomy is represented by specific Hebrew letters, and both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize the importance of not worshiping idols of other nations.

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| וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־לֹ֤א תִשְׁמַע֙ בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֤ר לַעֲשׂוֹת֙ אֶת־כׇּל־מִצְוֺתָ֣יו וְחֻקֹּתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם וּבָ֧אוּ עָלֶ֛יךָ כׇּל־הַקְּלָל֥וֹת הָאֵ֖לֶּה וְהִשִּׂיגֽוּךָ׃ | 15 | But if you do not obey your God יהוה to observe faithfully all the commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect: |

Failure to fulfill all aspects of Judaism will lead to escalating curses and punishments, threatening the decline of the Jewish people as a holy nation. The Holocaust caused a crisis of faith, challenging traditional beliefs in punishment and atonement. Balaam’s attempt to curse Israel failed, highlighting their unique status as God’s chosen people. The importance of heeding God’s commandments and listening willingly is emphasized in the Bible. The curses on Israel are represented by the twenty-two letters of the alphabet, and are conditional based on obedience to God’s laws.

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| אָר֥וּר אַתָּ֖ה בָּעִ֑יר וְאָר֥וּר אַתָּ֖ה בַּשָּׂדֶֽה׃ | 16 | Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country. |

The curse in Deuteronomy 28:16 signifies a loss of valuable and essential things, with R. Elazar explaining that different elements mentioned in the verse represent Torah, holidays, circumcision, and Tephilin. Rabbeinu Bahya stresses the importance of joy in serving God, with Levites between 30-50 years old commanded to offer songs and hymns. The Midrash BeChiddush on Pesach Haggadah discusses the tragic consequences for pregnant women during the Ten Plagues, while Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret the curse in Deuteronomy 28:16 as affecting both urban and rural areas.

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| אָר֥וּר טַנְאֲךָ֖ וּמִשְׁאַרְתֶּֽךָ׃ | 17 | Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. |

Ibn Ezra interprets “their leftovers” in Exodus 12:34 as wooden bowls for kneading dough, questioning why the Israelites carried them instead of placing them on donkeys with lighter garments. The Targum translation of Deuteronomy 28:17 states that both the fruit basket and solid foods of the people will be cursed.

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| אָר֥וּר פְּרִֽי־בִטְנְךָ֖ וּפְרִ֣י אַדְמָתֶ֑ךָ שְׁגַ֥ר אֲלָפֶ֖יךָ וְעַשְׁתְּרֹ֥ת צֹאנֶֽךָ׃ | 18 | Cursed shall be your issue from the womb and your produce from the soil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock. |

Ramban explains the order of blessings and curses, with the fruit of the body mentioned first in blessings and delayed in curses as punishment. Liturgy connects Deuteronomy 28:18,19 to the words “for fame, for glory, and for praise” and discusses the discrepancy between “Preserve” and “Remember” in the fourth commandment. The Targum mentions that disobedience will result in cursed offspring, crops, cattle, and flocks.

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| אָר֥וּר אַתָּ֖ה בְּבֹאֶ֑ךָ וְאָר֥וּר אַתָּ֖ה בְּצֵאתֶֽךָ׃ | 19 | Cursed shall you be in your comings and cursed shall you be in your goings. |

Rav Hirsch and Steinsaltz interpret Deuteronomy 28:19 as a continuation of verse 6, stating that people are cursed both upon arrival and departure. The Halakhah emphasizes the importance of not forgetting the wicked deeds of Amalek, commanding to destroy their memory while maintaining hatred towards them. The Midrash BeChiddush on Pesach Haggadah explains how God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, leading to the chaos of pursuit and the downfall of the Egyptians. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that one is cursed upon arrival and departure, as well as when entering places of entertainment and leaving to attend to worldly matters.

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| יְשַׁלַּ֣ח יְהֹוָ֣ה ׀ בְּ֠ךָ֠ אֶת־הַמְּאֵרָ֤ה אֶת־הַמְּהוּמָה֙ וְאֶת־הַמִּגְעֶ֔רֶת בְּכׇל־מִשְׁלַ֥ח יָדְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תַּעֲשֶׂ֑ה עַ֣ד הִשָּׁמֶדְךָ֤ וְעַד־אֲבׇדְךָ֙ מַהֵ֔ר מִפְּנֵ֛י רֹ֥עַ מַֽעֲלָלֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר עֲזַבְתָּֽנִי׃ | 20 | יהוה will let loose against you calamity, panic, and frustration in all the enterprises you undertake, so that you shall soon be utterly wiped out because of your evildoing in forsaking Me. |

The term “המארה” refers to paucity, “המהומה” is a terrifying sound, a curse signifies diminution, discomfiture refers to inability to finish tasks, rebuke means inability to enjoy work, and curses, confusion, panic, and disorder will befall individuals due to wicked deeds. God can bring blight and curses as punishment for disobedience in various aspects of life. Humility is essential, imperfections prevent arrogance, and can come from nature, family, events, or deeds. Rashbam and Ibn Ezra connect curses and confusion to afflictions, Or HaChaim discusses destructive forces, Ramban links commands to promises, and Midrash BeChiddush emphasizes the severity of plagues. Adonoy will bring ruin, panic, and frustration in all endeavors until destruction due to forsaking worship.

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| יַדְבֵּ֧ק יְהֹוָ֛ה בְּךָ֖ אֶת־הַדָּ֑בֶר עַ֚ד כַּלֹּת֣וֹ אֹֽתְךָ֔ מֵעַל֙ הָאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 21 | יהוה will make pestilence cling to you, until putting an end to you in the land that you are entering to possess. |

The curses in Deuteronomy 28:21:1-5 are consequences of sin and spiritual corruption, affecting individuals and their descendants for generations, serving as a warning against straying from God’s path. Rebbi Levi in the Talmud compares the epidemic to a contagious disease, with fasting rules varying based on the size of the town and number of victims. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret the passage as God bringing a plague upon the people, leading to their extermination from the land.

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| יַכְּכָ֣ה יְ֠הֹוָ֠ה בַּשַּׁחֶ֨פֶת וּבַקַּדַּ֜חַת וּבַדַּלֶּ֗קֶת וּבַֽחַרְחֻר֙ וּבַחֶ֔רֶב וּבַשִּׁדָּפ֖וֹן וּבַיֵּרָק֑וֹן וּרְדָפ֖וּךָ עַ֥ד אׇבְדֶֽךָ׃ | 22 | יהוה will strike you with consumption, fever, and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew; they shall hound you until you perish. |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Siftei Chakhamim, and Chizkuni provide interpretations of specific diseases mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:22. In cases of agricultural afflictions or epidemics, fasting and sounding trumpets are called for, while dry itch only requires crying out to God. The Mishnah discusses liability for false oaths and curses using names of God, with Rabbi Meir and the Rabbis differing on the specifics. The Talmud prohibits cursing with names of God and advises using euphemisms to avoid direct curses. The Targum describes various diseases and afflictions that will lead to destruction.

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| וְהָי֥וּ שָׁמֶ֛יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ֖ נְחֹ֑שֶׁת וְהָאָ֥רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־תַּחְתֶּ֖יךָ בַּרְזֶֽל׃ | 23 | The skies above your head shall be copper and the earth under you iron. |

Moses described the curses in Deuteronomy 28 as milder than those in Leviticus 26, with the punishment of the sky being copper and the earth being iron symbolizing a lack of rain and unfruitfulness. The Midrash explains that having the sky as iron and the earth as brass is worse than the reverse, resulting in the loss of fruit. Various commentaries emphasize that the punishment of no rain at all is a severe consequence for sins, corresponding to the Destruction of the First and Second Temples. The Tanakh states that God will humble the Israelites by making their skies like iron and their earth like copper if they disobey His commandments, while the Targum elaborates on this punishment by describing the heavens as unyielding like copper and the earth as strong as iron in withholding rain and fruitfulness.

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| יִתֵּ֧ן יְהֹוָ֛ה אֶת־מְטַ֥ר אַרְצְךָ֖ אָבָ֣ק וְעָפָ֑ר מִן־הַשָּׁמַ֙יִם֙ יֵרֵ֣ד עָלֶ֔יךָ עַ֖ד הִשָּׁמְדָֽךְ׃ | 24 | יהוה will make the rain of your land dust, and sand shall drop on you from the sky, until you are wiped out. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 28:24:1 explains that insufficient rain will lead to mud that rots vegetation, while the wind will bring dust and dirt, causing destruction. The Midrash emphasizes the importance of tithing for receiving blessings from God, with references to key figures like Abraham and Moses. Ramban suggests that the dust in Moses’ hands caused boils in Egypt as a decree of God. The Talmud considers winds after rain as a curse that raises dust, while the Targum describes Adonoy bringing drought and destruction upon the land.

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| יִתֶּנְךָ֨ יְהֹוָ֥ה ׀ נִגָּף֮ לִפְנֵ֣י אֹיְבֶ֒יךָ֒ בְּדֶ֤רֶךְ אֶחָד֙ תֵּצֵ֣א אֵלָ֔יו וּבְשִׁבְעָ֥ה דְרָכִ֖ים תָּנ֣וּס לְפָנָ֑יו וְהָיִ֣יתָ לְזַֽעֲוָ֔ה לְכֹ֖ל מַמְלְכ֥וֹת הָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 25 | יהוה will put you to rout before your enemies; you shall march out against them by a single road, but flee from them by many roads; and you shall become a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. |

The afflictions of the Israelites will cause fear and trembling among others, with the suffering being so intense that it will shock all nations. Ibn Ezra and Ramban provide interpretations of specific phrases in biblical texts, while Midrash BeChiddush and Abarbanel draw parallels between historical events and biblical stories. Adonoy will cause the Israelites to be defeated by their enemies, becoming a source of fear for all nations.

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| וְהָיְתָ֤ה נִבְלָֽתְךָ֙ לְמַֽאֲכָ֔ל לְכׇל־ע֥וֹף הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וּלְבֶהֱמַ֣ת הָאָ֑רֶץ וְאֵ֖ין מַחֲרִֽיד׃ | 26 | Your carcasses shall become food for all the birds of the sky and all the beasts of the earth, with none to frighten them off. |

The verse in Deuteronomy 28:26 depicts a scenario where the bodies of the disobedient will be left unburied, allowing birds and beasts to feed on them without interference, as explained in various commentaries and Targums.

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| יַכְּכָ֨ה יְהֹוָ֜ה בִּשְׁחִ֤ין מִצְרַ֙יִם֙ וּבַגָּרָ֖ב וּבֶחָ֑רֶס אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־תוּכַ֖ל לְהֵרָפֵֽא׃ | 27 | יהוה will strike you with the Egyptian inflammation, with hemorrhoids, boil-scars, and itch, from which you shall never recover. |

Various skin diseases and afflictions, including wet boils, dry boils, hemorrhoids, scabs, and itch, are discussed in the text as punishments from God for disobedience, with physicians unable to cure them due to their divine origin. The most perfect way to write a Torah scroll is outlined, with serious scribal errors disqualifying the scroll, such as using the wrong form of a word. Rashi provides interpretations of specific terms, while the Talmud teaches that verses with coarse language should be read in a refined manner. In the Tanakh, Moses causes boils to break out in Egypt as a punishment from God. Adonoy is said to afflict people with various incurable afflictions, including boils and scurvy. Verses in the Torah written in obscene language are to be read in refined language, according to the Tosefta.

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| יַכְּכָ֣ה יְהֹוָ֔ה בְּשִׁגָּע֖וֹן וּבְעִוָּר֑וֹן וּבְתִמְה֖וֹן לֵבָֽב׃ | 28 | יהוה will strike you with madness, blindness, and dismay. |

Various commentators interpret the phrase “clogging of the heart” in Deuteronomy 28:28 as afflictions of the mind like madness, numbness, blindness, and confusion of thoughts and emotions. In Mishnah, a wife is expected to perform various tasks for her husband, with the number of maidservants determining her responsibilities. Rashbam and other commentators discuss the meaning of specific words in different texts, such as “אבן” and “שעמום.” The curse described in Deuteronomy includes suffering madness, loss of sight, and confusion of mind. Targum explains that Adonoy will afflict with insanity, blindness, and confusion in the heart.

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| וְהָיִ֜יתָ מְמַשֵּׁ֣שׁ בַּֽצׇּהֳרַ֗יִם כַּאֲשֶׁ֨ר יְמַשֵּׁ֤שׁ הַֽעִוֵּר֙ בָּאֲפֵלָ֔ה וְלֹ֥א תַצְלִ֖יחַ אֶת־דְּרָכֶ֑יךָ וְהָיִ֜יתָ אַ֣ךְ עָשׁ֧וּק וְגָז֛וּל כׇּל־הַיָּמִ֖ים וְאֵ֥ין מוֹשִֽׁיעַ׃ | 29 | You shall grope at noon as the blind grope in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help. |

Various commentators explain that in Deuteronomy 28:29, being “wronged” means facing disputes in all actions, “groping” refers to blindness, and oppression by enemies will occur with no savior, leading to constant cheating, robbery, exploitation, and failure without any help. Isaac’s failing eyesight was a deliberate act by God to prevent Esau from receiving the blessing, with Jacob ultimately obtaining it based on his own merit. The plague of darkness in Exodus 10:21 is described as tangible darkness lasting seven days, with the Israelites having light in their dwellings while the Egyptians were enveloped in darkness. The Rabbis believe that even a blind man benefits from the luminaries, as they can sense the difference between light and darkness, despite not being able to see. Targum Jonathan expands on Deuteronomy 28:29, emphasizing the lack of guidance and truth, leading to constant struggle and oppression with no deliverance in sight.

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| אִשָּׁ֣ה תְאָרֵ֗שׂ וְאִ֤ישׁ אַחֵר֙ בַּ֥יִת תִּבְנֶ֖ה וְלֹא־תֵשֵׁ֣ב בּ֑וֹ כֶּ֥רֶם תִּטַּ֖ע וְלֹ֥א תְחַלְּלֶֽנּוּ׃ | 30 | If you [a man] pay the bride-price for a wife, another man shall enjoy her. If you build a house, you shall not live in it. If you plant a vineyard, you shall not harvest it. |

Rashi interprets “ישגלנה” as sexual intercourse, Ibn Ezra connects “תחללנו” to the flute, Mishneh Torah advises establishing an occupation, buying a house, and then marrying, Jewish Thought emphasizes the order of building a house before marriage, and the Talmud discusses using euphemisms for indelicate words. Jeremiah and Zechariah prophesy about defilement and war in Jerusalem, while Targum explains marrying a woman for another man and not enjoying a house or vineyard. The Tosefta mentions reading obscene verses in refined language, avoiding saying “amen” after leading a prayer, and giving instructions for leaders speaking to the people at the border and during war.

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| שׁוֹרְךָ֞ טָב֣וּחַ לְעֵינֶ֗יךָ וְלֹ֣א תֹאכַל֮ מִמֶּ֒נּוּ֒ חֲמֹֽרְךָ֙ גָּז֣וּל מִלְּפָנֶ֔יךָ וְלֹ֥א יָשׁ֖וּב לָ֑ךְ צֹֽאנְךָ֙ נְתֻנ֣וֹת לְאֹיְבֶ֔יךָ וְאֵ֥ין לְךָ֖ מוֹשִֽׁיעַ׃ | 31 | Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your ass shall be seized in front of you, and it shall not be returned to you; your flock shall be delivered to your enemies, with none to help you. |

Disobedience in Deuteronomy leads to consequences such as having your ox slaughtered, donkey stolen, and flock given to enemies with no help (Steinsaltz). During Greek oppression, Jews faced decrees like no doors in houses and inscribed animals, but found ways to overcome (Midrash). Euphemisms are used in the Talmud to replace indelicate words, and interpreting dreams was seen as predicting outcomes (Talmud). Onkelos and Targum Jonathan describe animals being killed or taken away with no hope of rescue in Deuteronomy (Targum).

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| בָּנֶ֨יךָ וּבְנֹתֶ֜יךָ נְתֻנִ֨ים לְעַ֤ם אַחֵר֙ וְעֵינֶ֣יךָ רֹא֔וֹת וְכָל֥וֹת אֲלֵיהֶ֖ם כׇּל־הַיּ֑וֹם וְאֵ֥ין לְאֵ֖ל יָדֶֽךָ׃ | 32 | Your sons and daughters shall be delivered to another people, while you look on; and your eyes shall strain for them constantly, but you shall be helpless. |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni discuss the longing and captivity of children in various contexts, while Mishnah Ketubot 4:11 states that a man must support his daughters until marriage even if it is not explicitly stated in the marriage contract. Ramban connects oaths and curses in Leviticus to the Babylonian exile and the destruction of the first Temple, while the German Commentary on Mishnah Ketubot interprets the verb “יתנסבן” as an Ithpeel of “נסב” meaning “to marry.” The Talmud discusses different interpretations of children being given to another people, with Rav and Rabbi Eliezer offering differing explanations, and also delves into the consequences of cursing using divine names. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem describe the helplessness and longing of parents whose children are taken away, and the Tosefta explores interpretations of fear and returning from battle.

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| פְּרִ֤י אַדְמָֽתְךָ֙ וְכׇל־יְגִ֣יעֲךָ֔ יֹאכַ֥ל עַ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־יָדָ֑עְתָּ וְהָיִ֗יתָ רַ֛ק עָשׁ֥וּק וְרָצ֖וּץ כׇּל־הַיָּמִֽים׃ | 33 | A people you do not know shall eat up the produce of your soil and all your gains; you shall be abused and downtrodden continually, |

Foreign nations will exploit the Israelites, leaving them with nothing and showing no mercy. Samuel was cautious in his leadership to avoid misunderstandings. The Talmud discusses sacred and secular uses of the divine name, consequences of cursing with divine attributes, and penalties for cursing with the Tetragrammaton. Targum states that foreign people will oppress the Israelites, consuming their fruit and labor.

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| וְהָיִ֖יתָ מְשֻׁגָּ֑ע מִמַּרְאֵ֥ה עֵינֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּרְאֶֽה׃ | 34 | until you are driven mad by what your eyes behold. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 28:34 explains that overwhelming troubles will lead to madness and distress. In Kabbalah, valuing external nations over internal Israel will result in the nations overcoming the Jewish nation. The Egyptians, convinced of their strength, were driven mad by impending death. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that people will become insane from what they see and shaken by vengeance.

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| יַכְּכָ֨ה יְהֹוָ֜ה בִּשְׁחִ֣ין רָ֗ע עַל־הַבִּרְכַּ֙יִם֙ וְעַל־הַשֹּׁקַ֔יִם אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־תוּכַ֖ל לְהֵרָפֵ֑א מִכַּ֥ף רַגְלְךָ֖ וְעַ֥ד קׇדְקֳדֶֽךָ׃ | 35 | יהוה will afflict you at the knees and thighs with a severe inflammation, from which you shall never recover—from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. |

Ibn Ezra notes that boils on knees and legs are difficult to heal and will afflict Israel if wounds cannot be cured by physicians. Rav Hirsch suggests that those exiled may suffer from this disease, making their situation worse. Steinsaltz summarizes that the Lord will strike with a rash from head to toe. The Mishnah Shevuot discusses liabilities for false oaths using specific names of God and cursing. Rabbi Meir and the Rabbis have differing views on punishment for cursing God or parents. Rabbi Meir holds witnesses liable for not testifying when God’s name is invoked, but the Halakha does not follow this ruling. Adonoy will afflict with unhealable boils as punishment unless the law is followed.

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| יוֹלֵ֨ךְ יְהֹוָ֜ה אֹתְךָ֗ וְאֶֽת־מַלְכְּךָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תָּקִ֣ים עָלֶ֔יךָ אֶל־גּ֕וֹי אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־יָדַ֖עְתָּ אַתָּ֣ה וַאֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ וְעָבַ֥דְתָּ שָּׁ֛ם אֱלֹהִ֥ים אֲחֵרִ֖ים עֵ֥ץ וָאָֽבֶן׃ | 36 | יהוה will drive you, and the king you have set over you, to a nation unknown to you or your ancestors, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. |

The commentary discusses the significance of the scepter not departing from Judah, indicating that the king of Israel will be from the tribe of Judah, with references to David and the Messiah. It also discusses the punishment of kings from other tribes ruling over Israel, such as the Hasmoneans, and the consequences of not following God’s commandments, leading to exile and servitude to other nations. The text also delves into the warnings and prophecies given in the Torah regarding idolatry and the consequences for straying from God’s path, as well as the fulfillment of these prophecies in history, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jewish people. King Josiah buried the Ark of the Covenant to prevent its desecration in exile, sequestering it along with other sacred items to avoid its exile to Babylon. In II Chronicles 34:21, King Josiah seeks guidance from the Lord regarding a discovered scroll, believing that the wrath of the Lord has been brought upon them due to their ancestors’ failure to obey the word of the Lord. Adonoy will lead the Israelites and their king into exile to a nation they did not know, where they will serve other nations that worship idols of wood and stone. After the Ark was hidden away by King Josiah, its vessels were also hidden to prevent them from being taken to Babylonia, with differing opinions on the whereabouts of the Ark among rabbis.

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| וְהָיִ֣יתָ לְשַׁמָּ֔ה לְמָשָׁ֖ל וְלִשְׁנִינָ֑ה בְּכֹל֙ הָֽעַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁר־יְנַהֶגְךָ֥ יְהֹוָ֖ה שָֽׁמָּה׃ | 37 | You shall be a consternation, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples to which יהוה will drive you. |

The Israelites will become objects of astonishment, proverbs, and bywords among all the peoples they are driven to as a punishment for their sins, while the foreigner among them will be spared. Those who worship idols will also face similar consequences when scattered among the Gentiles.

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| זֶ֥רַע רַ֖ב תּוֹצִ֣יא הַשָּׂדֶ֑ה וּמְעַ֣ט תֶּאֱסֹ֔ף כִּ֥י יַחְסְלֶ֖נּוּ הָאַרְבֶּֽה׃ | 38 | Though you take much seed out to the field, you shall gather in little, for the locust shall consume it. |

The locust is known for its ability to consume all vegetation in the field, earning it the nickname “the demolisher” or “grasshoppered.” Locusts are specifically destructive to trees and fruit, contrasting with hail which affects a wider range of targets. Ramban explains that pollution in Numbers 35:33 refers to the Land becoming barren due to sin, while defilement means the Glory of God will leave if innocent blood is shed. In Deuteronomy 28:42, Ramban interprets “tz’latzal” as a hostile army, warning of captivity and destruction if idolatry continues. Targum translations of Deuteronomy 28:38 all mention that despite sowing much seed, little will be gathered due to locusts destroying the crops.

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| כְּרָמִ֥ים תִּטַּ֖ע וְעָבָ֑דְתָּ וְיַ֤יִן לֹֽא־תִשְׁתֶּה֙ וְלֹ֣א תֶאֱגֹ֔ר כִּ֥י תֹאכְלֶ֖נּוּ הַתֹּלָֽעַת׃ | 39 | Though you plant vineyards and till them, you shall have no wine to drink or store, for the worm shall devour them. |

Ibn Ezra explains that despite planting vineyards, one will not enjoy the wine due to worms; The Sabbath Epistle discusses the beginning of days and the return of God; Certain actions by women can stop hail from falling, considered witchcraft; Ramban interprets “tz’latzal” as a hostile army in Deuteronomy 28:42; The Gemara discusses a judge not keeping his ruling to himself; Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that worms will consume wine despite planting vineyards.

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| זֵיתִ֛ים יִהְי֥וּ לְךָ֖ בְּכׇל־גְּבוּלֶ֑ךָ וְשֶׁ֙מֶן֙ לֹ֣א תָס֔וּךְ כִּ֥י יִשַּׁ֖ל זֵיתֶֽךָ׃ | 40 | Though you have olive trees throughout your territory, you shall have no oil for anointment, for your olives shall drop off. |

Various commentators interpret the verb “ישל” in Deuteronomy 28:40 as meaning “discard” or “drop off” in relation to olive trees losing their fruits, with Steinsaltz summarizing that the Israelites will not benefit from their olive trees. The Shulchan Arukh outlines specific rules for handling fruits on holidays. In Midrash, Torah is compared to oil, symbolizing the bitterness and sweetness of study, while the Talmud discusses the meaning of “getting lost” and interprets verses about olives falling off as symbolic of events before the Messiah’s coming. Targum translations convey that olive trees will be plentiful but produce no oil in Deuteronomy 28:40.

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| בָּנִ֥ים וּבָנ֖וֹת תּוֹלִ֑יד וְלֹא־יִהְי֣וּ לָ֔ךְ כִּ֥י יֵלְכ֖וּ בַּשֶּֽׁבִי׃ | 41 | Though you beget sons and daughters, they shall not remain with you, for they shall go into captivity. |

Children born to the Israelites will be taken into captivity as a result of their disobedience to God’s commandments, with Ramban interpreting the term “tz’latzal” as a hostile army in Deuteronomy 28:42. Historical events such as the Roman conquest of Jerusalem are linked to these warnings, emphasizing the consequences of idolatry. In a dream, Rava and Abaye receive different interpretations of a verse from Deuteronomy, with Abaye being told his children will marry outsiders, making it seem as if they were taken into captivity. Both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that despite bearing sons and daughters, the Israelites will not benefit from them as they will go into captivity.

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| כׇּל־עֵצְךָ֖ וּפְרִ֣י אַדְמָתֶ֑ךָ יְיָרֵ֖שׁ הַצְּלָצַֽל׃ | 42 | The cricket shall take over all the trees and produce of your land. |

Ramban interprets “tz’latzal” in Deuteronomy 28:42 as a hostile army, warning against idolatry leading to exile. Locusts specifically target fruit trees, unlike hail which affects animals and people. Mishnah Bava Kamma 10:5 discusses compensation for stolen fields due to regional disasters. The moon’s request in Deuteronomy 28:43 reflects the concept of rising and sinking. Rashi emphasizes the importance of joy and thanksgiving in serving God in the Promised Land. The Talmud defines “massikin” as those who consume others’ property, while various Targums interpret the destruction of trees and fruit differently.

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| הַגֵּר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּקִרְבְּךָ֔ יַעֲלֶ֥ה עָלֶ֖יךָ מַ֣עְלָה מָּ֑עְלָה וְאַתָּ֥ה תֵרֵ֖ד מַ֥טָּה מָּֽטָּה׃ | 43 | The strangers in your midst shall rise above you higher and higher, while you sink lower and lower: |

Ibn Ezra explains that “higher and higher” indicates a height over which no one else towers and may also indicate permanency, while “lower and lower” means very low. Steinsaltz summarizes that the stranger living among the Israelites will rise higher and higher while they will fall lower and lower. The Hebrew terms ‘alah’ and ‘yarad’ are used to indicate ascending and descending, as well as greatness and power, as seen in biblical references. If a Jewish person values the external, the “nations of the world” within them over the “Israel” within them, it will lead to the nations of the world overcoming and lowering the Jewish nation, causing their descent. The Midrash discusses the importance of giving thanks to God in times of distress and exile, and how following God’s will leads to elevation while not doing so results in being brought low. Non-Jews living among the Israelites will experience increasing success and prosperity, while the Israelites themselves will face a decline in their fortunes.

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| ה֣וּא יַלְוְךָ֔ וְאַתָּ֖ה לֹ֣א תַלְוֶ֑נּוּ ה֚וּא יִהְיֶ֣ה לְרֹ֔אשׁ וְאַתָּ֖ה תִּֽהְיֶ֥ה לְזָנָֽב׃ | 44 | they shall be your creditors, but you shall not be theirs; they shall be the head and you the tail. |

In Deuteronomy 28:44, commentators Ibn Ezra, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni all reference Proverbs 22:7 to explain the power dynamic between borrowers and lenders, emphasizing the servitude of the borrower. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan also highlight the imbalance of power between the lender and borrower in this verse.

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| וּבָ֨אוּ עָלֶ֜יךָ כׇּל־הַקְּלָל֣וֹת הָאֵ֗לֶּה וּרְדָפ֙וּךָ֙ וְהִשִּׂיג֔וּךָ עַ֖ד הִשָּׁמְדָ֑ךְ כִּי־לֹ֣א שָׁמַ֗עְתָּ בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֛ר מִצְוֺתָ֥יו וְחֻקֹּתָ֖יו אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּֽךְ׃ | 45 | All these curses shall befall you; they shall pursue you and overtake you, until you are wiped out, because you did not heed your God יהוה and keep the commandments and laws that were enjoined upon you. |

The curses in Deuteronomy 28:45 will pursue the people of Israel until their destruction for not obeying God’s commandments. Failure to remember God in times of prosperity may lead to punishment in order to recognize the need for Him, preventing a cycle of punishment and repentance.

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| וְהָי֣וּ בְךָ֔ לְא֖וֹת וּלְמוֹפֵ֑ת וּֽבְזַרְעֲךָ֖ עַד־עוֹלָֽם׃ | 46 | They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time. |

The troubles and plagues will be a sign of rebellion against God for the current generation and their descendants, serving as a reminder of their sins and leading to exile and punishment. In the month of Nisan, the Temple Assembly must observe signs of the month appointed by God for signs and wonders. Ramban explains that Laban establishes a covenant with Jacob using a physical object as a witness. The curses will serve as signs and wonders for the people and their descendants forever.

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| תַּ֗חַת אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹא־עָבַ֙דְתָּ֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּשִׂמְחָ֖ה וּבְט֣וּב לֵבָ֑ב מֵרֹ֖ב כֹּֽל׃ | 47 | Because you would not serve your God יהוה in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything, |

Chasidut emphasizes serving God with joy to redeem the soul from evil forces, rejecting sadness and highlighting the importance of continuous joy in seeking God. Various commentaries stress the consequences of not serving God joyfully, with rewards and punishments tied to fulfilling positive commandments and the need for joy in discipline. The text underlines the importance of rejoicing in God’s service during festivals, Torah study at night, and the significance of fear of God in acquiring wisdom. Divine service should be performed with joy and gladness, distinct but interconnected concepts that can exist independently, while serving God with joy increases one’s desire and love for adhering to Him. The consequences of not serving God with joy and gladness are evident in the suffering and hardships endured by the Israelites. Various sources highlight the importance of serving God with joy, establishing a meal for the joy of the commandment, and the eternal joy found in serving God. Rabbi Hananya emphasizes the importance of taking words of Torah to heart to alleviate troubling thoughts, with the requirement to accompany Temple offerings with song derived from serving God with joyfulness and goodness of heart. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize that not serving God joyfully leads to lack of affluence, while serving God cheerfully and with a right heart leads to an abundance of good things.

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| וְעָבַדְתָּ֣ אֶת־אֹיְבֶ֗יךָ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְשַׁלְּחֶ֤נּוּ יְהֹוָה֙ בָּ֔ךְ בְּרָעָ֧ב וּבְצָמָ֛א וּבְעֵירֹ֖ם וּבְחֹ֣סֶר כֹּ֑ל וְנָתַ֞ן עֹ֤ל בַּרְזֶל֙ עַל־צַוָּארֶ֔ךָ עַ֥ד הִשְׁמִיד֖וֹ אֹתָֽךְ׃ | 48 | you shall have to serve—in hunger and thirst, naked and lacking everything—the enemies whom יהוה will let loose against you. [God] will put an iron yoke upon your neck until you are wiped out. |

The punishment of serving enemies in deprivation is a consequence for Israelites not serving the Lord, emphasized in Mishneh Torah’s importance of studying Torah at night for wisdom and blessings, while Midrash discusses the relationship between God’s will, work, and Torah study. Ramban connects Deuteronomy 28:42 to Israel’s captivity, Talmud highlights the joy of Torah study and consequences of neglect, and Targum warns of serving enemies in deprivation until destruction.

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| יִשָּׂ֣א יְהֹוָה֩ עָלֶ֨יךָ גּ֤וֹי מֵרָחֹק֙ מִקְצֵ֣ה הָאָ֔רֶץ כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר יִדְאֶ֖ה הַנָּ֑שֶׁר גּ֕וֹי אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹא־תִשְׁמַ֖ע לְשֹׁנֽוֹ׃ | 49 | יהוה will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, which will swoop down like the eagle—a nation whose language you do not understand, |

The text discusses the arrival of the Roman Emperor Vespasianus and his son Titus leading to the destruction of the Second Temple by the Roman Empire. Observant Jewish individuals fulfill divine laws and believe in constant observation by God. The Liturgy text emphasizes following God’s commandments and staying true to one’s heritage. Affliction can be a sign of God’s love or a consequence of neglecting Torah study according to Midrash. The repair work of the world will restore humanity to its original state, with Torah study being essential. The Talmud mentions historical events of persecution, and the Tanakh describes a distant nation with an unintelligible language symbolized by an eagle. The Targum references a foreign nation coming swiftly like an eagle with an unknown language.

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| גּ֖וֹי עַ֣ז פָּנִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹא־יִשָּׂ֤א פָנִים֙ לְזָקֵ֔ן וְנַ֖עַר לֹ֥א יָחֹֽן׃ | 50 | a ruthless nation, that will show the influential no regard and the vulnerable no mercy. |

The nation in Deuteronomy 28:50 is identified as the Roman Empire by Chizkuni, characterized as brazen and lacking compassion. Duties towards oneself, others, and God are outlined by the prophet Michah, with vows viewed negatively by sages. Cruelty is the opposite of mercy and leads to punishment, while holding socially and spiritually eminent individuals accountable is emphasized. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 28:50 also describe a nation that is harsh and lacks compassion, showing no respect for the elderly and no mercy towards the young.

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| וְ֠אָכַ֠ל פְּרִ֨י בְהֶמְתְּךָ֥ וּפְרִֽי־אַדְמָתְךָ֮ עַ֣ד הִשָּׁמְדָךְ֒ אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹא־יַשְׁאִ֜יר לְךָ֗ דָּגָן֙ תִּיר֣וֹשׁ וְיִצְהָ֔ר שְׁגַ֥ר אֲלָפֶ֖יךָ וְעַשְׁתְּרֹ֣ת צֹאנֶ֑ךָ עַ֥ד הַאֲבִיד֖וֹ אֹתָֽךְ׃ | 51 | It shall devour the offspring of your cattle and the produce of your soil, until you have been wiped out, leaving you nothing of new grain, wine, or oil, of the calving of your herds and the lambing of your flocks, until it has brought you to ruin. |

Steinsaltz explains that the enemy will exploit the land and animals, leading to the destruction of the people. The chastisements mentioned in the Torah were meant to terrify the people of Israel, with some names of the chastisements experienced in Egypt being slightly changed. Both Targums on Deuteronomy 28:51 state that the enemies will consume the produce of the land and animals until the people are destroyed, leaving them with nothing.

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| וְהֵצַ֨ר לְךָ֜ בְּכׇל־שְׁעָרֶ֗יךָ עַ֣ד רֶ֤דֶת חֹמֹתֶ֙יךָ֙ הַגְּבֹהֹ֣ת וְהַבְּצֻר֔וֹת אֲשֶׁ֥ר אַתָּ֛ה בֹּטֵ֥חַ בָּהֵ֖ן בְּכׇל־אַרְצֶ֑ךָ וְהֵצַ֤ר לְךָ֙ בְּכׇל־שְׁעָרֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇ֨ל־אַרְצְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֛ן יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ לָֽךְ׃ | 52 | It shall shut you up in all your towns throughout your land until every mighty, towering wall in which you trust has come down. And when you are shut up in all your towns throughout your land that your God יהוה has assigned to you, |

Rashi explains “רדת” as subjugation, Rabbeinu Bahya sees frustration in Jewish movements, Siftei Chakhamim discusses “רדת” as mastering, Rav Hirsch blames weak fortifications and lack of divine protection for enemy success, Steinsaltz describes enemy breaching fortified walls. Midrash warns against idol worship, adultery, and negative influences of wine, referencing biblical figures for consequences of actions. Quoting Commentary clarifies meanings of specific words in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Targum predicts suffering in cities, with enemies capturing relied-upon fortifications [Onkelos Deuteronomy 28:52; Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 28:52].

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| וְאָכַלְתָּ֣ פְרִֽי־בִטְנְךָ֗ בְּשַׂ֤ר בָּנֶ֙יךָ֙ וּבְנֹתֶ֔יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַן־לְךָ֖ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ בְּמָצוֹר֙ וּבְמָצ֔וֹק אֲשֶׁר־יָצִ֥יק לְךָ֖ אֹיְבֶֽךָ׃ | 53 | you shall eat your own issue, the flesh of your sons and daughters that your God יהוה has assigned to you, because of the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you. |

During a siege, extreme famine will lead people to resort to cannibalism out of desperation, as foretold in Deuteronomy 28:53. David’s righteousness is everlasting, bringing comfort and troubles that lead to righteousness forever for Israel. The Talmud explains that both “massikin” and “matzikin” refer to thugs causing distress, supported by a verse from Deuteronomy mentioning distress caused by enemies as “matzok.” The Targum describes a horrifying scenario where people will eat their own children due to famine and oppression during a siege.

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| הָאִישׁ֙ הָרַ֣ךְ בְּךָ֔ וְהֶעָנֹ֖ג מְאֹ֑ד תֵּרַ֨ע עֵינ֤וֹ בְאָחִיו֙ וּבְאֵ֣שֶׁת חֵיק֔וֹ וּבְיֶ֥תֶר בָּנָ֖יו אֲשֶׁ֥ר יוֹתִֽיר׃ | 54 | The householder who is most tender and fastidious among you shall be too mean to his brother and the wife of his bosom and the children he has spared |

Rashi explains that the person in Deuteronomy 28:54 will become cruel due to hunger, not sharing the flesh of his children with his remaining children. Ibn Ezra suggests that “whom he hath remaining” refers to the enemy or those hidden, all due to the siege. Siftei Chakhamim clarifies that the person will be stingy towards his brother and wife, not himself. Steinsaltz emphasizes the selfishness of the man towards his family due to extreme famine, while Chizkuni also mentions the enemy or those in hiding as the ones remaining. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem all describe how even the most delicate and refined individuals will look upon their family members with disdain and evil eyes, including their own brothers, wives, and children who are left behind.

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| מִתֵּ֣ת ׀ לְאַחַ֣ד מֵהֶ֗ם מִבְּשַׂ֤ר בָּנָיו֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר יֹאכֵ֔ל מִבְּלִ֥י הִשְׁאִֽיר־ל֖וֹ כֹּ֑ל בְּמָצוֹר֙ וּבְמָצ֔וֹק אֲשֶׁ֨ר יָצִ֥יק לְךָ֛ אֹיִבְךָ֖ בְּכׇל־שְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 55 | to share with any of them the flesh of the children that he eats, because he has nothing else left as a result of the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in all your towns. |

Ibn Ezra interprets “in all thy gates” in Deuteronomy 28:55 as meaning in any place in the country. Steinsaltz describes extreme desperation during a siege where people resort to consuming their own children’s flesh due to intense hunger, leading to a loss of humanity within the city gates. Martha, a wealthy woman in Jerusalem, died from infection after failing to find food, fulfilling a prophecy by throwing her gold and silver in the streets. Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai notes the unique mention of a tender and delicate woman in Deuteronomy, highlighting the significance of women in that context. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak explains that both “massikin” and “matzikin” can refer to thugs in the mishna, with the term “matzikin” supported by a verse from Deuteronomy. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret Deuteronomy 28:55 as describing a situation where individuals are so besieged by enemies that they are forced to eat their own children out of desperation.

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| הָרַכָּ֨ה בְךָ֜ וְהָעֲנֻגָּ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹֽא־נִסְּתָ֤ה כַף־רַגְלָהּ֙ הַצֵּ֣ג עַל־הָאָ֔רֶץ מֵהִתְעַנֵּ֖ג וּמֵרֹ֑ךְ תֵּרַ֤ע עֵינָהּ֙ בְּאִ֣ישׁ חֵיקָ֔הּ וּבִבְנָ֖הּ וּבְבִתָּֽהּ׃ | 56 | And she who is most tender and dainty among you, so tender and dainty that she would never venture to set a foot on the ground, shall begrudge the husband of her bosom, and her son and her daughter, |

In Deuteronomy 28:56, Rashi and Rashbam explain that during times of hardship, women will be selfish towards their family members, not sharing food even with their own children. Martha and Miriam, two women from the Midrash, suffered greatly due to their wealth and delicate nature, fulfilling biblical prophecies. Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai and Talmudic texts discuss the complexities of giving money and making decisions, while Targum translations emphasize the consequences of indulgence and selfishness.

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| וּֽבְשִׁלְיָתָ֞הּ הַיּוֹצֵ֣ת ׀ מִבֵּ֣ין רַגְלֶ֗יהָ וּבְבָנֶ֙יהָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תֵּלֵ֔ד כִּֽי־תֹאכְלֵ֥ם בְּחֹסֶר־כֹּ֖ל בַּסָּ֑תֶר בְּמָצוֹר֙ וּבְמָצ֔וֹק אֲשֶׁ֨ר יָצִ֥יק לְךָ֛ אֹיִבְךָ֖ בִּשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ׃ | 57 | the afterbirth that issues from between her legs and the babies she bears; she shall eat them secretly, because of utter want, in the desperate straits to which your enemy shall reduce you in your towns. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 28:57 discusses the extreme distress that may lead a mother to cannibalism, the Jewish Thought discusses the future of Jacob’s sons, the Midrash emphasizes the importance of knowledge and righteousness, the Quoting Commentary explains the hereditary nature of Yehudah’s descendants as kings, the Talmud discusses the validity of ḥalitza in certain cases, and the Targum describes a situation where a woman may resort to eating her own children during a siege.

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| אִם־לֹ֨א תִשְׁמֹ֜ר לַעֲשׂ֗וֹת אֶת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵי֙ הַתּוֹרָ֣ה הַזֹּ֔את הַכְּתֻבִ֖ים בַּסֵּ֣פֶר הַזֶּ֑ה לְ֠יִרְאָ֠ה אֶת־הַשֵּׁ֞ם הַנִּכְבָּ֤ד וְהַנּוֹרָא֙ הַזֶּ֔ה אֵ֖ת יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 58 | If you fail to observe faithfully all the terms of this Teaching that are written in this book, to reverence this honored and awesome Name, your God יהוה, |

Chasidut teaches that fear in the heart is connected to the glorious name of God, emphasizing the intertwining of fear and knowledge in understanding His exaltedness. Halakhah details the process of lashing and the prohibition of mentioning God’s names in vain, while Jewish Thought highlights the importance of fearing God and obedience. Midrash discusses the prophecy of the Torah being forgotten and the significance of Torah traditions. Musar stresses the need to fear God’s exaltedness and avoid rushing through prayers, with various commentaries emphasizing the severity of punishment for such conduct. The Talmud explores the connection between those liable for execution and receiving lashes, as well as the importance of observing the law during flogging. Targum emphasizes following all Torah commands to show reverence and fear towards God’s name.

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| וְהִפְלָ֤א יְהֹוָה֙ אֶת־מַכֹּ֣תְךָ֔ וְאֵ֖ת מַכּ֣וֹת זַרְעֶ֑ךָ מַכּ֤וֹת גְּדֹלֹת֙ וְנֶ֣אֱמָנ֔וֹת וׇחֳלָיִ֖ם רָעִ֥ים וְנֶאֱמָנִֽים׃ | 59 | יהוה will inflict extraordinary plagues upon you and your offspring, strange and lasting plagues, malignant and chronic diseases— |

Chasidut explains that astounding afflictions result from a loss of faith, leading to illnesses that cannot be cured by medicine, prayer, or ancestral merit. Halakhah outlines the criteria for a maidservant to be liable for lashes and the sins requiring a guilt-offering sacrifice. Jewish Thought explores the concept of ne’eman in relationships with God and humans. Liturgy praises God’s compassion, miracles, and wonders, emphasizing gratitude and the inadequacy of human actions to thank Him. Midrash discusses the future of the Torah being forgotten and the concept of God’s jealousy. Mishnah details the recitation of verses during flogging and exemptions from further lashes. Musar prohibits cursing with God’s name and emphasizes the role of doctors in healing. Quoting Commentary offers insights on blessings for following commandments, divine healing, and the punishment for a maidservant. Talmud describes the process of flogging, liability of the beadle, and the destiny of the Torah being forgotten. Targum depicts Adonoy inflicting severe and enduring plagues and illnesses.

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| וְהֵשִׁ֣יב בְּךָ֗ אֵ֚ת כׇּל־מַדְוֵ֣ה מִצְרַ֔יִם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יָגֹ֖רְתָּ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם וְדָבְק֖וּ בָּֽךְ׃ | 60 | bringing back upon you all the sicknesses of Egypt that you dreaded so, and they shall cling to you. |

The Israelites endured the plagues in Egypt for refinement and to sever ties with the Egyptians, with fear of the plagues meant to refine their hearts and straighten out deficiencies. Rashi explains that the Israelites feared the plagues, not Egypt itself, with the afflictions of Egypt eventually returning to them. The promise of protection from diseases is contingent on obedience to God’s commandments, with disobedience potentially leading to afflictions similar to those in Egypt. In Deuteronomy, it is mentioned that God will bring back the Egyptian diseases that the Israelites feared, clinging to them.

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| גַּ֤ם כׇּל־חֳלִי֙ וְכׇל־מַכָּ֔ה אֲשֶׁר֙ לֹ֣א כָת֔וּב בְּסֵ֖פֶר הַתּוֹרָ֣ה הַזֹּ֑את יַעְלֵ֤ם יְהֹוָה֙ עָלֶ֔יךָ עַ֖ד הִשָּׁמְדָֽךְ׃ | 61 | Moreover, יהוה will bring upon you all the other diseases and plagues that are not mentioned in this book of Teaching, until you are wiped out. |

Chasidut emphasizes that the death of Torah sages can bring punishment to those who do not heed their words, leading to an incurable illness and death. The Midrash discusses the discovery of Philacteries on the heads of those killed in Byther and the mistreatment of Israelite youth by Roman nobles, connecting disobedience to afflictions and diseases. The Talmud recounts a story of two children seeking to understand a form of punishment not explicitly written in the Torah, highlighting the importance of studying and seeking knowledge. The Targum mentions that illnesses and plagues not mentioned in the Torah will be brought upon the people by the Word of the Lord until they are destroyed.

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| וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם֙ בִּמְתֵ֣י מְעָ֔ט תַּ֚חַת אֲשֶׁ֣ר הֱיִיתֶ֔ם כְּכוֹכְבֵ֥י הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם לָרֹ֑ב כִּֽי־לֹ֣א שָׁמַ֔עְתָּ בְּק֖וֹל יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ | 62 | You shall be left a scant few, after having been as numerous as the stars in the skies, because you did not heed the command of your God יהוה. |

The commentary on Deuteronomy 28:62 explains that the Israelites will remain few in number due to their failure to heed God’s voice, rather than a lack of ability to stand against enemies. R. Joshua b. Chanina discusses God’s lack of rejoicing over the downfall of the wicked, while the Targum states that the Israelites will become a small nation instead of numerous like the stars because they did not obey the word of the Lord.

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| וְ֠הָיָ֠ה כַּאֲשֶׁר־שָׂ֨שׂ יְהֹוָ֜ה עֲלֵיכֶ֗ם לְהֵיטִ֣יב אֶתְכֶם֮ וּלְהַרְבּ֣וֹת אֶתְכֶם֒ כֵּ֣ן יָשִׂ֤ישׂ יְהֹוָה֙ עֲלֵיכֶ֔ם לְהַאֲבִ֥יד אֶתְכֶ֖ם וּלְהַשְׁמִ֣יד אֶתְכֶ֑ם וְנִסַּחְתֶּם֙ מֵעַ֣ל הָאֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 63 | And as יהוה once delighted in making you prosperous and many, so will יהוה now delight in causing you to perish and in wiping you out; you shall be torn from the land that you are about to enter and possess. |

Various commentators and sources explain that God does not personally rejoice in the downfall of the wicked or the suffering of the Israelites, but rather causes others to rejoice over these events. This is seen in interpretations of verses from Exodus, Deuteronomy, and other biblical texts, as well as in Talmudic discussions and explanations of God’s actions and emotions using metaphors and imagery. The ultimate goal is for the Jewish people to turn back to God, leading to their rehabilitation and God’s personal delight in their redemption.

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| וֶהֱפִֽיצְךָ֤ יְהֹוָה֙ בְּכׇל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים מִקְצֵ֥ה הָאָ֖רֶץ וְעַד־קְצֵ֣ה הָאָ֑רֶץ וְעָבַ֨דְתָּ שָּׁ֜ם אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר לֹא־יָדַ֛עְתָּ אַתָּ֥ה וַאֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ עֵ֥ץ וָאָֽבֶן׃ | 64 | יהוה will scatter you among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, whom neither you nor your ancestors have experienced. |

Rashi, Siftei Chakhamim, and Rav Hirsch clarify that serving other gods in Deuteronomy 28:64 refers to paying tribute to idol-worshipping peoples, not idolatry itself. Steinsaltz emphasizes the unfamiliarity of the idol worship of their captors. The text discusses entering and inheriting the land of Israel, dwelling in it according to the teachings of the Ari, and the unity of God. The Rabbi compares those who venerate the land of prophecy but also revere places sacred to idols to proselytes who only accept the fundamental principles of the law. The Jewish people left Egypt and will be redeemed with the quality of the Sefirah of Understanding-Binah. The Midrash Tehillim explores the creation of Adam, the punishment of the Flood, and the destruction of Amalek. Ramban explains the covenant made by God with Israel alludes to the first and present exiles, with a promise of a more complete redemption. Haamek Davar discusses how suffering and exile serve a greater purpose of fulfilling God’s plan. Abarbanel explains that in times of great troubles, some may turn to idol worship out of fear for their lives, seen as a punishment rather than a sin. Targum Jonathan describes how Adonoy will scatter the people to serve other gods among all nations.

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| וּבַגּוֹיִ֤ם הָהֵם֙ לֹ֣א תַרְגִּ֔יעַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶ֥ה מָנ֖וֹחַ לְכַף־רַגְלֶ֑ךָ וְנָתַן֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה לְךָ֥ שָׁם֙ לֵ֣ב רַגָּ֔ז וְכִלְי֥וֹן עֵינַ֖יִם וְדַאֲב֥וֹן נָֽפֶשׁ׃ | 65 | Yet even among those nations you shall find no peace, nor shall your foot find a place to rest. יהוה will give you there an anguished heart and eyes that pine and a despondent spirit. |

Various commentaries interpret phrases in the text differently, such as Rashi explaining “לא תרגיע” as no rest, Haamek Davar interpreting it as a lack of tranquility, and Rav Hirsch emphasizing the lack of rest and trembling heart among the nations. The Midrash discusses divine punishment and consequences of sin, including lack of rest and peace among the nations. Anger is likened to a disease of the soul in Musar, leading to physical ailments and torment in hell. In the Second Temple text, the foolish man is described as constantly moving and averse to rest. The Talmud discusses hemorrhoids causing pain and soul anguish, anger leading to murder, and the lack of rest among the nations. Targum emphasizes the lack of peace and fear among the Israelites if they worship idols.

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| וְהָי֣וּ חַיֶּ֔יךָ תְּלֻאִ֥ים לְךָ֖ מִנֶּ֑גֶד וּפָֽחַדְתָּ֙ לַ֣יְלָה וְיוֹמָ֔ם וְלֹ֥א תַאֲמִ֖ין בְּחַיֶּֽיךָ׃ | 66 | The life you face shall be precarious; you shall be in terror, night and day, with no assurance of survival. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of constantly improving one’s spiritual service to God and warns against complacency in worship. Commentary on Deuteronomy 28:66 discusses the fear of imminent death for those relying on buying food, with different interpretations highlighting uncertainty and insecurity. The Midrash explores various levels of reliance on grain and historical events related to oppressive decrees on Israel. Ramban connects biblical warnings against idolatry to historical events like the Roman conquest and exile of the Jewish people. In the Talmud, discussions range from uncertainty about the future to the purity of a mule’s blood and the implications of buying food from different sources. Targum translations convey a sense of fear and dread in relation to the uncertainty of life.

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| בַּבֹּ֤קֶר תֹּאמַר֙ מִֽי־יִתֵּ֣ן עֶ֔רֶב וּבָעֶ֥רֶב תֹּאמַ֖ר מִֽי־יִתֵּ֣ן בֹּ֑קֶר מִפַּ֤חַד לְבָֽבְךָ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר תִּפְחָ֔ד וּמִמַּרְאֵ֥ה עֵינֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר תִּרְאֶֽה׃ | 67 | In the morning you shall say, “If only it were evening!” and in the evening you shall say, “If only it were morning!”—because of what your heart shall dread and your eyes shall see. |

Rashi, Rashbam, Siftei Chakhamim, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz all explain Deuteronomy 28:67 as reflecting increasing fear and distress leading people to wish for different times of day. Emunah in Jewish thought emphasizes the reliability of wisdom and knowledge over material treasures. The Liturgy expresses a longing for morning as a reflection of fear and impatience in exile. Midrash discusses the daily merits of prayers and the fear experienced by different nations. In the Talmud, it is stated that each day since the Temple’s destruction is cursed, with each day worse than the previous one. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan interpret the verse as describing affliction and fear as punishment for wrongdoing.

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| וֶהֱשִֽׁיבְךָ֨ יְהֹוָ֥ה ׀ מִצְרַ֘יִם֮ בׇּאֳנִיּוֹת֒ בַּדֶּ֙רֶךְ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָמַ֣רְתִּֽי לְךָ֔ לֹא־תֹסִ֥יף ע֖וֹד לִרְאֹתָ֑הּ וְהִתְמַכַּרְתֶּ֨ם שָׁ֧ם לְאֹיְבֶ֛יךָ לַעֲבָדִ֥ים וְלִשְׁפָח֖וֹת וְאֵ֥ין קֹנֶֽה׃ | 68 | יהוה will send you back to Egypt in galleys, by a route which I told you you should not see again. There you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but none will buy. |

Various commentaries explain the consequences of the Israelites returning to Egypt, with Rashi and Ibn Ezra emphasizing captivity and slavery, Sforno and Siftei Chakhamim discussing economic implications, and Rav Hirsch highlighting degradation. Halakhah prohibits permanent residence in Egypt due to immoral behavior, allowing only temporary visits or residence under specific circumstances. In Kabbalah, Elijah praises Rabbi Shimon for his merit, and Liturgy discusses the afflictions faced by the people due to transgression. Midrash explores historical events and consequences of not following the covenant, while Musar criticizes Moses’ response to the Israelites’ fear. In Second Temple history, Caesar’s soldiers killed many during the siege of Jerusalem, and Talmud warns against returning to Egypt based on past downfalls. Joshua reads the blessings and curses from the Book of the Teaching, and Targum describes the Israelites being sold as slaves and returning to Egypt through the Sea of Suph.

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| אֵ֩לֶּה֩ דִבְרֵ֨י הַבְּרִ֜ית אֲֽשֶׁר־צִוָּ֧ה יְהֹוָ֣ה אֶת־מֹשֶׁ֗ה לִכְרֹ֛ת אֶת־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מוֹאָ֑ב מִלְּבַ֣ד הַבְּרִ֔ית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַ֥ת אִתָּ֖ם בְּחֹרֵֽב׃ | 69 | These are the terms of the covenant which יהוה commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which was made with them at Horeb. |

The covenant with the children of Israel involved taking on the observance of the Torah under an imprecation and oath, renewing and strengthening the covenant made at Horeb, reflecting historical experiences in the wilderness and impending possession of the promised land. On Tish’ah B’Av, specific passages are read in the morning and Minchah services. The Covenant of Egypt represents fate, while the Covenant of Sinai represents destiny, with blessings for righteousness and calamities for idolatry. Rabbi Abba discusses five covenants symbolizing different aspects of the divine covenant with humanity. The text emphasizes the resilience of Israel in the face of afflictions and curses, stressing unity and faith in God. The laws in Deuteronomy focus on the covenant between God and Israel, shifting to criminal and moral issues with a humanistic tone. Rebbi Judah ben Pazi states that most of God’s teachings are the admonitions in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, discussing the sixteen covenants for each mitzvah. The LORD has carried out His purpose by tearing down without pity, allowing the enemy to rejoice. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan refer to the covenant commanded by Adonoy to ratify with Bnei Yisroel in the land of Moav, in addition to the covenant at Choreiv.

## Deuteronomy 29

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| וַיִּקְרָ֥א מֹשֶׁ֛ה אֶל־כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֲלֵהֶ֑ם אַתֶּ֣ם רְאִיתֶ֗ם אֵ֣ת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁר֩ עָשָׂ֨ה יְהֹוָ֤ה לְעֵֽינֵיכֶם֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם לְפַרְעֹ֥ה וּלְכׇל־עֲבָדָ֖יו וּלְכׇל־אַרְצֽוֹ׃ | 1 | Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: You have seen all that יהוה did before your very eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his courtiers and to his whole country: |

Moses called Israel to renew the covenant, emphasizing their role in revealing God’s glory. Man has free will and must follow the commandments, with Moses reassured of his mission by God. Torah study and mitzvot are essential, showcasing Israel’s resilience and faith in the face of challenges. Moses reminded Israel of the plagues in Egypt to reaffirm their faith.

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| הַמַּסּוֹת֙ הַגְּדֹלֹ֔ת אֲשֶׁ֥ר רָא֖וּ עֵינֶ֑יךָ הָאֹתֹ֧ת וְהַמֹּפְתִ֛ים הַגְּדֹלִ֖ים הָהֵֽם׃ | 2 | the wondrous feats that you saw with your own eyes, those prodigious signs and marvels. |

Rav Hirsch and Steinsaltz interpret different divine manifestations experienced by the Israelites as trials, miracles, signs, and wonders. Midrash highlights the importance of Torah study and mitzvot for receiving rewards in this world and the World to Come, distinguishing Israel as God’s children. Mishnah states that certain groups will not have a share in the World-to-Come, while Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer have differing beliefs on the return of the ten tribes. Kabbalistic interpretations connect aspects of Torah to the Divine name in Mitzvah, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling commandments in the land of Israel. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan both emphasize the extraordinary signs and wonders witnessed by the Israelites.

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| וְלֹא־נָתַן֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה לָכֶ֥ם לֵב֙ לָדַ֔עַת וְעֵינַ֥יִם לִרְא֖וֹת וְאׇזְנַ֣יִם לִשְׁמֹ֑עַ עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 3 | Yet to this day יהוה has not given you a mind to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of understanding the deeper meanings in the Torah, including moral lessons from the patriarchs and matriarchs. Halakhah lists actions that impede Teshuvah, while Jewish Thought discusses the interpretation of the word “heart” in biblical passages. Midrash explores Israel’s acceptance of the covenant at Mount Sinai, and Mishnah outlines stages of life and learning. Musar highlights actions that impede repentance, and Talmud discusses Moses addressing the Israelites after forty years in the desert. Targum reflects on the Israelites’ lack of understanding until a certain point.

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| וָאוֹלֵ֥ךְ אֶתְכֶ֛ם אַרְבָּעִ֥ים שָׁנָ֖ה בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר לֹֽא־בָל֤וּ שַׂלְמֹֽתֵיכֶם֙ מֵעֲלֵיכֶ֔ם וְנַעַלְךָ֥ לֹֽא־בָלְתָ֖ה מֵעַ֥ל רַגְלֶֽךָ׃ | 4 | I led you through the wilderness forty years; the clothes on your back did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet; |

Ibn Ezra, Sforno, and Rav Hirsch highlight the significance of the Israelites’ experiences in the wilderness in reinforcing their covenant with God, developing sagacity, and solidifying their knowledge of God’s power, respectively. Steinsaltz points out the miraculous preservation of the Israelites’ garments and shoes during this time. Admonishment is crucial for repentance, and congregations should appoint a sage to motivate towards Teshuvah. Prophecy is a gift from God based on qualifications and attributes like physical well-being, wisdom, and devotion. The Midrash discusses Israel’s sustenance in the wilderness through divine miracles and the importance of humility. Repentance is always available to those who seek to draw closer to God with sincerity. Moses did not allude to the Jewish people until after forty years of learning Torah, indicating a deep understanding. In Nehemiah 9:21 and Targum, it is mentioned that God sustained the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years, ensuring their needs were met.

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| לֶ֚חֶם לֹ֣א אֲכַלְתֶּ֔ם וְיַ֥יִן וְשֵׁכָ֖ר לֹ֣א שְׁתִיתֶ֑ם לְמַ֙עַן֙ תֵּֽדְע֔וּ כִּ֛י אֲנִ֥י יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶֽם׃ | 5 | you had no bread to eat and no wine or other intoxicant to drink—that you might know that I יהוה am your God. |

The Israelites relied on manna provided by God in the wilderness, occasionally purchasing food for pleasure, to demonstrate God as their sustainer. Repentance is crucial to avoid harsh consequences, recording miracles prevents doubt, Torah study is best for those not providing a livelihood. Prohibited sexual intercourse laws apply to all Israel, Moses spoke in God’s name, Israel’s survival in the desert was miraculous, Joshua’s command is an extension of God’s promises. Abstaining from certain foods and focusing on God’s law is important to know He is their God.

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| וַתָּבֹ֖אוּ אֶל־הַמָּק֣וֹם הַזֶּ֑ה וַיֵּצֵ֣א סִיחֹ֣ן מֶֽלֶךְ־חֶ֠שְׁבּ֠וֹן וְע֨וֹג מֶלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁ֧ן לִקְרָאתֵ֛נוּ לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה וַנַּכֵּֽם׃ | 6 | When you reached this place, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to engage us in battle, but we defeated them. |

Chasidut explains that the tzaddik’s attributes were present in physical space during his lifetime, with disciples only receiving a portion of these attributes through his teachings. The commentary on the Israelites’ conquest emphasizes the importance of faith, wisdom, and observance of mitzvot for success, while Targum recounts the victory of the Israelites over Sihon and Og in battle.

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| וַנִּקַּח֙ אֶת־אַרְצָ֔ם וַנִּתְּנָ֣הּ לְנַחֲלָ֔ה לָראוּבֵנִ֖י וְלַגָּדִ֑י וְלַחֲצִ֖י שֵׁ֥בֶט הַֽמְנַשִּֽׁי׃ | 7 | We took their land and gave it to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh as their heritage. |

The Israelites were reminded of God giving them the land of the Amorites as an inheritance, specifically to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. They were warned not to disregard this display of God’s power. God also granted the Israelites kingdoms, peoples, and territories, allowing them to possess the lands of Sihon and Og.

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| וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֗ם אֶת־דִּבְרֵי֙ הַבְּרִ֣ית הַזֹּ֔את וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֖ם אֹתָ֑ם לְמַ֣עַן תַּשְׂכִּ֔ילוּ אֵ֖ת כׇּל־אֲשֶׁ֥ר תַּעֲשֽׂוּן׃ | 8 | Therefore observe faithfully all the terms of this covenant, that you may succeed in all that you undertake. |

The importance of preparing for Rosh Hashanah by engaging in Torah study, repentance, reciting penitential prayers, embodying kindness and charity, focusing on the thirteen attributes of mercy, and raising one’s heart to God during prayer is emphasized in Chasidut. In commentary, the covenant at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eyval is highlighted as essential for success, and the obligation to observe the covenant in light of favors received from the Lord is stressed. Mitzvah performance should be automatic and not forgotten in Jewish Thought, with the garments worn by priests serving as reminders of the commandments. The righteous do not engage in robbery, studying the Torah brings prosperity, and teaching Torah to others is considered creating them in Midrash. The court crier recites verses from Deuteronomy during the flogging process in Mishnah, emphasizing the importance of observing the law and the mercy of God. Wisdom and knowledge are necessary for recognizing and serving God in Musar, with Torah study linked to success in property dealings in Talmud. The covenant must be kept and fulfilled to succeed in all endeavors and have prosperity is reiterated in Targum.

# **51**: נצבים|Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20)

## Deuteronomy 29

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| אַתֶּ֨ם נִצָּבִ֤ים הַיּוֹם֙ כֻּלְּכֶ֔ם לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם רָאשֵׁיכֶ֣ם שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֗ם זִקְנֵיכֶם֙ וְשֹׁ֣טְרֵיכֶ֔ם כֹּ֖ל אִ֥ישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 9 | You stand this day, all of you, before your God יהוה —your tribal heads, your elders, and your officials, every householder in Israel, |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of standing before God in prayer and faith, linking His presence to His benevolence or anger towards mankind. Halakhah discusses specific Torah readings before holidays and the significance of the covenant of circumcision. Jewish Thought reflects on God’s choice of the Jewish people, not based on deeds, and the need for unity in Israel. Midrash interprets various verses and analogies, while Mishnah details the flogging ceremony and exemptions. Musar highlights the mitzvah of guarding one’s tongue, and quoting commentary offers insights from Ramban, Sforno, Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Rashi. Talmud discusses oaths to keep the Torah, and Tanakh mentions elders gathering before King Solomon. Targum emphasizes the public declaration to follow God made to all of Israel.

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| טַפְּכֶ֣ם נְשֵׁיכֶ֔ם וְגֵ֣רְךָ֔ אֲשֶׁ֖ר בְּקֶ֣רֶב מַחֲנֶ֑יךָ מֵחֹטֵ֣ב עֵצֶ֔יךָ עַ֖ד שֹׁאֵ֥ב מֵימֶֽיךָ׃ | 10 | your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to waterdrawer— |

The text discusses ten levels of individuals in Israel, interconnected and representing different attributes, emphasizing the importance of Torah study and the interconnectedness of all individuals in their spiritual journey towards God. Some Canaanites converted during Moses’ time were assigned as woodcutters and water drawers, with male slaves as woodcutters and female slaves as water drawers. The greater Sages of Israel, despite facing challenges, were dedicated to Torah study, passing down teachings from Moses. The text highlights the importance of rewarding those who bring children to learn Torah, emphasizing the significance of righteous individuals in protecting the community and the world. The Gemara discusses a decree against the Gibeonites, concluding that Moses decreed for that generation to remain separate while David decreed for all generations. The Gibeonites deceived the Israelites in Joshua 9:4, and God gave commandments to the Israelites through Moses near Jericho in Numbers 36:13. The Targums mention the inclusion of young children, wives, and foreigners in the camps of the Israelites, specifically mentioning woodcutters and water drawers.

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| לְעׇבְרְךָ֗ בִּבְרִ֛ית יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ וּבְאָלָת֑וֹ אֲשֶׁר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ כֹּרֵ֥ת עִמְּךָ֖ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 11 | to enter into the covenant of your God יהוה, which your God יהוה is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions; |

Rashi explains that entering the Covenant of Hashem involves thoughts, not just actions, as thoughts are important for being close to God. The blessing for Eretz Yisrael should include thanks at the beginning and end, mentioning the land, sustenance, and qualities of Eretz Yisrael, as well as the covenant of circumcision and the Torah. Moses presents a threefold picture of the moral platform of the Jewish people, emphasizing the importance of leadership in guiding individuals towards closeness to G’d. Rabbi Pinḥas interpreted the significance of the covenant and oath made between God and the Israelites, highlighting the consequences of violating this covenant. Ramban explains the fear of the king of the Philistines towards Isaac due to the covenant made with Abraham, while Rashi discusses the importance of not violating the covenant made with God at Horeb. Rebbi Eleazar explains the significance of saying “Amen” for acceptance, an oath, and confirming words, as seen in various biblical verses. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem all refer to entering into the covenant of the Lord your God and remembering the oath made to avoid transgressions.

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| לְמַ֣עַן הָקִֽים־אֹתְךָ֩ הַיּ֨וֹם ׀ ל֜וֹ לְעָ֗ם וְה֤וּא יִֽהְיֶה־לְּךָ֙ לֵֽאלֹהִ֔ים כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּר־לָ֑ךְ וְכַאֲשֶׁ֤ר נִשְׁבַּע֙ לַאֲבֹתֶ֔יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֥ם לְיִצְחָ֖ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹֽב׃ | 12 | in order to establish you this day as God’s people and in order to be your God, as promised you and as sworn to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. |

Chasidut emphasizes Bnei Yisrael’s partnership in creation and ability to reveal divine light, while the covenant between God and the Israelites ensures their eternal relationship and commitment. Jewish Thought highlights the covenant of mutual responsibility between Israel and God, requiring Israel to walk in God’s ways. The Midrash discusses the brokenness of the soul and the consequences of breaking covenants with God, emphasizing the unique relationship between Israel and God. The Targum emphasizes God’s sustenance and role as a God to the people of Israel, fulfilling promises to their forefathers.

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| וְלֹ֥א אִתְּכֶ֖ם לְבַדְּכֶ֑ם אָנֹכִ֗י כֹּרֵת֙ אֶת־הַבְּרִ֣ית הַזֹּ֔את וְאֶת־הָאָלָ֖ה הַזֹּֽאת׃ | 13 | I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, |

The covenant made with the Israelites at that time included future generations, emphasizing the obligation to ensure offspring followed the Torah. God’s choice of the Jewish people was not based on their deeds, but on a more encompassing choice. The covenant between God and Israel is eternal and compared to a father-child relationship, with consequences for breaking it. Ramban emphasizes the importance of transmitting the memory of miracles to future generations through commandments like phylacteries and the Sh’ma. Moses administered an oath to the Jewish people in the plains of Moab, emphasizing the divine nature of the covenant. The covenant and oath-curse are made with both the Israelites and future generations.

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| כִּי֩ אֶת־אֲשֶׁ֨ר יֶשְׁנ֜וֹ פֹּ֗ה עִמָּ֙נוּ֙ עֹמֵ֣ד הַיּ֔וֹם לִפְנֵ֖י יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ וְאֵ֨ת אֲשֶׁ֥ר אֵינֶ֛נּוּ פֹּ֖ה עִמָּ֥נוּ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 14 | but both with those who are standing here with us this day before our God יהוה and with those who are not with us here this day. |

The covenant made by Moses with the Israelites extends to future generations, ensuring continuity and inclusivity in the faith. The prophets received their prophecies at Mount Sinai, with all souls present at the giving of the Torah. The concept of the soul being punished for sins in a previous life or returning to different bodies is refuted, emphasizing reliance on spiritual opinions. Vows and oaths must be taken seriously, with mental reservations not valid for future generations. God’s covenant is with all generations, past and future, standing before Him.

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| כִּֽי־אַתֶּ֣ם יְדַעְתֶּ֔ם אֵ֥ת אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁ֖בְנוּ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם וְאֵ֧ת אֲשֶׁר־עָבַ֛רְנוּ בְּקֶ֥רֶב הַגּוֹיִ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר עֲבַרְתֶּֽם׃ | 15 | Well you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we passed through the midst of various other nations; |

The Israelites were warned against idolatry, having seen the abominations of Egypt and other nations, with the Torah serving as a guide to prevent them from being led astray. The survivors of the Exodus who had lived through the slavery in Egypt were still present, highlighting the importance of remaining loyal to God and the consequences of turning towards idolatry. The first commandment caused a great upheaval in nature and even the dead in Sheol to revive, while the Targum mentions the specific years the Israelites spent in Egypt and the miracles they experienced during their journey.

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| וַתִּרְאוּ֙ אֶת־שִׁקּ֣וּצֵיהֶ֔ם וְאֵ֖ת גִּלֻּלֵיהֶ֑ם עֵ֣ץ וָאֶ֔בֶן כֶּ֥סֶף וְזָהָ֖ב אֲשֶׁ֥ר עִמָּהֶֽם׃ | 16 | and you have seen the detestable things and the fetishes of wood and stone, silver and gold, that they keep. |

Idols are considered abominable because they are detestable like dung, easily replaced, unable to guard themselves, and lead to theft and promiscuity, emphasizing the importance of accepting the covenant. Halakhah states that objects found on the head of an idol in a deferential manner are forbidden, while Talmud discusses the prohibition of coveting silver and gold on idolatrous objects. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 29:16 highlight the presence of abominable idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold owned by the people.

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| פֶּן־יֵ֣שׁ בָּ֠כֶ֠ם אִ֣ישׁ אֽוֹ־אִשָּׁ֞ה א֧וֹ מִשְׁפָּחָ֣ה אוֹ־שֵׁ֗בֶט אֲשֶׁר֩ לְבָב֨וֹ פֹנֶ֤ה הַיּוֹם֙ מֵעִם֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֔ינוּ לָלֶ֣כֶת לַעֲבֹ֔ד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵ֖י הַגּוֹיִ֣ם הָהֵ֑ם פֶּן־יֵ֣שׁ בָּכֶ֗ם שֹׁ֛רֶשׁ פֹּרֶ֥ה רֹ֖אשׁ וְלַעֲנָֽה׃ | 17 | Perchance there is among you some man or woman, or some clan or tribe, whose heart is even now turning away from our God יהוה to go and worship the gods of those nations—perchance there is among you a stock sprouting poison weed and wormwood. |

Chasidut emphasizes maintaining faith and rejecting evil thoughts, striving to bind the soul with simple faith to God. The Commentary discusses the introduction of an oath to prevent idol worship and warns against devious attempts to avoid punishment. Halakhah explains the tradition of saying “Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom forever” after the Shema. Kabbalah highlights belief in the Ruler of the world and consequences for denial. Midrash discusses Moses’ request for a priest from a specific tribe and the importance of serving God. Musar warns against exploiting the community’s merit for protection and describes the severity of evil speech. Quoting Commentary includes interpretations by Ramban, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Rashi, Or HaChaim, Simchat HaRegel, and Nachal Eshkol. Tanakh criticizes the perversion of justice and righteousness, urging people to seek God. Targum warns against turning away from serving God to worship idols.

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| וְהָיָ֡ה בְּשׇׁמְעוֹ֩ אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֨י הָאָלָ֜ה הַזֹּ֗את וְהִתְבָּרֵ֨ךְ בִּלְבָב֤וֹ לֵאמֹר֙ שָׁל֣וֹם יִֽהְיֶה־לִּ֔י כִּ֛י בִּשְׁרִר֥וּת לִבִּ֖י אֵלֵ֑ךְ לְמַ֛עַן סְפ֥וֹת הָרָוָ֖ה אֶת־הַצְּמֵאָֽה׃ | 18 | When hearing the words of these sanctions, they may imagine a special immunity, thinking, “I shall be safe, though I follow my own willful heart”—to the utter ruin of moist and dry alike. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of belief in the power of prayers and Torah study, leading to mindful actions done for the sake of God. Commentary warns against thinking one can sin without consequences and highlights the impact of thoughts on spiritual well-being. Jewish Thought discusses seeking healing from sages, obedience to Torah commandments, and the significance of the heart in biblical verses. Musar contrasts the righteous and the wicked in terms of reward and punishment, with the souls of the wicked compared to chaff. Quoting Commentary delves into interpretations of specific words in biblical texts, while the Talmud warns against actions that lead to sin. Targum warns against following one’s own desires and unintentionally adding sins to intentional ones.

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| לֹא־יֹאבֶ֣ה יְהֹוָה֮ סְלֹ֣חַֽ לוֹ֒ כִּ֣י אָ֠ז יֶעְשַׁ֨ן אַף־יְהֹוָ֤ה וְקִנְאָתוֹ֙ בָּאִ֣ישׁ הַה֔וּא וְרָ֤בְצָה בּוֹ֙ כׇּל־הָ֣אָלָ֔ה הַכְּתוּבָ֖ה בַּסֵּ֣פֶר הַזֶּ֑ה וּמָחָ֤ה יְהֹוָה֙ אֶת־שְׁמ֔וֹ מִתַּ֖חַת הַשָּׁמָֽיִם׃ | 19 | יהוה will never forgive that party. Rather, יהוה’s anger and passion will rage against them, till every sanction recorded in this book comes down upon them, and יהוה blots out their name from under heaven. |

The text discusses God’s decision to give humans free will despite advice against it, Israel’s livelihood being determined on the first day of Tishrey, consequences of violating the covenant with God including curses and erasure of names, Miriam’s punishment for criticizing Moses, warning against exploiting community merit, the importance of personal Torah observance, the severity of punishments for forbidden relationships, and the consequences of sins following the individual throughout life. The Talmud warns against inappropriate marriages and performing favors without notification, while the Targum emphasizes that God will not forgive those who sin.

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| וְהִבְדִּיל֤וֹ יְהֹוָה֙ לְרָעָ֔ה מִכֹּ֖ל שִׁבְטֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל כְּכֹל֙ אָל֣וֹת הַבְּרִ֔ית הַכְּתוּבָ֕ה בְּסֵ֥פֶר הַתּוֹרָ֖ה הַזֶּֽה׃ | 20 | [As for such a clan or tribe,] יהוה will single it out from all the tribes of Israel for misfortune, in accordance with all the sanctions of the covenant recorded in this book of Teaching. |

The text discusses G’d singling out individuals or tribes for good or evil, with references to the origins of Jewish souls, potential separation of souls for punishment, and unique consequences for those who go against the Torah. Reuben’s act of rearranging Bilhah’s bed was seen as defending his mother’s honor without sinning. Certain events not explicitly in the Torah, like Moses’ death, are still considered part of it. Adonoy will separate individuals for harm or evil from all the tribes of Israel based on the covenant’s oath-curses.

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| וְאָמַ֞ר הַדּ֣וֹר הָאַחֲר֗וֹן בְּנֵיכֶם֙ אֲשֶׁ֤ר יָק֙וּמוּ֙ מֵאַ֣חֲרֵיכֶ֔ם וְהַ֨נׇּכְרִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר יָבֹ֖א מֵאֶ֣רֶץ רְחוֹקָ֑ה וְ֠רָא֠וּ אֶת־מַכּ֞וֹת הָאָ֤רֶץ הַהִוא֙ וְאֶת־תַּ֣חֲלֻאֶ֔יהָ אֲשֶׁר־חִלָּ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה בָּֽהּ׃ | 21 | And later generations will ask—the children who succeed you, and foreigners who come from distant lands and see the plagues and diseases that יהוה has inflicted upon that land, |

Future generations, including foreigners, will inquire about disasters in Israel as a result of breaching the covenant and idolatry, understanding them as punishments from Hashem. The term gentile-stranger refers to non-Jews outside of autonomous Jewish societies. Ibn Ezra explains that God pleased to chastise the suffering servant with exile, similar to the sicknesses laid upon Israel. Targum Jonathan and Onkelos mention that future generations and foreigners will witness the plagues and illnesses inflicted by the Lord on the land.

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| גׇּפְרִ֣ית וָמֶ֘לַח֮ שְׂרֵפָ֣ה כׇל־אַרְצָהּ֒ לֹ֤א תִזָּרַע֙ וְלֹ֣א תַצְמִ֔חַ וְלֹא־יַעֲלֶ֥ה בָ֖הּ כׇּל־עֵ֑שֶׂב כְּֽמַהְפֵּכַ֞ת סְדֹ֤ם וַעֲמֹרָה֙ אַדְמָ֣ה אֲשֶׁר֙ הָפַ֣ךְ יְהֹוָ֔ה בְּאַפּ֖וֹ וּבַחֲמָתֽוֹ׃ | 22 | all its soil devastated by sulfur and salt, beyond sowing and producing, no grass growing in it, just like the upheaval of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which יהוה overthrew in fierce anger— |

The text warns of the consequences of forsaking God and serving other gods, comparing the destruction of the land with brimstone and salt to that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Various commentaries and texts emphasize the severe punishment for disobedience and idol worship, with references to specific verses and historical events highlighting the importance of upholding moral values and avoiding immoral behavior.

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| וְאָֽמְרוּ֙ כׇּל־הַגּוֹיִ֔ם עַל־מֶ֨ה עָשָׂ֧ה יְהֹוָ֛ה כָּ֖כָה לָאָ֣רֶץ הַזֹּ֑את מֶ֥ה חֳרִ֛י הָאַ֥ף הַגָּד֖וֹל הַזֶּֽה׃ | 23 | all nations will ask, “Why did יהוה do thus to this land? Wherefore that awful wrath?” |

Rabbi Yitzchak explains that the Israelites refused to repent in Israel but did so after being exiled, leading to God’s promise to never forget them. Rashbam emphasizes the importance of atonement before settling in the Holy Land, while Ramban stresses the commandment to remember the exodus and fundamental principles of faith. The Talmud discusses baking bread as thin cakes to save effort, and the importance of setting boundaries to prevent wrongdoing is highlighted in Avot DeRabbi Natan. The Targums emphasize that all nations will question why God has brought destruction upon the land.

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| וְאָ֣מְר֔וּ עַ֚ל אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָזְב֔וּ אֶת־בְּרִ֥ית יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵ֣י אֲבֹתָ֑ם אֲשֶׁר֙ כָּרַ֣ת עִמָּ֔ם בְּהוֹצִיא֥וֹ אֹתָ֖ם מֵאֶ֥רֶץ מִצְרָֽיִם׃ | 24 | They will be told, “Because they forsook the covenant that יהוה, God of their ancestors, made with them upon freeing them from the land of Egypt; |

The anger of God towards the Israelites in Deuteronomy 29:24 was due to their forsaking of the covenant made with Him, as explained by Rashbam, Steinsaltz, and Da’at Zekenim. The Talmud expresses a willingness to endure punishments in order to achieve redemption. Ramban interprets that blessings mentioned in the Torah are hidden miracles that will be evident when the whole nation is righteous, and discusses the role of physicians in relation to G’d’s will. Rabbi Yosei believed that Eretz Yisrael was cursed with brimstone and salt for seven years as punishment for forsaking the covenant of the Lord, based on a verbal analogy between the duration of the curse and a covenant mentioned in the Bible. The people will explain that they were punished because they abandoned the covenant made with God when they were brought out of Egypt, as seen in Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 29:24.

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| וַיֵּלְכ֗וּ וַיַּֽעַבְדוּ֙ אֱלֹהִ֣ים אֲחֵרִ֔ים וַיִּֽשְׁתַּחֲו֖וּ לָהֶ֑ם אֱלֹהִים֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹֽא־יְדָע֔וּם וְלֹ֥א חָלַ֖ק לָהֶֽם׃ | 25 | they turned to the service of other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not experienced and whom [God] had not allotted to them. |

The Israelites worshipped unfamiliar Canaanite gods not assigned to them by God, lacking knowledge of their divine powers and prostrating themselves before idols. The Talmud discusses the importance of making fences around the Torah and words, citing examples from Adam, Moses, Job, and the Prophets. The Targum highlights how the Israelites turned away from God to worship foreign gods not allotted to them.

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| וַיִּחַר־אַ֥ף יְהֹוָ֖ה בָּאָ֣רֶץ הַהִ֑וא לְהָבִ֤יא עָלֶ֙יהָ֙ אֶת־כׇּל־הַקְּלָלָ֔ה הַכְּתוּבָ֖ה בַּסֵּ֥פֶר הַזֶּֽה׃ | 26 | So יהוה was incensed at that land and brought upon it all the curses recorded in this book. |

Steinsaltz explains that Deuteronomy 29:26 discusses the punishment for turning away from God. The commentary also highlights the consequences of disobedience and lack of faith. The Halakhah mentions how the Israelites harm each other due to their sense of importance, emphasizing the need for righteousness to prevent further destruction. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that God’s anger was aimed at the land, resulting in the fulfillment of all curses in Deuteronomy.

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| וַיִּתְּשֵׁ֤ם יְהֹוָה֙ מֵעַ֣ל אַדְמָתָ֔ם בְּאַ֥ף וּבְחֵמָ֖ה וּבְקֶ֣צֶף גָּד֑וֹל וַיַּשְׁלִכֵ֛ם אֶל־אֶ֥רֶץ אַחֶ֖רֶת כַּיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 27 | יהוה uprooted them from their soil in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is still the case.” |

Various Jewish texts discuss the exile of the Israelites as a punishment for their actions, with differing opinions on the fate of the ten tribes and the significance of settling in Erez Yisra’el. The Talmud and Mishnah mention that certain groups will not have a share in the World-to-Come, while the Tanakh and Targum emphasize the consequences of disobedience and the divine anger leading to exile.

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| הַנִּ֨סְתָּרֹ֔ת לַיהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֹ֞ת לָ֤ׄנׄוּׄ וּׄלְׄבָׄנֵ֙ׄיׄנׄוּ֙ׄ עַׄד־עוֹלָ֔ם לַעֲשׂ֕וֹת אֶת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֖י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּֽאת׃ | 28 | Concealed acts concern our God יהוה; but with overt acts, it is for us and our children ever to apply all the provisions of this Teaching. |

Chasidut emphasizes God’s ongoing creative force in daily prayers, Torah and mitzvot connect physical and celestial realms, differing opinions in Torah interpretation are part of God’s words, and separating chochma for Hashem elevates actions. Halakhah discusses the role of prophets, eternal Torah commandments, and the principle of suretyship. Jewish Thought highlights shared responsibility among the people of Israel, mutual accountability, and God’s judgment based on revealed and concealed matters. Kabbalah warns against seeking forbidden knowledge, emphasizes the importance of fear and love in Torah approach, and discusses the significance of different sephiroth. Liturgy explores confession for sins, atonement, and the ineffable nature of God. Midrash discusses punishment for hidden sins, hidden meanings in the text, and unity among the Israelites. Musar emphasizes dedicating deeds to God, walking in God’s ways, and rebuking fellow countrymen for sin. Quoting Commentary discusses distinguishing true prophets, obeying established prophets, punishment for false prophets, and the transformation of matzah to mitzvah. Responsa emphasizes the uniqueness of the Jewish religion, refutes attempts to undermine it, and stresses the eternal nature of the Law. Talmud explains the significance of dots in the Torah indicating hidden sins, insincerity, and acceptance of secret matters. Targum highlights God’s knowledge of hidden and revealed matters, emphasizing following the Torah.

## Deuteronomy 30

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| וְהָיָה֩ כִֽי־יָבֹ֨אוּ עָלֶ֜יךָ כׇּל־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֗לֶּה הַבְּרָכָה֙ וְהַקְּלָלָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר נָתַ֖תִּי לְפָנֶ֑יךָ וַהֲשֵׁבֹתָ֙ אֶל־לְבָבֶ֔ךָ בְּכׇ֨ל־הַגּוֹיִ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֧ר הִדִּיחֲךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ שָֽׁמָּה׃ | 1 | When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which your God יהוה has banished you, |

Chasidut emphasizes the unity of God’s aspects, the need for repentance, and the inner righteousness of sinners. Halakhah and Jewish Thought discuss repentance as crucial for Israel’s redemption, with affliction leading to redemption. Kabbalah delves into the symbolism of the moon-Levanah and the consequences of Adam’s actions on the Tree of Knowledge. Midrash connects exile to sin, highlighting the hope for repentance and redemption. Musar and the Quoting Commentary stress the transformative power of blessings and curses, the importance of repentance, and the promise of ultimate redemption for Israel. Targum mentions the return to God’s fear in the face of blessings and curses.

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| וְשַׁבְתָּ֞ עַד־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ֣ בְקֹל֔וֹ כְּכֹ֛ל אֲשֶׁר־אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם אַתָּ֣ה וּבָנֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 2 | and you return to your God יהוה, and you and your children heed God’s command with all your heart and soul, just as I enjoin upon you this day, |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of repentance and returning to God with all one’s heart and soul, serving Him and keeping His commandments to hasten redemption. Halakhah stresses the need for repentance for redemption, especially after the Holocaust, to fulfill the divine mission of the Jewish people. Jewish Thought highlights the connection between Israel and God through laws like circumcision and the Sabbath, comparing them to a sick person hoping for recovery. Musar discusses how God accepts repentance even from sinners, renewing a pure spirit within them, and emphasizes the importance of fulfilling all aspects of the Torah for spiritual well-being. Quoting Commentary references various interpretations of repentance and redemption in different biblical verses. Targum emphasizes the command to return to God and obey His word wholeheartedly for repentance to be favored for the upright, even after sinning.

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| וְשָׁ֨ב יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ אֶת־שְׁבוּתְךָ֖ וְרִחֲמֶ֑ךָ וְשָׁ֗ב וְקִבֶּצְךָ֙ מִכׇּל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר הֱפִֽיצְךָ֛ יְהֹוָ֥ה אֱלֹהֶ֖יךָ שָֽׁמָּה׃ | 3 | then your God יהוה will restore your fortunes and take you back in love. [God] will bring you together again from all the peoples where your God יהוה has scattered you. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of teshuvah for reuniting with God after a period of exile, while Halakhah discusses the restoration of Temple service and observance of statutes for Israel’s redemption. Jewish Thought highlights the need for refinement through exile before a permanent home for G-d, and Kabbalah explains the titles of God and His Indwelling Presence with the returning people. Liturgy includes prayers for the gathering of dispersed congregations and blessings upon Israel, while Midrash emphasizes the Divine Presence with the Israelites in exile and their ultimate redemption through repentance. Musar stresses the importance of repentance for redemption, and Responsa caution against attempts to predict the exact date of the Messiah’s arrival. Talmud and Tanakh both discuss the Divine Presence with the Jewish people in exile and upon their redemption, while Targum emphasizes God’s mercy and favor upon the repentance of the exiles.

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| אִם־יִהְיֶ֥ה נִֽדַּחֲךָ֖ בִּקְצֵ֣ה הַשָּׁמָ֑יִם מִשָּׁ֗ם יְקַבֶּצְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ וּמִשָּׁ֖ם יִקָּחֶֽךָ׃ | 4 | Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there your God יהוה will gather you, from there [God] will fetch you. |

Ibn Ezra explains the metaphorical nature of the “uttermost parts of heaven” in Deuteronomy 30:4, with the JPS 1985 Footnotes clarifying “sky” as the literal translation. The Messianic king will rebuild the Temple, gather the dispersed of Israel, and restore observance of Torah statutes. Jewish belief holds that exile was a result of sins but eventual repentance will lead to forgiveness and return to the land. The Liturgy and Midrash emphasize God’s promise to gather the dispersed from all corners of the earth, as stated in Deuteronomy 30:4. The belief in the coming of Moshiach is a fundamental principle of faith, with the Torah testifying to his coming and the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people.

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| וֶהֱבִיאֲךָ֞ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ אֶל־הָאָ֛רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יָרְשׁ֥וּ אֲבֹתֶ֖יךָ וִֽירִשְׁתָּ֑הּ וְהֵיטִֽבְךָ֥ וְהִרְבְּךָ֖ מֵאֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 5 | And your God יהוה will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and [God] will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your ancestors. |

The Jewish people sanctified the land of Israel twice, with the second sanctification being eternal and linked to a masculine song symbolizing a final redemption. The laws regarding the redemption of houses in walled cities, the coming of the Messiah, and the observance of Sabbatical and Jubilee years are discussed. Abraham’s prayers for Ishmael’s destiny, the covenant with Abraham and Isaac ensuring the future of Israel, and the importance of anticipating redemption and believing in Moshiach in Musar are highlighted. The Talmudic texts discuss the inheritance and sanctification of the land of Israel, the return of the Jewish people from exile, and biblical obligations regarding the land and Temple. God will bring the Israelites to the land of their forefathers, blessing them and multiplying them more than their ancestors.

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| וּמָ֨ל יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ אֶת־לְבָבְךָ֖ וְאֶת־לְבַ֣ב זַרְעֶ֑ךָ לְאַהֲבָ֞ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֥ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשְׁךָ֖ לְמַ֥עַן חַיֶּֽיךָ׃ | 6 | Then your God יהוה will open up your heart and the hearts of your offspring—to love your God יהוה with all your heart and soul, in order that you may live. |

Repentance is essential for clear prayer and a circumcised heart, with the days of Elul being particularly favorable for this. In the days of the Messiah, the heart will naturally desire good, leading to obedience to God’s laws. The period from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Yom Kippur is significant for repentance, prayer, and charity. The Torah emphasizes God’s promises, atonement, and forgiveness, with a desire for God to circumcise the hearts of the people. Repentance is accepted by God, even for great sins, with God’s assistance in achieving it beyond natural ability. The legislation of certain statutes will be fully understood only after the arrival of the Messiah. Deuteronomy 10:16 instructs individuals to remove hardness from their hearts, and Targum Jonathan mentions God removing foolishness from the hearts of the people to inspire love for Him and eternal life.

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| וְנָתַן֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ אֵ֥ת כׇּל־הָאָל֖וֹת הָאֵ֑לֶּה עַל־אֹיְבֶ֥יךָ וְעַל־שֹׂנְאֶ֖יךָ אֲשֶׁ֥ר רְדָפֽוּךָ׃ | 7 | Your God יהוה will inflict all those curses upon the enemies and foes who persecuted you. |

Sforno, Rav Hirsch, and Rabbeinu Bahya discuss God’s punishment of nations opposing or hating Israel, with Ishmaelites and Edomites symbolized by two geese seeking refuge or converting. Abudarham’s Weekday Prayers address the curse against enemies like Amalek, emphasizing repentance and God’s mercy. The Liturgy stresses repentance, obedience, and devotion to receive God’s blessings. Midrash highlights the power of Torah study and prayer for atonement, with examples of retribution against enemies and the significance of circumcision in conflicts. The blessing in Genesis indicates that even Israel’s enemies will seek their wisdom despite hating them. Adonoy will send curse on enemies and oppressors of Israel.

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| וְאַתָּ֣ה תָשׁ֔וּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ֖ בְּק֣וֹל יְהֹוָ֑ה וְעָשִׂ֙יתָ֙ אֶת־כׇּל־מִצְוֺתָ֔יו אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּֽוֹם׃ | 8 | You, however, will again heed יהוה and obey all the divine commandments that I enjoin upon you this day. |

Sforno explains that the return mentioned in Deuteronomy 30:8 refers to the arrival of the Messiah after the elimination of hostile nations, contrasting the fate of nations with that of the Jewish people. Halakhah states that Levites were chosen to serve in the Sanctuary and must be ready for service. Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of acts of kindness and generosity in cultivating traits and reflecting a bond between man and God. The Midrash highlights the importance of prayer and Torah study for atonement, valuing words and prayers over material sacrifices. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan reiterate the importance of obeying God’s commandments.

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| וְהוֹתִֽירְךָ֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ בְּכֹ֣ל ׀ מַעֲשֵׂ֣ה יָדֶ֗ךָ בִּפְרִ֨י בִטְנְךָ֜ וּבִפְרִ֧י בְהֶמְתְּךָ֛ וּבִפְרִ֥י אַדְמָתְךָ֖ לְטֹבָ֑ה כִּ֣י ׀ יָשׁ֣וּב יְהֹוָ֗ה לָשׂ֤וּשׂ עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ לְט֔וֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר־שָׂ֖שׂ עַל־אֲבֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 9 | And your God יהוה will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in your issue from the womb, the offspring of your cattle, and your produce from the soil. For יהוה will again delight in your well-being as in that of your ancestors, |

The text discusses God providing abundance and blessings to the Jewish people, based on their repentance and observance of commandments, leading to increased success and joy. Failure to observe commandments will result in curses and destruction. Miracles performed in the wilderness for Israel will also be done in Zion, with God gradually revealing His presence to prevent overwhelming them. Rabbi Eliezer explains that God does not delight in causing misery to the Jewish people, but causes others to do so. Even in exile, the descendants of Avraham will benefit the nations hosting them. Obeying God’s commandments and ordinances is essential to receive His blessings. Adonoy will provide surplus in all endeavors, offspring, animals, and produce of the soil, rejoicing over the Jewish people as He did with their forefathers.

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| כִּ֣י תִשְׁמַ֗ע בְּקוֹל֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֤ר מִצְוֺתָיו֙ וְחֻקֹּתָ֔יו הַכְּתוּבָ֕ה בְּסֵ֥פֶר הַתּוֹרָ֖ה הַזֶּ֑ה כִּ֤י תָשׁוּב֙ אֶל־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בְּכׇל־לְבָבְךָ֖ וּבְכׇל־נַפְשֶֽׁךָ׃ | 10 | since you will be heeding your God יהוה and keeping the divine commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching—once you return to your God יהוה with all your heart and soul. |

Ibn Ezra emphasizes the need for oral tradition to understand the Torah commandments, while Steinsaltz stresses observing them with heart and soul for blessings. Chizkuni links redemption from exile to penitence and obeying commandments. The Rabbi compares Israel to a sick person hoping for recovery through laws and covenants. Deuteronomy 30 promises restoration for repentant, obedient people. The Midrash portrays the heart in various states. Rambam stresses belief in the Messiah and the House of David, with communal repentance leading to the Messiah’s arrival. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan highlight the importance of obeying God’s word and returning to the fear of the Lord wholeheartedly.

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| כִּ֚י הַמִּצְוָ֣ה הַזֹּ֔את אֲשֶׁ֛ר אָנֹכִ֥י מְצַוְּךָ֖ הַיּ֑וֹם לֹא־נִפְלֵ֥את הִוא֙ מִמְּךָ֔ וְלֹ֥א רְחֹקָ֖ה הִֽוא׃ | 11 | Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. |

Chasidut emphasizes the accessibility of Godliness and mercy to all, encouraging a habitual focus on God and highlighting the presence of Moses’ love in each generation. Halakhah discusses the severity of sin and the importance of timely repentance, while Jewish Thought stresses the importance of love in fulfilling commandments and becoming a holy nation. Liturgy discusses returning to God and obeying His commandments for blessings, and Midrash emphasizes the power of prayer, Torah knowledge, and blessings. Musar discusses the holiness of a Nazirite and the concept of hidden or concealed aspects in Torah. Quoting Commentary highlights the enduring nature of commandments and the concept of teshuva. Targum emphasizes the accessibility and clarity of the commandments.

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| לֹ֥א בַשָּׁמַ֖יִם הִ֑וא לֵאמֹ֗ר מִ֣י יַעֲלֶה־לָּ֤נוּ הַשָּׁמַ֙יְמָה֙ וְיִקָּחֶ֣הָ לָּ֔נוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵ֥נוּ אֹתָ֖הּ וְנַעֲשֶֽׂנָּה׃ | 12 | It is not in the heavens, that you should say, “Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” |

Chasidut emphasizes the accessibility of Torah to those who seek it with effort and desire, as taught by the Baal Shem Tov, while Halakhah stresses the immutability of the Torah and the responsibility of poskim in applying it. Jewish Thought discusses humility in following the consensus of sages, and Kabbalah highlights the importance of guarding the Brit for protection from spiritual afflictions. Midrash emphasizes the accessibility of Torah to all, and Musar teaches that wisdom is found in Torah study. Quoting Commentary reinforces the accessibility and interpretability of Torah by each generation’s sages, while Responsa refutes claims about Prophet Mohammed and stresses adherence to the laws of Moses. Second Temple text discusses the interconnectedness of words, thoughts, intentions, and deeds for human happiness, and Talmud stresses human effort in Torah study, humility, and the need for constant learning. Targum underscores the accessibility of the law to the people without needing heavenly intervention.

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| וְלֹא־מֵעֵ֥בֶר לַיָּ֖ם הִ֑וא לֵאמֹ֗ר מִ֣י יַעֲבׇר־לָ֜נוּ אֶל־עֵ֤בֶר הַיָּם֙ וְיִקָּחֶ֣הָ לָּ֔נוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵ֥נוּ אֹתָ֖הּ וְנַעֲשֶֽׂנָּה׃ | 13 | Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” |

Various commentators and sources emphasize that the Torah is not distant or unreachable, but rather near and accessible to all, with a focus on the importance of fear leading to love, the necessity of humility and righteousness in fulfilling mitzvot, the dangers of excessive focus on business over Torah study, and the idea that God is found in the present moment rather than in distant realms.

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| כִּֽי־קָר֥וֹב אֵלֶ֛יךָ הַדָּבָ֖ר מְאֹ֑ד בְּפִ֥יךָ וּבִֽלְבָבְךָ֖ לַעֲשֹׂתֽוֹ׃ | 14 | No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it. |

Chasidut stresses engaging in simple avodah with passion, immersing in divine nature, and habitually arousing love for God. Torah accessible through written and oral traditions, emphasizes heart in understanding and performing commandments. Prophets command repentance for redemption, Torah promises redemption through Teshuvah. Torah not too difficult to follow, emphasizes self-control, balance between physical and spiritual pursuits, repentance, and Torah study. Torah compared to hidden princess, symbolizing special relationship between God and Israel, accessible to all. Fulfilling all 613 commandments, repentance, prayer, and charity essential for spiritual rehabilitation. Torah close to heart and mouth for easy observance, G-d’s decision to create man with free will. Good thing divided into words, plans, actions, must have all three parts. Torah close when spoken and internalized. Targums emphasize closeness of God’s word, urge meditation and heart purification for fulfillment.

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| רְאֵ֨ה נָתַ֤תִּי לְפָנֶ֙יךָ֙ הַיּ֔וֹם אֶת־הַֽחַיִּ֖ים וְאֶת־הַטּ֑וֹב וְאֶת־הַמָּ֖וֶת וְאֶת־הָרָֽע׃ | 15 | See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of choice and awareness in distinguishing between good and evil, with the Torah highlighting the contrast between life and good, and death and evil. Halakhah and Jewish Thought stress the principle of free will in choosing between good and evil, with actions leading to reward or punishment. Kabbalah explores the existence of both Evil and Good Inclinations, explaining the consequences of precepts and transgressions. Midrash and Musar focus on personal responsibility for choices and outcomes, with the importance of choosing life over evil inclination. Quoting Commentary underscores the idea of free will in following the commandments and choosing between life and death. Second Temple texts and Targum emphasize the choice between good and evil, with the path of good leading to life and the path of evil leading to death.

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| אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָנֹכִ֣י מְצַוְּךָ֮ הַיּוֹם֒ לְאַהֲבָ֞ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ לָלֶ֣כֶת בִּדְרָכָ֔יו וְלִשְׁמֹ֛ר מִצְוֺתָ֥יו וְחֻקֹּתָ֖יו וּמִשְׁפָּטָ֑יו וְחָיִ֣יתָ וְרָבִ֔יתָ וּבֵֽרַכְךָ֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בָּאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּ֥ה בָא־שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 16 | For I command you this day, to love your God יהוה, to walk in God’s ways, and to keep God’s commandments, God’s laws, and God’s rules, that you may thrive and increase, and that your God יהוה may bless you in the land that you are about to enter and possess. |

The importance of loving God, following His ways, and obeying His commandments for blessings and prosperity is emphasized in various Jewish texts, including Nefesh HaChayim, Akeidat Yitzchak, and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 30:16. The connection between adherence to God’s ways and the resulting blessings of life and material increase is highlighted, even without full understanding of the reasons behind His commandments.

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| וְאִם־יִפְנֶ֥ה לְבָבְךָ֖ וְלֹ֣א תִשְׁמָ֑ע וְנִדַּחְתָּ֗ וְהִֽשְׁתַּחֲוִ֛יתָ לֵאלֹהִ֥ים אֲחֵרִ֖ים וַעֲבַדְתָּֽם׃ | 17 | But if your heart turns away and you give no heed, and are lured into the worship and service of other gods, |

The importance of the heart in staying faithful to God’s teachings is emphasized in Deuteronomy 30:17:1. Ramban and Rabbeinu Bahya highlight the prohibition of turning to idols and emphasize the importance of revering parents and observing the Sabbath. The Talmud interprets Deuteronomy 28:1 as indicating that diligence in the present leads to continued obedience in the future. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan discuss the consequences of straying from God and worshipping idols.

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| הִגַּ֤דְתִּי לָכֶם֙ הַיּ֔וֹם כִּ֥י אָבֹ֖ד תֹּאבֵד֑וּן לֹא־תַאֲרִיכֻ֤ן יָמִים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתָּ֤ה עֹבֵר֙ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן לָב֥וֹא שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 18 | I declare to you this day that you shall certainly perish; you shall not long endure on the soil that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. |

The commentators on Deuteronomy 30:18:1 warn that turning away from their destiny will lead to death and destruction, with Sforno adding that it would result in perishing forever. Ibn Ezra notes that not following God’s blessings will result in the opposite, and Steinsaltz highlights neglecting their purpose leading to exile instead of prolonging their days in the promised land. The Halakhah stresses the importance of choosing life by loving God, following His commandments, and avoiding the worship of other gods for longevity and success in the promised land. Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey that the Israelites will not have a long life in the land they are crossing the Jordan River to inherit.

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| הַעִדֹ֨תִי בָכֶ֣ם הַיּוֹם֮ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֣יִם וְאֶת־הָאָ֒רֶץ֒ הַחַיִּ֤ים וְהַמָּ֙וֶת֙ נָתַ֣תִּי לְפָנֶ֔יךָ הַבְּרָכָ֖ה וְהַקְּלָלָ֑ה וּבָֽחַרְתָּ֙ בַּחַיִּ֔ים לְמַ֥עַן תִּֽחְיֶ֖ה אַתָּ֥ה וְזַרְעֶֽךָ׃ | 19 | I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live— |

The text emphasizes the importance of choosing life and following the commandments to preserve life, with the responsibility to protect and save lives taking precedence over all other laws (Halakhah). The Torah highlights the choice between good and evil, guiding towards choosing life and following God’s commandments (Jewish Thought). In Deuteronomy, Moshe calls heaven and earth as witnesses against the Israelites, urging them to choose life and blessings over death and curses for this world and the hereafter (Commentary). The text also discusses the significance of Torah study, engagement, and fulfillment of commandments, connecting Torah observance to various Jewish figures and themes of repentance, divine judgment, and the role of witnesses in Jewish law (Midrash). Gaidad’s son Maiel’s name symbolizes being cut off from God by living an irrational life, as defined by Moses as loving Him (Second Temple). Rebbi Aqiba emphasizes the importance of a father fulfilling obligations towards his son, including teaching Torah and a trade, while Rebbi Ismael highlights choosing a profession for sustaining life (Talmud). Moshe’s warning in Nitzavim about the consequences of breaking the covenant and the importance of choosing life for oneself and future generations is emphasized (Tanakh). Onkelos and Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 30:19 urge the audience to choose life and follow the law for a prosperous future (Targum).

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| לְאַֽהֲבָה֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לִשְׁמֹ֥עַ בְּקֹל֖וֹ וּלְדׇבְקָה־ב֑וֹ כִּ֣י ה֤וּא חַיֶּ֙יךָ֙ וְאֹ֣רֶךְ יָמֶ֔יךָ לָשֶׁ֣בֶת עַל־הָאֲדָמָ֗ה אֲשֶׁר֩ נִשְׁבַּ֨ע יְהֹוָ֧ה לַאֲבֹתֶ֛יךָ לְאַבְרָהָ֛ם לְיִצְחָ֥ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹ֖ב לָתֵ֥ת לָהֶֽם׃ | 20 | by loving your God יהוה, heeding God’s commands, and holding fast to [God]. For thereby you shall have life and shall long endure upon the soil that יהוה swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of concentrating on God to avoid spiritual consequences and renewing service to God daily, with love for God stemming from the heart. Halakhah stresses Torah study out of love for God, while liturgy expresses gratitude for Torah and commandments. Kabbalah discusses studying Torah for eternal life, while Midrash illustrates the risks and rewards of Torah dedication. Mishnah highlights acquiring Torah and wisdom over material possessions, and Musar emphasizes clinging to God through Torah study for blessings. Quoting Commentary underscores the importance of Torah for spiritual growth, and Second Temple teachings link prosperity to loving and cleaving to God. Talmud emphasizes following Torah laws for a place in the World to Come, and Tanakh stresses the importance of Torah study for the Jewish people’s life. Targum emphasizes loving and obeying God for a long life and dwelling in the promised land.

# **52**: וילך|Vayeilech (Deuteronomy 31:1-30)

## Deuteronomy 31

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| וַיֵּ֖לֶךְ מֹשֶׁ֑ה וַיְדַבֵּ֛ר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִ֥ים הָאֵ֖לֶּה אֶל־כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 1 | Moses went and spoke these things to all Israel. |

Chasidut discusses Moses’ attachment to prayer letters and spiritual powers transferred to Joshua, Torah study and prayer for healing and cleansing. Commentary highlights Moses’ farewell to the Israelites, comforting them and passing leadership to Joshua. Halakhah explains that debts are nullified at the end of the Sabbatical year. Midrash emphasizes the transition of power from Moses to Joshua. Quoting Commentary mentions Moses writing the Law and Song, instructing priests to place the Book of the Law by the ark. Targum describes Moses addressing Israel inside the tabernacle.

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| וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֲלֵהֶ֗ם בֶּן־מֵאָה֩ וְעֶשְׂרִ֨ים שָׁנָ֤ה אָנֹכִי֙ הַיּ֔וֹם לֹא־אוּכַ֥ל ע֖וֹד לָצֵ֣את וְלָב֑וֹא וַֽיהֹוָה֙ אָמַ֣ר אֵלַ֔י לֹ֥א תַעֲבֹ֖ר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֥ן הַזֶּֽה׃ | 2 | He said to them: I am now one hundred and twenty years old, I can no longer be active. Moreover, יהוה has said to me, “You shall not go across yonder Jordan.” |

Moses reached a state of completion where he could not lose what he had apprehended or gain anything further, symbolized by his statement “I can no longer go out or come in.” His death on the seventh of Adar marked the end of the Mannah, and despite his pleas for mercy, he resigned himself to death. When G-d rejected Moses’ prayers to avoid challenges, it signified his need to consult other Torah scholars as his intellectual powers declined. Moses hands leadership to Joshua, unable to enter the Promised Land, ensuring the Torah is passed down for generations.

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| יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֶ֜יךָ ה֣וּא ׀ עֹבֵ֣ר לְפָנֶ֗יךָ הֽוּא־יַשְׁמִ֞יד אֶת־הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֛לֶּה מִלְּפָנֶ֖יךָ וִירִשְׁתָּ֑ם יְהוֹשֻׁ֗עַ ה֚וּא עֹבֵ֣ר לְפָנֶ֔יךָ כַּאֲשֶׁ֖ר דִּבֶּ֥ר יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 3 | It is indeed your God יהוה who will cross over before you, and who will wipe out those nations from your path; and you shall dispossess them.—Joshua is the one who shall cross before you, as יהוה has spoken.— |

Moses reassures the people that God will lead them, emphasizing the importance of Joshua as their new leader. Midrash highlights the significance of Torah in Moses’ communication with God. Ramban discusses Jacob’s sacrifices and Onkelos’ translations in the Torah, while Targum emphasizes God and His Shekinah going before the Israelites with Joshua.

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| וְעָשָׂ֤ה יְהֹוָה֙ לָהֶ֔ם כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֗ה לְסִיח֥וֹן וּלְע֛וֹג מַלְכֵ֥י הָאֱמֹרִ֖י וּלְאַרְצָ֑ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר הִשְׁמִ֖יד אֹתָֽם׃ | 4 | יהוה will do to them as was done to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and to their countries, when [God] wiped them out. |

The Lord will destroy the nations as He did with Sihon and Og, the Emorite kings, and their land, executing judgment on them.

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| וּנְתָנָ֥ם יְהֹוָ֖ה לִפְנֵיכֶ֑ם וַעֲשִׂיתֶ֣ם לָהֶ֔ם כְּכׇ֨ל־הַמִּצְוָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוִּ֖יתִי אֶתְכֶֽם׃ | 5 | יהוה will deliver them up to you, and you shall deal with them in full accordance with the Instruction that I have enjoined upon you. |

Ibn Ezra, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni all agree that the Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanites and not allow any to remain alive in their land. Targum emphasizes that the Lord will deliver the enemies before the Israelites, who must follow the commandments given to them.

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| חִזְק֣וּ וְאִמְצ֔וּ אַל־תִּֽירְא֥וּ וְאַל־תַּעַרְצ֖וּ מִפְּנֵיהֶ֑ם כִּ֣י ׀ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֗יךָ ה֚וּא הַהֹלֵ֣ךְ עִמָּ֔ךְ לֹ֥א יַרְפְּךָ֖ וְלֹ֥א יַעַזְבֶֽךָּ׃ | 6 | Be strong and resolute, be not in fear or in dread of them; for it is indeed your God יהוה who marches with you: [God] will not fail you or forsake you. |

Various commentators, including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Haamek Davar, Siftei Chakhamim, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz, interpret Deuteronomy 31:6 as emphasizing God’s presence and support in battle, providing mental fortitude, protection, and not abandoning the people. The text emphasizes relying on God rather than material possessions, strengthening character traits, and reinforcing trust in God through memory joggers and constant reminders of mitzvot. In the Midrash, the Levites serve God in battle, with the Lord going before them. Ramban and Rabbeinu Bahya offer different perspectives on why Moses feared Og, with one focusing on Og’s merits and the other on his longevity. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan convey the message of God’s presence and support in Deuteronomy 31:6.

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| וַיִּקְרָ֨א מֹשֶׁ֜ה לִיהוֹשֻׁ֗עַ וַיֹּ֨אמֶר אֵלָ֜יו לְעֵינֵ֣י כׇל־יִשְׂרָאֵל֮ חֲזַ֣ק וֶאֱמָץ֒ כִּ֣י אַתָּ֗ה תָּבוֹא֙ אֶת־הָעָ֣ם הַזֶּ֔ה אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר נִשְׁבַּ֧ע יְהֹוָ֛ה לַאֲבֹתָ֖ם לָתֵ֣ת לָהֶ֑ם וְאַתָּ֖ה תַּנְחִילֶ֥נָּה אוֹתָֽם׃ | 7 | Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: “Be strong and resolute, for it is you who shall go with this people into the land that יהוה swore to their fathers to give them, and it is you who shall apportion it to them. |

Moses appoints Joshua as the leader of Israel, emphasizing strength and courage, with God instructing Joshua to lead alone, highlighting the importance of assertiveness in leadership. Moses charges Joshua to be strong in Torah and good deeds, while also discussing the timing of tithing festivals. God chooses Joshua as the leader of the Israelites, giving him authority to lead and instructing him to seek guidance from the Urim through Eleazar the priest. (Numbers 27:15-23)

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| וַיהֹוָ֞ה ה֣וּא ׀ הַהֹלֵ֣ךְ לְפָנֶ֗יךָ ה֚וּא יִהְיֶ֣ה עִמָּ֔ךְ לֹ֥א יַרְפְּךָ֖ וְלֹ֣א יַעַזְבֶ֑ךָּ לֹ֥א תִירָ֖א וְלֹ֥א תֵחָֽת׃ | 8 | And it is indeed יהוה who will go before you. [God] will be with you—and will not fail you or forsake you. Fear not and be not dismayed!” |

In Chasidut, the Ba’al Shem Tov teaches that God is always present and will never abandon or distance oneself, as seen in Deuteronomy 31:8 and emphasized in the Targum’s translation. In the Commentary, Moses reassures Joshua that God will go ahead of the Israelites and be with him, giving him the strength and authority needed to lead. In the Tanakh, the priests holding the Ark allowed the people to cross the Jordan quickly after receiving God’s instructions from Joshua. The Targum further emphasizes God’s support and presence, encouraging Joshua to not fear or be dismayed.

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| וַיִּכְתֹּ֣ב מֹשֶׁה֮ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָ֣ה הַזֹּאת֒ וַֽיִּתְּנָ֗הּ אֶל־הַכֹּֽהֲנִים֙ בְּנֵ֣י לֵוִ֔י הַנֹּ֣שְׂאִ֔ים אֶת־אֲר֖וֹן בְּרִ֣ית יְהֹוָ֑ה וְאֶל־כׇּל־זִקְנֵ֖י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 9 | Moses wrote down this Teaching and gave it to the priests, sons of Levi, who carried the Ark of יהוה’s Covenant, and to all the elders of Israel. |

Moses wrote the entire Torah and gave it to the priests and elders of Israel, who carried and interpreted it, with the Torah scroll passed to the king for public reading. The Mishna establishes that a priest should read first followed by a Levite during Torah readings, based on Deuteronomy 31:9. The Targum confirms that Moses gave the Torah to the kohanim and elders of Israel, emphasizing the importance of the priests and Levites in carrying out this duty.

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| וַיְצַ֥ו מֹשֶׁ֖ה אוֹתָ֣ם לֵאמֹ֑ר מִקֵּ֣ץ ׀ שֶׁ֣בַע שָׁנִ֗ים בְּמֹעֵ֛ד שְׁנַ֥ת הַשְּׁמִטָּ֖ה בְּחַ֥ג הַסֻּכּֽוֹת׃ | 10 | And Moses instructed them as follows: Every seventh year, the year set for remission, at the Feast of Booths, |

The festival of Succot during the Shemittah year emphasizes the insignificance of man’s actions compared to God’s will, with the commandment to read the Torah every seven years during Sukkot reinforcing the importance of Torah study. The Israelites were instructed to set up stones inscribed with the words of the Torah upon entering the promised land, and the Jewish people are commanded to gather after every Sabbatical year to hear Torah passages. King Agrippa would read specific sections of Deuteronomy during Sukkot, causing tears to flow from his eyes. The Gemara questions the exemption of women from positive, time-bound mitzvot, and explains that the years of produce are determined by the first third of their growth based on a verse linking the Sabbatical Year with Sukkot. In Exodus, it is advised to let the land rest every seventh year, and to rest on the seventh day, allowing animals and slaves to refresh themselves. Moshe commanded the people to gather during the Shemittah year at the feast of Tabernacles.

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| בְּב֣וֹא כׇל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל לֵֽרָאוֹת֙ אֶת־פְּנֵי֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ בַּמָּק֖וֹם אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִבְחָ֑ר תִּקְרָ֞א אֶת־הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֛את נֶ֥גֶד כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל בְּאׇזְנֵיהֶֽם׃ | 11 | when all Israel comes to appear before your God יהוה in the place that [God] will choose, you shall read this Teaching aloud in the presence of all Israel. |

The commandment for Joshua to read the Torah publicly before all of Israel was given in Deuteronomy 31:11, with specific instructions detailed in Treatise Sotah 41a. The Hak’hel ceremony cannot be fulfilled nowadays due to the Temple’s ruins, and all men are obligated to appear before God on festivals except for certain exemptions. The Torah’s teachings are universal and consistent for all, regardless of age or wisdom, as stated in Devarim 31:12 and 31:11. Women, the deaf, and others are exempt from specific religious obligations based on their physical or health status, as specified in Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate Kaspa 4:8. The defeat of the Canaanite nations and the commandment for every male Israelite to write a copy of the Torah emphasize the importance of learning and internalizing its teachings, as explained by the Arizal. The reading of the king on the last day of Tabernacles, the exemption of women from the mitzva of appearance on pilgrimage festivals, and the disagreement between the Rabbis and Rebbi Yose regarding Aaron’s sons’ coats are all discussed in various Talmudic texts.

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| הַקְהֵ֣ל אֶת־הָעָ֗ם הָֽאֲנָשִׁ֤ים וְהַנָּשִׁים֙ וְהַטַּ֔ף וְגֵרְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בִּשְׁעָרֶ֑יךָ לְמַ֨עַן יִשְׁמְע֜וּ וּלְמַ֣עַן יִלְמְד֗וּ וְיָֽרְאוּ֙ אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֔ם וְשָֽׁמְר֣וּ לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֶת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֖י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּֽאת׃ | 12 | Gather the people—men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere your God יהוה and to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching. |

Prayer should be done in the presence of the congregation, as stated in Numbers 20:8 and Deuteronomy 31:12, emphasizing the importance of communal prayer including men, women, and children who gather to listen, learn, and observe Torah commandments. The Torah should be read before all of Israel during the Festival of Sukkot every seven years, including men, women, children, and strangers. Specific texts are read on different holidays to commemorate events and emphasize the importance of Torah study for both men and women. The importance of fearing the Lord, humility, and following the teachings of one’s teachers are emphasized in Kabbalah and Jewish Thought. The Midrash highlights the significance of learning from the wise and following the decrees of the righteous. The Talmud discusses the obligation of women in assembly and the importance of learning and teaching Torah. The Hak’hel ceremony was meant to include everyone, regardless of gender, age, or social status, to ensure equal access to education and the opportunity to follow community traditions. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan stress the importance of assembling all people to hear and learn to fear God and fulfill the Torah, including men, women, infants, converts, and sojourners. Rabbi Yochanan ben Berokah and Rabbi Elazar ben Hisma discuss the teachings of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah on the commandment of Hakhel, emphasizing the reward for bringing children to learn and God’s love for Israel.

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| וּבְנֵיהֶ֞ם אֲשֶׁ֣ר לֹא־יָדְע֗וּ יִשְׁמְעוּ֙ וְלָ֣מְד֔וּ לְיִרְאָ֖ה אֶת־יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם כׇּל־הַיָּמִ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתֶּ֤ם חַיִּים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתֶּ֜ם עֹבְרִ֧ים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֛ן שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 13 | Their children, too, who have not had the experience, shall hear and learn to revere your God יהוה as long as they live in the land that you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. |

Children too young to understand the Torah are present at the assembly to instill a fear of God from an early age, rewarding those who bring them and ensuring the transmission of the Torah to the next generation. The Torah reading cycle is completed every seven years at the Hakhel gathering, where all of Israel, including men, women, and children, hear the Torah read aloud to encourage faith, reverence, Torah study, and mitzva observance. Men are obligated to perform all mitzvot of a son with regard to his father, while women are exempt, but both are obligated to perform all mitzvot of a father with regard to his son. The covenant at Sinai included all people, emphasizing universal citizenship and rights, reflected in the mitzva of Hak’hel where all members of society, including women, were assembled to renew the covenant with God. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan emphasize the importance of children learning to fear and respect God while living in the land they are inheriting.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֗ה הֵ֣ן קָרְב֣וּ יָמֶ֘יךָ֮ לָמוּת֒ קְרָ֣א אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁ֗עַ וְהִֽתְיַצְּב֛וּ בְּאֹ֥הֶל מוֹעֵ֖ד וַאֲצַוֶּ֑נּוּ וַיֵּ֤לֶךְ מֹשֶׁה֙ וִיהוֹשֻׁ֔עַ וַיִּֽתְיַצְּב֖וּ בְּאֹ֥הֶל מוֹעֵֽד׃ | 14 | יהוה said to Moses: The time is drawing near for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him. Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting. |

God instructs Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor, symbolizing the passing of authority in the Tent of Meeting. Moses shows love for Joshua by willingly passing on his office, highlighting the importance of avoiding envy and jealousy. The Creator determines the length of each person’s life, with the fear of the Lord potentially extending it. Moses was forewarned of his death, allowing time for preparation. God holds Moses accountable for his lack of faith and acknowledgment of His power. Various commentators discuss the significance of Moses and Joshua entering the Tent of Meeting together, the power of charity in extending life, and the influence of prayer on outcomes. Rabbi Ḥanin derives the number five from a verse indicating Moses’ impending death, while the Targum emphasizes the pattern of righteous figures being informed of their approaching death and appointing successors.

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| וַיֵּרָ֧א יְהֹוָ֛ה בָּאֹ֖הֶל בְּעַמּ֣וּד עָנָ֑ן וַֽיַּעֲמֹ֛ד עַמּ֥וּד הֶעָנָ֖ן עַל־פֶּ֥תַח הָאֹֽהֶל׃ | 15 | יהוה appeared in the Tent, in a pillar of cloud, the pillar of cloud having come to rest at the entrance of the tent. |

The pillar of cloud at the entrance of the Tent signified God’s presence, allowing Moses to communicate with Joshua and emphasizing Joshua’s lower prophetic status. The clouds of glory were associated with Aaron as the connection between God and Israel. Musar emphasizes the importance of destroying lust to prevent sinful behavior. Radak, Ramban, and Targum discuss the significance of God’s presence in the cloud at the Sanctuary and the role of free choice in controlling actions.

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| וַיֹּ֤אמֶר יְהֹוָה֙ אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֔ה הִנְּךָ֥ שֹׁכֵ֖ב עִם־אֲבֹתֶ֑יךָ וְקָם֩ הָעָ֨ם הַזֶּ֜ה וְזָנָ֣ה ׀ אַחֲרֵ֣י ׀ אֱלֹהֵ֣י נֵכַר־הָאָ֗רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֨ר ה֤וּא בָא־שָׁ֙מָּה֙ בְּקִרְבּ֔וֹ וַעֲזָבַ֕נִי וְהֵפֵר֙ אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֔י אֲשֶׁ֥ר כָּרַ֖תִּי אִתּֽוֹ׃ | 16 | יהוה said to Moses: You are soon to lie with your ancestors. This people will thereupon go astray after the alien gods in their midst, in the land that they are about to enter; they will forsake Me and break My covenant that I made with them. |

Chasidut discusses Moshe embodying the three Patriarchs in the future resurrection, emphasizing the concept of “one is maintained by three.” Commentary highlights the unique and divine nature of the Land of Israel, emphasizing the importance of following God’s commandments there. Halakhah emphasizes human free will in choosing to follow God’s ways, despite God’s decrees. Jewish Thought discusses the threat of punishment for idolatry and the importance of God’s presence with the Israelites in the desert. Midrash discusses vows and dedication to the Temple, contrasting Solomon with his father David. Quoting Commentary emphasizes the holiness of the Land of Israel and the need to observe laws strictly. Talmud discusses resurrection and divine knowledge, with Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥananya explaining these concepts to the Romans. Targum predicts Moshe’s death and the people turning to foreign idols, forsaking the covenant with God.

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| וְחָרָ֣ה אַפִּ֣י ב֣וֹ בַיּוֹם־הַ֠ה֠וּא וַעֲזַבְתִּ֞ים וְהִסְתַּרְתִּ֨י פָנַ֤י מֵהֶם֙ וְהָיָ֣ה לֶאֱכֹ֔ל וּמְצָאֻ֛הוּ רָע֥וֹת רַבּ֖וֹת וְצָר֑וֹת וְאָמַר֙ בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֔וּא הֲלֹ֗א עַ֣ל כִּי־אֵ֤ין אֱלֹהַי֙ בְּקִרְבִּ֔י מְצָא֖וּנִי הָרָע֥וֹת הָאֵֽלֶּה׃ | 17 | Then My anger will flare up against them, and I will abandon them and hide My countenance from them. They shall be ready prey; and many evils and troubles shall befall them. And they shall say on that day, “Surely it is because our God is not in our midst that these evils have befallen us.” |

Chasidut discusses how moderation in eating affects the hiding or revealing of God’s countenance, with excess leading to concealment. Halakhah states that bad events are actions by God as a result of sin, highlighting the consequences of separation from God. Jewish Thought emphasizes divine presence and protection, while Kabbalah discusses neglecting Torah study leading to spiritual consequences. Midrash warns against the dangers of idol worship and adultery, and Musar stresses the importance of recognizing sins and repenting to avoid harsher punishment. Talmud mentions God hiding His face from the Jewish people due to their sins, while Targum describes the consequences of God forsaking and hiding His presence from the people.

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| וְאָנֹכִ֗י הַסְתֵּ֨ר אַסְתִּ֤יר פָּנַי֙ בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֔וּא עַ֥ל כׇּל־הָרָעָ֖ה אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֑ה כִּ֣י פָנָ֔ה אֶל־אֱלֹהִ֖ים אֲחֵרִֽים׃ | 18 | Yet I will keep My countenance hidden on that day, because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods. |

The text discusses the contrast between the redemptions of Egypt and Purim, highlighting the hiddenness of the Purim miracle and the importance of recognizing spiritual illness for healing. Various commentaries explore God hiding His face as a response to idol worship and the Israelites’ actions, with implications for the length of exile. The Purim story reflects a time of Divine Presence concealment during exile, with the erasure of Amalek linked to the number of words in the Torah and verses in the Scroll of Esther. The Midrash discusses trouble in various historical periods, attributing calamities to leaders’ actions, and the Talmud finds allusions to Esther and Mordecai in specific Torah verses. Additionally, both Targums explain divine withdrawal as punishment for Israel’s sins.

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| וְעַתָּ֗ה כִּתְב֤וּ לָכֶם֙ אֶת־הַשִּׁירָ֣ה הַזֹּ֔את וְלַמְּדָ֥הּ אֶת־בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל שִׂימָ֣הּ בְּפִיהֶ֑ם לְמַ֨עַן תִּֽהְיֶה־לִּ֜י הַשִּׁירָ֥ה הַזֹּ֛את לְעֵ֖ד בִּבְנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 19 | Therefore, write down this poem and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, in order that this poem may be My witness against the people of Israel. |

Moses and Joshua wrote the song of Haazinu for the Israelites to recite with song and psalm, with Moses ensuring the proper writing, teaching, and recitation of the condensed poetic description of Israel’s history. The Torah commands Jewish men to write a Torah scroll for themselves, with Torah study essential for all, and the Gemara providing clarity on laws and mitzvot. Joining a community and living according to the lessons of Sinai is crucial for sanctifying the Divine name, with Torah interpretations valued more than the original text. In the days of Moses, Torah was learned through repetition, with the Sages’ words considered as important as the Torah itself. The phrase “b’etzem” emphasizes the significance of specific days and observances, and Moses writing a song is interpreted as a command to write a Sefer Torah. Rosh ruled that every man in Israel should write a copy of the Pentateuch, Mishnah, Gemara, and Rashi’s commentary, in addition to a Sefer Torah, with achronim debating whether the commandment to write a Torah Scroll still applies. Rabbi Akiva teaches the obligation to teach Torah, the Gemara discusses Moses’ command to teach the Torah or just the song of Ha’azinu, and both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan explain that the song serves as a witness against the Israelites.

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| כִּֽי־אֲבִיאֶ֜נּוּ אֶֽל־הָאֲדָמָ֣ה ׀ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֣עְתִּי לַאֲבֹתָ֗יו זָבַ֤ת חָלָב֙ וּדְבַ֔שׁ וְאָכַ֥ל וְשָׂבַ֖ע וְדָשֵׁ֑ן וּפָנָ֞ה אֶל־אֱלֹהִ֤ים אֲחֵרִים֙ וַעֲבָד֔וּם וְנִ֣אֲצ֔וּנִי וְהֵפֵ֖ר אֶת־בְּרִיתִֽי׃ | 20 | When I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey that I promised on oath to their fathers, and they eat their fill and grow fat and turn to other gods and serve them, spurning Me and breaking My covenant, |

The text discusses how the Israelites will turn to idolatry, primarily serving Baalim, leading to God’s anger, but the Torah and song will guide them back to their duties and eventual spiritual resurrection. Satiety can lead to rebellion against God, as shown in Biblical examples. Rashi explains that God will accept prayers willingly like a fat burnt offering. The Book of Jubilees warns of the rebellious nature of the people before entering the promised land. The Talmud discusses laws regarding sancta during travel and tending the altar fire, while Rav Aḥa emphasizes the sin of filling one’s stomach. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan state that the Israelites will turn to idolatry after becoming satisfied and prosperous in the land of milk and honey.

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| וְ֠הָיָ֠ה כִּֽי־תִמְצֶ֨אןָ אֹת֜וֹ רָע֣וֹת רַבּוֹת֮ וְצָרוֹת֒ וְ֠עָנְתָ֠ה הַשִּׁירָ֨ה הַזֹּ֤את לְפָנָיו֙ לְעֵ֔ד כִּ֛י לֹ֥א תִשָּׁכַ֖ח מִפִּ֣י זַרְע֑וֹ כִּ֧י יָדַ֣עְתִּי אֶת־יִצְר֗וֹ אֲשֶׁ֨ר ה֤וּא עֹשֶׂה֙ הַיּ֔וֹם בְּטֶ֣רֶם אֲבִיאֶ֔נּוּ אֶל־הָאָ֖רֶץ אֲשֶׁ֥ר נִשְׁבַּֽעְתִּי׃ | 21 | and the many evils and troubles befall them—then this poem shall confront them as a witness, since it will never be lost from the mouth of their offspring. For I know what plans they are devising even now, before I bring them into the land that I promised on oath. |

Chasidut emphasizes Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai’s assurance that the Torah will not be forgotten by the Jewish people, connected to the Zohar’s promise of redemption. Halakhah stresses the importance of charity and lending to the poor, while Jewish Thought highlights the need for fear of God and seeking divine assistance for understanding. Midrash discusses the incompleteness of joy in the Creation story, Musar links Torah to the crown of Israel and the final redemption, and Quoting Commentary explores various interpretations of promises and metaphors in Torah texts. Talmud mentions Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai’s belief in the preservation of the Torah, criticism of Aḥaz for neglecting education, and concerns about troubles faced by the Jewish people. Tanakh notes God’s promise to never again destroy the earth due to human evil, and Targum discusses a song as a testimony to the Israelites’ actions.

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| וַיִּכְתֹּ֥ב מֹשֶׁ֛ה אֶת־הַשִּׁירָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֑וּא וַֽיְלַמְּדָ֖הּ אֶת־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 22 | That day, Moses wrote down this poem and taught it to the Israelites. |

Moses wrote a song in Deuteronomy to attract worthy gentiles to convert to Judaism, emphasizing the importance of helping these “sparks” of holy spirits among them. The song was written on the day of Moses’ death, with Joshua present, highlighting the importance of Torah knowledge and fidelity to God’s law. The final exile will lead to increased Torah study among the Jewish people. Moses chanted the song opposite all of Israel, with ten songs mentioned in the text. Ramban explains that both Moses and Joshua were commanded to write the Song of Ha’azinu, with Moses being the principal writer and teacher of the song. Moshe wrote a song of praise on that day and taught it to the children of Israel.

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| וַיְצַ֞ו אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁ֣עַ בִּן־נ֗וּן וַיֹּ֘אמֶר֮ חֲזַ֣ק וֶאֱמָץ֒ כִּ֣י אַתָּ֗ה תָּבִיא֙ אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אֶל־הָאָ֖רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּ֣עְתִּי לָהֶ֑ם וְאָנֹכִ֖י אֶהְיֶ֥ה עִמָּֽךְ׃ | 23 | And [God] charged Joshua son of Nun: “Be strong and resolute: for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them on oath, and I will be with you.” |

God commanded Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land, emphasizing His presence with Joshua. Joshua was instructed to be strong and courageous in the context of war, to consider the elders’ opinion, resist idolatrous practices, and lead the people into the land even against their will. Rabbi Yoḥanan explained that God established Joshua as the sole leader, emphasizing the need for a single leader for each generation. Joshua is reminded to be strong and resolute in apportioning the land promised to the people by their fathers, with God promising to be with him wherever he goes.

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| וַיְהִ֣י ׀ כְּכַלּ֣וֹת מֹשֶׁ֗ה לִכְתֹּ֛ב אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַתּוֹרָֽה־הַזֹּ֖את עַל־סֵ֑פֶר עַ֖ד תֻּמָּֽם׃ | 24 | When Moses had put down in writing the words of this Teaching to the very end, |

Moses wrote the Law and Song, commanded the priests to place the complete book by the side of the ark of the covenant, ensuring no additions or subtractions. The Torah scroll was placed inside the Holy Ark next to the Ten Commandments, with the Song serving as a witness. The Israelites sang ten songs in gratitude for ten miracles, including those in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and at the well. All 613 commandments are contained within the Ten Commandments, as the Torah scroll was written by Moshe and not Hashem. Moses finished writing the Torah in a book, completing the words of the law on parchment until they were finished.

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| וַיְצַ֤ו מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּ֔ם נֹ֥שְׂאֵ֛י אֲר֥וֹן בְּרִית־יְהֹוָ֖ה לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 25 | Moses charged the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of יהוה, saying: |

Moses commanded the Levites, specifically the kohanim, who were the bearers of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, not addressing the entire tribe of Levites who were prohibited from touching the ark. He also addressed the tribes of Gad and Reuven using the pronoun “you” instead of “them” to imply that his commandment applies to all the tribes, similar to how he addresses the Levites but speaks to the whole people. Ibn Ezra explains that this is because the tribes of Gad and Reuven are included among all of Israel, just as the Levites are. The Targum states that Moses commanded the Levites who were carrying the ark of Adonoy’s covenant.

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| לָקֹ֗חַ אֵ֣ת סֵ֤פֶר הַתּוֹרָה֙ הַזֶּ֔ה וְשַׂמְתֶּ֣ם אֹת֔וֹ מִצַּ֛ד אֲר֥וֹן בְּרִית־יְהֹוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֵיכֶ֑ם וְהָיָה־שָׁ֥ם בְּךָ֖ לְעֵֽד׃ | 26 | Take this book of Teaching and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of your God יהוה, and let it remain there as a witness against you. |

Different opinions exist regarding the exact placement of the Torah scroll, with some suggesting it was inside the Ark and others proposing it was next to it, while a Midrash recounts how Moses personally wrote multiple Torah scrolls for each tribe before depositing one in the Ark. Halakhah emphasizes respectful behavior towards a Torah scroll, including not spitting, undressing, or scuffing one’s feet in front of it, and sitting before it with the proper mindset, awe, and fear. The Rabbi explains that the Jewish people are like scattered limbs with a trace of vital power, better than lifeless bodies made of marble and plaster, with the root of all knowledge represented by the Ark and its contents. The Talmud presents different opinions on how the Torah was given and where the Torah scroll was placed near the Ark of the Covenant, with Rabbi Shimon arguing that the Torah was complete as is and dictated by God to Moses. Onkelos and Targum Jonathan discuss the placement of the Torah scroll as a witness against the people.

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| כִּ֣י אָנֹכִ֤י יָדַ֙עְתִּי֙ אֶֽת־מֶרְיְךָ֔ וְאֶֽת־עׇרְפְּךָ֖ הַקָּשֶׁ֑ה הֵ֣ן בְּעוֹדֶ֩נִּי֩ חַ֨י עִמָּכֶ֜ם הַיּ֗וֹם מַמְרִ֤ים הֱיִתֶם֙ עִם־יְהֹוָ֔ה וְאַ֖ף כִּי־אַחֲרֵ֥י מוֹתִֽי׃ | 27 | Well I know how defiant and stiffnecked you are: even now, while I am still alive in your midst, you have been defiant toward יהוה; how much more, then, when I am dead! |

Chasidut: Moshe’s prayer to enter the land of Israel elevated the prayers of the Children of Israel, serving as a fix for ineffective prayers and benefiting the people, even though it was not answered positively.

Commentary: Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim, Rav Hirsch, and Steinsaltz provide interpretations of Moses’ words in Deuteronomy, highlighting the ongoing struggle of the Israelites to maintain their connection with God and warning of future challenges to their faith.

Halakhah: Admonishment is crucial for repentance, and congregations are advised to appoint a respected sage to motivate the community towards Teshuvah. Five deeds can lock the paths of Teshuvah, including separating from the community and hating admonishment.

Midrash: Rabbi Yoḥanan lists ten deaths decreed for Moses, who prayed 515 times to enter the Land of Israel, engaging in a fierce struggle with the angel of death. The text also discusses the destruction of the Temple and presents a series of a fortiori inferences from biblical verses.

Quoting Commentary: Various interpretations of biblical verses in Exodus, Devarim, and Psalms are discussed, highlighting Moses’ warnings to the Israelites about past mistakes and future corruption, as well as his criticism and doubts about their future.

Targum: The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 31:27 emphasize the rebelliousness and stubbornness of the people towards God, with different versions mentioning defiers, obduracy, and worsening behavior after Moses’ death.

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| הַקְהִ֧ילוּ אֵלַ֛י אֶת־כׇּל־זִקְנֵ֥י שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֖ם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶ֑ם וַאֲדַבְּרָ֣ה בְאׇזְנֵיהֶ֗ם אֵ֚ת הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה וְאָעִ֣ידָה בָּ֔ם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וְאֶת־הָאָֽרֶץ׃ | 28 | Gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, that I may speak all these words to them and that I may call heaven and earth to witness against them. |

Chasidut emphasizes Bnei Yisrael’s testimony to Hashem’s power in creation and their role as protectors aligned with Shabbos. Moses did not use the trumpets on the day of his death, appointing Heaven and Earth as witnesses against the Israelites. Scribes follow traditional practices in Torah scroll layout not explicitly mentioned in the Talmud. Midrash texts discuss individual responsibility, repentance, and lack of control over death, while Rabbeinu Bahya and other commentaries interpret symbols like the Tablets of Testimony and trumpets made by Moses. Targum texts mention gathering judges and officers with heaven and earth as witnesses in Deuteronomy 31:28.

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| כִּ֣י יָדַ֗עְתִּי אַחֲרֵ֤י מוֹתִי֙ כִּֽי־הַשְׁחֵ֣ת תַּשְׁחִת֔וּן וְסַרְתֶּ֣ם מִן־הַדֶּ֔רֶךְ אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוִּ֖יתִי אֶתְכֶ֑ם וְקָרָ֨את אֶתְכֶ֤ם הָרָעָה֙ בְּאַחֲרִ֣ית הַיָּמִ֔ים כִּֽי־תַעֲשׂ֤וּ אֶת־הָרַע֙ בְּעֵינֵ֣י יְהֹוָ֔ה לְהַכְעִיס֖וֹ בְּמַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יְדֵיכֶֽם׃ | 29 | For I know that, when I am dead, you will act wickedly and turn away from the path that I enjoined upon you, and that in time to come misfortune will befall you for having done evil in the sight of יהוה, whom you vexed by your deeds. |

In Chasidut, evil individuals receive nurture and vitality from the sitra achara. Moses warned the Israelites of future corruption, particularly idolatry, to prevent them from straying. Halakhah details traditions for scribes writing Torah scrolls. Jewish Thought discusses reversibility of natural phenomena by God’s will and Moses’ unique relationship with God. Midrash reflects on corruption, idolatry, and Moses’ inability to enter the Land of Israel. Quoting Commentary includes interpretations from Sforno, Radak, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Hasagot HaRa’avad, and Or HaChaim. Tanakh mentions Israel serving God during Joshua’s time, while Targum predicts Israel’s corruption after Moses’ death.

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| וַיְדַבֵּ֣ר מֹשֶׁ֗ה בְּאׇזְנֵי֙ כׇּל־קְהַ֣ל יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַשִּׁירָ֖ה הַזֹּ֑את עַ֖ד תֻּמָּֽם׃ | 30 | Then Moses recited the words of this poem to the very end, in the hearing of the whole congregation of Israel: |

Moses recited a song/poem to the Israelites, known as Haazinu, which conveyed past, present, and future events with a focus on redemption from exile. He also set up family teaching and public reading of the Instruction every seven years, symbolizing a new stage in Israel’s history (Deuteronomy 31:1-30; Covenant and Conversation). The book of Devarim contains speeches where Moses taught the law and history to the Israelites before his death, ensuring they understood before entering the land of Israel (Covenant and Conversation Family Edition, V’Zot HaBerachah, I). Moses spoke the words of the song to the entire assembly of Israel until they were finished (Onkelos Deuteronomy 31:30, Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 31:30).

# **53**: האזינו|Ha’Azinu (Deuteronomy 32:1-52)

## Deuteronomy 32

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| הַאֲזִ֥ינוּ הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וַאֲדַבֵּ֑רָה וְתִשְׁמַ֥ע הָאָ֖רֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִֽי׃ | 1 | Give ear, O heavens, let me speak; Let the earth hear the words I utter! |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of connecting with both heavenly and earthly influences, as represented by Moses calling on the heavens and Isaiah calling on the earth to listen. Halakhah outlines specific traditions for Torah readings and scrolls to ensure accuracy and reverence. Jewish Thought discusses the connection between Israel and Divine Influence through laws like circumcision and the Sabbath. Midrash delves into various aspects of Moses’s interactions and the significance of inclining one’s ear to Torah. Quoting Commentary highlights the contrast between Israelites’ slavery in Egypt and their freedom, emphasizing the need for every Jew to write or take part in writing a sefer Torah. Talmud provides details on the recitation of the Song of Ha’azinu by the Levites in the Temple. Targum discusses Mosheh the prophet’s choice of witnesses and lists ten songs spoken by prophets and leaders in Israel’s history.

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| יַעֲרֹ֤ף כַּמָּטָר֙ לִקְחִ֔י תִּזַּ֥ל כַּטַּ֖ל אִמְרָתִ֑י כִּשְׂעִירִ֣ם עֲלֵי־דֶ֔שֶׁא וְכִרְבִיבִ֖ים עֲלֵי־עֵֽשֶׂב׃ | 2 | May my discourse come down as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, Like showers on young growth, Like droplets on the grass. |

Chasidut emphasizes the transformative power of Torah study and observance in connecting with God and awakening one’s inner potential, while also highlighting the importance of mitzvot and aligning oneself with divine will. Commentary discusses the impact of Torah teachings using similes like rain and dew to illustrate gradual nourishment and growth. Jewish Thought uses analogies to convey subtle understanding, while Midrash emphasizes the significance of rain in relation to righteousness and the Torah. Mishnah states the beloved nature of man and Israel due to being created in God’s image and called children of the All-Present. Quoting Commentary connects Torah teachings to various interpretations and concepts, and Talmud discusses the importance of rain and Torah, with different perspectives on their significance. Tanakh and Targum use imagery of rain and dew to describe the impact and nourishment of Torah teachings.

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| כִּ֛י שֵׁ֥ם יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶקְרָ֑א הָב֥וּ גֹ֖דֶל לֵאלֹהֵֽינוּ׃ | 3 | For the name of יהוה I proclaim; Give glory to our God! |

Chasidut describes how Moshe Rabeynu silenced external forces to bring Torah to Israel, Commentary emphasizes praising God through Torah study, Halakhah details various recitations and blessings in Jewish practice, Jewish Thought delves into different aspects of divine laws and offerings, Kabbalah warns about using the Name HaShem properly, Liturgy includes prayers honoring God’s greatness, Midrash explores blessings and unity among Israel, Musar discusses the origin of Man/Israel and God’s attributes, Quoting Commentary interprets various Biblical verses, Talmud discusses benedictions before Torah study and meals, and Targum explains Mosheh’s dedication before pronouncing the Holy Name.

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| הַצּוּר֙ תָּמִ֣ים פׇּֽעֳל֔וֹ כִּ֥י כׇל־דְּרָכָ֖יו מִשְׁפָּ֑ט אֵ֤ל אֱמוּנָה֙ וְאֵ֣ין עָ֔וֶל צַדִּ֥יק וְיָשָׁ֖ר הֽוּא׃ | 4 | The Rock!—whose deeds are perfect, Yea, all God’s ways are just; A faithful God, never false, True and upright indeed. |

Chasidut emphasizes attributing all actions to God and avoiding boasting, while avoiding philosophical works. Jewish Thought outlines divine laws and observances, emphasizing the importance of faith in God’s justice and moral actions. Kabbalah delves into the balance between judgment and mercy in divine justice, while Liturgy highlights the importance of observing the Sabbath. Midrash discusses God’s justice and inheritance, Musar emphasizes spiritual growth and avoiding lashon hara, and Quoting Commentary emphasizes God’s perfection and justice. Second Temple stresses the importance of faith, Talmud discusses divine justice and punishment, Tanakh describes God as perfect and just, and Targum describes God’s perfect works and judgment.

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| שִׁחֵ֥ת ל֛וֹ לֹ֖א בָּנָ֣יו מוּמָ֑ם דּ֥וֹר עִקֵּ֖שׁ וּפְתַלְתֹּֽל׃ | 5 | Unworthy children— That crooked, perverse generation— Their baseness has played God false. |

Chasidut emphasizes the necessity of moving to protect children’s lives. Commentary discusses how Israelites’ corruption is their own fault, not God’s, leading to them being viewed as not His children. Jewish Thought refutes the belief that evil outweighs good, attributing suffering to man’s actions. Kabbalah explains the Channel in God’s creative act, ensuring ultimate good. Midrash recounts instances of Israelites’ corruption and Moses interceding on their behalf. Musar stresses the importance of guarding speech and ears and the impact of neglecting mitzvot. Quoting Commentary references various interpretations of biblical verses. Second Temple discusses Lea and Rachel using handmaids to bear children. Tanakh states that God is not corrupt, but His children are described as crooked. Targum highlights the corruption and idol worship of the children.

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| הַ לְיְהֹוָה֙ תִּגְמְלוּ־זֹ֔את עַ֥ם נָבָ֖ל וְלֹ֣א חָכָ֑ם הֲלוֹא־הוּא֙ אָבִ֣יךָ קָּנֶ֔ךָ ה֥וּא עָשְׂךָ֖ וַֽיְכֹנְנֶֽךָ׃ | 6 | Do you thus requite יהוה, O dull and witless people? Is not this the Father who created you— Fashioned you and made you endure! |

Chasidut explains God’s relationship with Israel through metaphors of a father and father-in-law, emphasizing the human soul’s insignificance compared to God’s greatness. Commentary highlights Israel’s ingratitude and lack of wisdom towards God, emphasizing the importance of admonishment for repentance. Halakhah discusses actions that hinder repentance, stressing the necessity of rebukes for Teshuvah. Jewish Thought explores God’s rule through angels and the obligation of serving Him. Kabbalah delves into the role of angels in God’s actions and the creation of existence. Liturgy references Torah in the liturgy multiple times. Midrash discusses acknowledging God’s miracles and creations, human limitations compared to God, and the importance of humility. Musar teachings emphasize love for the Creator, repentance hindrances, honoring parents, and faith in God’s will. Quoting Commentary analyzes Moses’ call to the heavens and earth, focusing on God’s ownership and mastery over creation. Second Temple refers to the people as rebellious “bairns” who sin against God. Talmud stresses the importance of blessings, accuracy in Torah scrolls, and kashrut laws. Tanakh highlights God’s closeness to Israel and His role as Father and Redeemer. Targum emphasizes the foolishness of the people in repaying God for His goodness.

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| זְכֹר֙ יְמ֣וֹת עוֹלָ֔ם בִּ֖ינוּ שְׁנ֣וֹת דֹּר־וָדֹ֑ר שְׁאַ֤ל אָבִ֙יךָ֙ וְיַגֵּ֔דְךָ זְקֵנֶ֖יךָ וְיֹ֥אמְרוּ לָֽךְ׃ | 7 | Remember the days of old, Consider the years of ages past; Ask your parent, who will inform you, Your elders, who will tell you: |

Chasidut emphasizes studying Parshiot related to the Patriarchs to understand spiritual exchanges with God, while also discussing the symbolism of Chanukah in strengthening emuna and defeating Greek opposition to divine wisdom. Halakhah focuses on pausing Torah reading at rebuke verses and establishing safeguards, while also addressing kashrut of exotic animals. Jewish Thought stresses examining one’s matters, Halachah, and Aggadah, passing on stories to future generations, and understanding occurrences determined by Supreme Wisdom. Kabbalah highlights seeking answers from elders, while Midrash emphasizes consulting elders for counsel, love for the Torah, merit and punishment falling on specific days, and recalling past events of divine punishment. Quoting Commentary discusses G’d as the origin of manifestations, observing the Sabbath, Israel’s centrality in the universe, and wisdom that comes with age. Talmud delves into mitzvot of lighting Hanukkah candles, reciting blessings, and heeding Sages’ words, while Tanakh and Targum emphasize not dwelling on the past, calling on יהוה, mourning Elijah’s departure, and remembering history and seeking wisdom from elders and books.

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| בְּהַנְחֵ֤ל עֶלְיוֹן֙ גּוֹיִ֔ם בְּהַפְרִיד֖וֹ בְּנֵ֣י אָדָ֑ם יַצֵּב֙ גְּבֻלֹ֣ת עַמִּ֔ים לְמִסְפַּ֖ר בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 8 | When the Most High gave nations their homes And set the divisions of humanity, [God] fixed the boundaries of peoples In relation to Israel’s numbers. |

God created the world with the intention of bringing the Israelite nation into existence, with nations deriving their existence from blessings meant for Israel. The borders of nations are set according to the number of the children of Israel, with Israel being the main focus. The Torah was given to guide the world and was apportioned to the tribes of Israel since the confusion of languages. The seventy ministering angels are assigned portions on earth and in nations, with HaShem taking Jerusalem and the Jewish people as His portions. The Targum commentaries emphasize how God established the boundaries of nations based on the number of the Bnei Yisroel, highlighting the significance of the Israelites in the divine plan.

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| כִּ֛י חֵ֥לֶק יְהֹוָ֖ה עַמּ֑וֹ יַעֲקֹ֖ב חֶ֥בֶל נַחֲלָתֽוֹ׃ | 9 | For יהוה’s portion is this people; Jacob, God’s own allotment. |

Various commentaries, including Chasidut, Halakhah, Jewish Thought, Kabbalah, Liturgy, Midrash, Musar, and Second Temple texts, discuss the concept of Israel as chosen by God as His portion and inheritance, distinct from other nations. They highlight the importance of Torah, prayer, faith, repentance, and adherence to divine commandments in maintaining this special relationship, with references to Jacob and his descendants as the foundation of the House of Israel. The texts emphasize the unity and uniqueness of the Jewish people, their connection to God, and the significance of their role in the world. Additionally, Targum translations of Deuteronomy 32:9 reinforce the idea that Israel is the Lord’s portion and inheritance.

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| יִמְצָאֵ֙הוּ֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִדְבָּ֔ר וּבְתֹ֖הוּ יְלֵ֣ל יְשִׁמֹ֑ן יְסֹבְבֶ֙נְהוּ֙ יְב֣וֹנְנֵ֔הוּ יִצְּרֶ֖נְהוּ כְּאִישׁ֥וֹן עֵינֽוֹ׃ | 10 | [God] found them in a desert region, In an empty howling waste. [God] engirded them, watched over them, Guarded them as the pupil of God’s eye. |

Chasidut emphasizes Bnei Yisrael’s recognition of their need for something greater to receive the Torah, given in the wilderness to highlight the importance of fulfillment. God protected the Israelites in the desert, providing for their needs and surrounding them with His presence. The High Priest symbolizes sanctity and atonement through the Yom Kippur goats, while the Sefirot concept in Kabbalah distinguishes between Israel and the nations. The Midrash praises Israel for quickly assimilating the Torah at Mount Sinai, and various commentaries offer interpretations on different biblical passages. Yahweh guided the Israelites in the wilderness, and Targum highlights God’s provision and protection in the desolate land.

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| כְּנֶ֙שֶׁר֙ יָעִ֣יר קִנּ֔וֹ עַל־גּוֹזָלָ֖יו יְרַחֵ֑ף יִפְרֹ֤שׂ כְּנָפָיו֙ יִקָּחֵ֔הוּ יִשָּׂאֵ֖הוּ עַל־אֶבְרָתֽוֹ׃ | 11 | Like an eagle who rouses its nestlings, Gliding down to its young, So did [God] spread wings and take them, Bear them along on pinions; |

The text discusses the importance of tzitzit in protecting garments and serving as a safeguard for commandments, praising tzaddikim for elevating daat and the rectification of brit. God’s guidance is compared to an eagle with its young, emphasizing trust and faith. Prophecy must provide additional information, and rewards for fulfilling commandments are not revealed to prevent selective observance. The flags of the camps in the desert symbolized their characteristics, with Dan’s featuring an eagle for protection and speed. The Targum describes God’s protection of Israel as an eagle caring for its young.

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| יְהֹוָ֖ה בָּדָ֣ד יַנְחֶ֑נּוּ וְאֵ֥ין עִמּ֖וֹ אֵ֥ל נֵכָֽר׃ | 12 | יהוה alone did guide them, No alien god alongside. |

In various texts, including Chasidut, Liturgy, Musar, and Targum, the unique relationship between God and the Jewish people is emphasized, highlighting that Israel is led by God alone without the presence of foreign gods. This exclusivity is seen as a promise for the future, focusing on unity and reliance on God, with a special emphasis on the Land of Israel and the individual responsibility of each Israelite. Additionally, the importance of forbidden sexual relationships in the Land of Israel is discussed, as well as insights from various commentators on different verses and concepts in the Bible.

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| יַרְכִּבֵ֙הוּ֙ עַל־ אָ֔רֶץ וַיֹּאכַ֖ל תְּנוּבֹ֣ת שָׂדָ֑י וַיֵּנִקֵ֤הֽוּ דְבַשׁ֙ מִסֶּ֔לַע וְשֶׁ֖מֶן מֵחַלְמִ֥ישׁ צֽוּר׃ | 13 | [God] set them atop the highlands, To feast on the yield of the earth; Nursing them with honey from the crag, And oil from the flinty rock, |

Deuteronomy 32:13 metaphorically describes the blessings of the land of Israel, emphasizing the abundance of honey and oil. When reading Parashat Ha’azinu, the Torah reading is divided into sections that end with verses of rebuke to motivate repentance. The term “rakab” in Hebrew symbolizes dominion over the heavens, while the Jewish people ascend to the Unlimited One. In the Midrash, the Hebrew midwives were Yokheved and Miriam, with righteous women in Egypt being rewarded. The Levites recited the song of Ha’azinu in six sections during Shabbat offerings, and Abraham’s ten trials resulted in miracles for his children in Egypt. God instructed Moses to lead the Israelites to the promised land in Exodus 33:1.

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| חֶמְאַ֨ת בָּקָ֜ר וַחֲלֵ֣ב צֹ֗אן עִם־חֵ֨לֶב כָּרִ֜ים וְאֵילִ֤ים בְּנֵֽי־בָשָׁן֙ וְעַתּוּדִ֔ים עִם־חֵ֖לֶב כִּלְי֣וֹת חִטָּ֑ה וְדַם־עֵנָ֖ב תִּשְׁתֶּה־חָֽמֶר׃ | 14 | Curd of kine and milk of flocks; With the best of lambs, And rams of Bashan, and he-goats; With the very finest wheat— And foaming grape-blood was your drink. |

Chasidut explains the significance of the word “sutah” in Genesis 49:11 for Yehuda’s strength, Moshe’s use of Aramaic in Devarim 32:14, and the inner and external aspects represented by Moshe and Yaakov. Commentary offers various interpretations of Deuteronomy 32:14, with Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Rashbam, Rabbeinu Bahya, and Chizkuni providing insights. Halakhah discusses forbidden fats in sacrifices and the distinction between literal fat and choice portions. Jewish Thought clarifies King Solomon’s beliefs and the figurative language used in Scripture. Midrash predicts abundant crops in the future, symbolized by the offerings of the princes in the Tabernacle. Quoting Commentary provides insights from Ramban, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Gevia Kesef, Rashbam, and Bartenura. Talmud discusses future abundance in Eretz Yisrael and the rebuilding of the Temple. Tanakh mentions Solomon’s provisions and descriptions in Genesis 49:11 and Amos 6:4-6. Targum emphasizes the blessings for observing the law in Deuteronomy 32:14.

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| וַיִּשְׁמַ֤ן יְשֻׁרוּן֙ וַיִּבְעָ֔ט שָׁמַ֖נְתָּ עָבִ֣יתָ כָּשִׂ֑יתָ וַיִּטֹּשׁ֙ אֱל֣וֹהַּ עָשָׂ֔הוּ וַיְנַבֵּ֖ל צ֥וּר יְשֻׁעָתֽוֹ׃ | 15 | So Jeshurun grew fat and kicked— You grew fat and gross and coarse — They forsook the God who made them And spurned the Rock of their support. |

Chasidut recommends eating lean animal meat and drinking olive oil for conception, focusing on Torah to subdue physical desires and find happiness. Commentary discusses Israel’s deviation from spiritual teachings and the consequences of neglecting Torah. Halakhah emphasizes the importance of righteousness and repentance, while Jewish Thought delves into the song of Moshe and neglecting spiritual duties for material wealth. Kabbalah warns against becoming wealthy and denying God, while Midrash highlights rebellion due to satiety. Musar stresses the need to control desires and focus on repentance, while Quoting Commentary explores various interpretations of biblical texts. Second Temple discusses forsaking God for material pleasures, Talmud links the sin of the Golden Calf to riches, and Tanakh describes rebellion and consequences. Targum highlights Israel’s rebellion, wealth, and abandonment of God.

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| יַקְנִאֻ֖הוּ בְּזָרִ֑ים בְּתוֹעֵבֹ֖ת יַכְעִיסֻֽהוּ׃ | 16 | They incensed [God] with alien things, Vexed [God] with abominations. |

The text from Deuteronomy 32:16 discusses how the Israelites provoked God with abominable deeds such as idolatry, pederasty, and sorcery, leading to His anger and jealousy. The Midrash explores the severe punishment for idol worship and licentiousness, contrasting forgiveness for idol worship with harsh consequences for violating interpersonal laws. The Targum commentaries emphasize that the people incited God’s anger through idol worship and abominable actions.

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| יִזְבְּח֗וּ לַשֵּׁדִים֙ לֹ֣א אֱלֹ֔הַּ אֱלֹהִ֖ים לֹ֣א יְדָע֑וּם חֲדָשִׁים֙ מִקָּרֹ֣ב בָּ֔אוּ לֹ֥א שְׂעָר֖וּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶֽם׃ | 17 | They sacrificed to demons, no-gods, Gods they had never known, New ones, who came but lately, Who stirred not your forebears’ fears. |

Various commentaries explore the concept of idol worship among the Israelites, describing how they sacrificed to non-deities and demons in hopes of gaining favor, but these beings were ultimately powerless and not truly feared. The worship of spirits and idols extended to imaginary entities, illustrating the futility of such practices. Additionally, the Targum commentaries emphasize the worthlessness and instability of the idols worshipped by the Israelites.

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| צ֥וּר יְלָדְךָ֖ תֶּ֑שִׁי וַתִּשְׁכַּ֖ח אֵ֥ל מְחֹלְלֶֽךָ׃ | 18 | You neglected the Rock who begot you, Forgot the God who labored to bring you forth. |

The text explores concepts related to Jewish history and theology, including miracles, redemption, and the destruction of the Second Temple, emphasizing the relationship between human actions and divine intervention. It discusses the consequences of forgetting God, the importance of repentance and spiritual growth, and the impact of Israel’s sins on their relationship with God, as well as the significance of historical events like the fifteenth of Av and the destruction of Beitar on Jewish identity and religious observance. The text also touches on themes of pride, humility, and the need for spiritual rectification in the face of worldly temptations, citing various commentaries and sources from Chasidut, Jewish Thought, Kabbalah, Midrash, Musar, Quoting Commentary, Talmud, Tanakh, and Targum.

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| וַיַּ֥רְא יְהֹוָ֖ה וַיִּנְאָ֑ץ מִכַּ֥עַס בָּנָ֖יו וּבְנֹתָֽיו׃ | 19 | יהוה saw and was vexed And spurned these sons and daughters. |

The wickedness of women in the generation of the destruction of the First Temple led to God’s anger and the refinement of their character in exile. Fear of God is essential for lasting Torah study, with Torah compared to a son and fear to a daughter. The song of Moshe (Ha’azinu) hints at the future resurrection of the Israelite people and explores God’s attributes and man’s imperfection. In Midrash, Resh Lakish consoles R. Chiya b. Abba after a tragedy, cautioning against inviting misfortune with ominous words. Performing mitzvot brings goodness, while transgressions can lead to punishment, but repentance removes them from God’s view. Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Rashi, and Ramban offer interpretations of Deuteronomy 32:19 regarding the writing of the song of Haazinu. In Targum, God’s anger is provoked by His beloved children, who are referred to as sons and daughters.

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| וַיֹּ֗אמֶר אַסְתִּ֤ירָה פָנַי֙ מֵהֶ֔ם אֶרְאֶ֖ה מָ֣ה אַחֲרִיתָ֑ם כִּ֣י ד֤וֹר תַּהְפֻּכֹת֙ הֵ֔מָּה בָּנִ֖ים לֹא־אֵמֻ֥ן בָּֽם׃ | 20 | [God] said: I will hide My countenance from them, And see how they fare in the end. For they are a treacherous breed, Children with no loyalty in them. |

Various commentators discuss God’s decision to hide His face from the Israelites in Deuteronomy 32:20 due to their actions and lack of faithfulness. The fear of the Lord is crucial for safeguarding Torah and acts of lovingkindness, ensuring lasting impact through Torah study and good deeds. The Gaon of Vilna emphasized the importance of faithful prayer, while Kabbalah explains that God conceals His face when enclothed in physical garments. In Selichot prayers, there is a plea for forgiveness and a question of why God hides during times of trouble. In the Midrash, R. Meir interprets names to discern one’s nature, while R. Meir, R. Juda, and R. Jose pay attention to names for signs of wickedness. Rabbi Meir’s interpretation in the Talmud highlights the eternal bond between God and His people.

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| הֵ֚ם קִנְא֣וּנִי בְלֹא־אֵ֔ל כִּעֲס֖וּנִי בְּהַבְלֵיהֶ֑ם וַֽאֲנִי֙ אַקְנִיאֵ֣ם בְּלֹא־עָ֔ם בְּג֥וֹי נָבָ֖ל אַכְעִיסֵֽם׃ | 21 | They incensed Me with no-gods, Vexed Me with their futilities; I’ll incense them with a no-folk, Vex them with a nation of fools. |

The text discusses Israelites worshiping false gods, leading to punishment by nations like the Chaldeans and Edomites. Descriptions in the Torah are metaphorical, and God’s divinity is embodied in various ways. Rabbi Meir and Midrash texts highlight consequences of immoral actions and importance of repentance. Commentary from Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Ramban, and Talmudic interpretations provide insights into the text. Verses from Isaiah, Obadiah, and Psalms prophesy destruction and despise for nations like Edom. The Targum emphasizes Israel’s angering God through idol worship.

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| כִּי־אֵשׁ֙ קָדְחָ֣ה בְאַפִּ֔י וַתִּיקַ֖ד עַד־שְׁא֣וֹל תַּחְתִּ֑ית וַתֹּ֤אכַל אֶ֙רֶץ֙ וִֽיבֻלָ֔הּ וַתְּלַהֵ֖ט מוֹסְדֵ֥י הָרִֽים׃ | 22 | For a fire has flared in My wrath And burned to the bottom of Sheol, Has consumed the earth and its increase, Eaten down to the base of the hills. |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Chizkuni, and Rav Hirsch interpret the text as describing God’s burning anger consuming Jerusalem and punishing the people. Midrash teaches that studying the Torah prevents affliction and suffering, while neglecting it leads to suffering. Quoting commentary further emphasizes the importance of proper observance and honoring God to avoid severe punishment. Targum describes a powerful wind of fire destroying the earth and its produce.

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| אַסְפֶּ֥ה עָלֵ֖ימוֹ רָע֑וֹת חִצַּ֖י אֲכַלֶּה־בָּֽם׃ | 23 | I will sweep misfortunes on them, Use up My arrows on them: |

Various commentators explain that in Deuteronomy 32:23, the phrase “אספה” signifies the deployment of all punishments against the guilty, exhausting all arrows of punishment, emphasizing the severity and variety of disasters that will befall them. The text contrasts the destruction of the wicked with the resilience of the righteous, highlighting how God does not punish until a nation is destroyed. Israel’s survival is ensured by God’s unchanging nature, even in the face of punishment and anger. The cycle of judgment and vengeance reflects God’s ultimate justice, as seen in examples from Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Daniel. Ameimar from the Talmud explains that God does not repeatedly strike the Jewish people like other nations, ensuring they will not be completely destroyed despite being struck many times for their sins. The Targums on Deuteronomy 32:23 mention the idea of God bringing calamities or evil upon the people as a form of punishment.

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| מְזֵ֥י רָעָ֛ב וּלְחֻ֥מֵי רֶ֖שֶׁף וְקֶ֣טֶב מְרִירִ֑י וְשֶׁן־בְּהֵמֹת֙ אֲשַׁלַּח־בָּ֔ם עִם־חֲמַ֖ת זֹחֲלֵ֥י עָפָֽר׃ | 24 | Wasting famine, ravaging plague, Deadly pestilence, and fanged beasts Will I let loose against them, With venomous creepers in dust. |

Various commentators provide interpretations of different phrases in Deuteronomy 32:24, such as Rashi explaining “מזי רעב” as “hairy through hunger” and Rashbam describing “וקטב מרירי” as being stabbed by robbers. In Mishnah Eruvin 10:6, it is allowed to stand in one domain and drink in another, and in Musar, Torah study is seen as a way to dispel afflictions. Rabbi Yoḥanan warns against issuing halakhic rulings in front of one’s teacher in the Talmud, and in Tanakh, Leviticus 26:22 mentions the threat of wild beasts attacking the people. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 32:24 describes the punishment of the Israelites for their sins, including being sent into captivity and being attacked by various dangers.

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| מִחוּץ֙ תְּשַׁכֶּל־חֶ֔רֶב וּמֵחֲדָרִ֖ים אֵימָ֑ה גַּם־בָּחוּר֙ גַּם־בְּתוּלָ֔ה יוֹנֵ֖ק עִם־אִ֥ישׁ שֵׂיבָֽה׃ | 25 | The sword shall deal death without, As shall the terror within, To youth and maiden alike, The suckling as well as the aged. |

Rashi explains that the sword will destroy people outside the city, while terror will cause fear and death within homes, with all ages affected. Moses first spoke harshly to Israel, then consoled them with blessings, connecting the laws of jealousy in Numbers to idol worship and future retribution. Rabbeinu Bahya discusses a series of punishments for sins, including the destruction of the Holy Temple, emphasizing the importance of Torah study for the survival of the Torah. The Sages teach to limit time outside during a plague, as described in verses in Isaiah and Deuteronomy. Judah and the elders of Israel are depicted as worshiping false gods in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with the Targum translations emphasizing the widespread destruction by the sword.

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| אָמַ֖רְתִּי אַפְאֵיהֶ֑ם אַשְׁבִּ֥יתָה מֵאֱנ֖וֹשׁ זִכְרָֽם׃ | 26 | I might have reduced them to naught, Made their memory cease among humankind, |

Various commentators interpret the phrase “אמרתי אפאיהם” in Deuteronomy 32:26 differently, with Ramban, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Rashbam, and Rav Hirsch each offering their own explanations. The song of Moshe is divided into six parts, including allusions to the future redemption and resurrection of the Israelite people. The Selichot prayers on Erev Rosh Hashana seek mercy to prevent the nations from questioning God’s existence. The Midrash discusses the story of Haman plotting against the Jewish people, highlighting their resilience and divine protection. A disciple’s doubts about the Ramban’s claims were dispelled when the Ramban showed how the disciple’s name was hinted at in a verse from Parashas Ha’azinu. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem all describe God abandoning and destroying the people, eliminating their memory.

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| לוּלֵ֗י כַּ֤עַס אוֹיֵב֙ אָג֔וּר פֶּֽן־יְנַכְּר֖וּ צָרֵ֑ימוֹ פֶּן־יֹֽאמְרוּ֙ יָדֵ֣נוּ רָ֔מָה וְלֹ֥א יְהֹוָ֖ה פָּעַ֥ל כׇּל־זֹֽאת׃ | 27 | But for fear of the taunts of the foe, Their enemies who might misjudge And say, “Our own hand has prevailed; None of this was wrought by יהוה !” |

The text discusses the fear that the enemies of Israel will attribute their power to themselves and their gods, rather than to God, leading to misinterpretation by the gentiles. Midrash texts emphasize the significance of God’s voice in punishing enemies, the restraint of judgment as praise to God, and the naming of righteous individuals as an honor from God. Sforno, Tur HaArokh, and Ramban provide interpretations of specific commandments in Deuteronomy. The Talmud describes how the Levites recited the song of Ha’azinu in sections as part of Shabbat offerings, while the Targum emphasizes the danger of enemies attributing their success to their own strength rather than to God’s decree.

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| כִּי־ג֛וֹי אֹבַ֥ד עֵצ֖וֹת הֵ֑מָּה וְאֵ֥ין בָּהֶ֖ם תְּבוּנָֽה׃ | 28 | For they are a folk void of sense, Lacking in all discernment. |

In Likutei Moharan, it is explained that understanding is necessary to reveal counsel, as seen in the verse “The counsels in man’s heart are deep waters, yet a man of understanding can draw them out.” Without understanding, counsel is lost, as shown in the statement “For they are a nation devoid of counsel, and there is no understanding among them.” The enemies of Israel are described as lacking understanding of God’s actions and punishment and failing to recognize the role of God in Israel’s fate. Different commentators interpret the lack of counsel among the nations in various ways, with some focusing on the lack of wisdom and others highlighting the failure of the Jewish people to heed God’s guidance.

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| ל֥וּ חָכְמ֖וּ יַשְׂכִּ֣ילוּ זֹ֑את יָבִ֖ינוּ לְאַחֲרִיתָֽם׃ | 29 | Were they wise, they would think upon this, Gain insight into their future: |

The commentaries on Deuteronomy 32:29 highlight that misfortunes and victories are due to God’s punishment and divine intervention. In Mishnah Ketubot 1:7, Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Eliezer accept a woman’s claim of hymen rupture by wood, while Rabbi Yehoshua requires proof. The Targums on Deuteronomy 32:29 stress the importance of wisdom and understanding the law. In Kabbalah, the Divine quality of Kingship-Malchut is special to Yehudah, and in Musar, humility, remembrance of death, and accountability before God are essential to avoid sin and pride. Rashi, Siftei Chakhamim, Or HaChaim, and Rabbeinu Bahya provide insights on various biblical verses.

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| אֵיכָ֞ה יִרְדֹּ֤ף אֶחָד֙ אֶ֔לֶף וּשְׁנַ֖יִם יָנִ֣יסוּ רְבָבָ֑ה אִם־לֹא֙ כִּֽי־צוּרָ֣ם מְכָרָ֔ם וַֽיהֹוָ֖ה הִסְגִּירָֽם׃ | 30 | “How could one have routed a thousand, Or two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, יהוה had given them up?” |

The text discusses how God’s punishment led to Israelites being pursued by their enemies, the promises of the Torah will be fulfilled in the future, the Almighty is the origin of all things, and the importance of humility in divine favor. Additionally, the Midrash highlights David’s humility, Abraham’s choice between Gehenna and exile, and Jerusalem’s ultimate comfort. Rashi explains Dan’s vengeance against the Philistines, Siftei Chakhamim discusses the proportion of non-Jews pursuing and killing Jews, and the Talmud recounts the disagreement over Bar Koziba being the Messiah. The Targum emphasizes the importance of God’s presence in defeating enemies.

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| כִּ֛י לֹ֥א כְצוּרֵ֖נוּ צוּרָ֑ם וְאֹיְבֵ֖ינוּ פְּלִילִֽים׃ | 31 | For their rock is not like our Rock, In our enemies’ own estimation. |

Rashi explains that judgments should only be brought before Israel and not idolaters, as doing so would profane the name of God and give honor to idolatry. Jewish lawsuits should not be brought before gentile courts, even if they rule in a manner consistent with Jewish law, as it implies the superiority of what they worship. Litigants in Israel should not turn to idolatrous judges for decisions, as it renounces God and Israel’s law. The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 32:31 emphasize that while the idols of other nations are not comparable to the Almighty God of Israel, when the people of Israel sin, they face punishment from God.

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| כִּֽי־מִגֶּ֤פֶן סְדֹם֙ גַּפְנָ֔ם וּמִשַּׁדְמֹ֖ת עֲמֹרָ֑ה עֲנָבֵ֙מוֹ֙ עִנְּבֵי־ר֔וֹשׁ אַשְׁכְּלֹ֥ת מְרֹרֹ֖ת לָֽמוֹ׃ | 32 | Ah! The vine for them is from Sodom, From the vineyards of Gomorrah; The grapes for them are poison, A bitter growth their clusters. |

Various commentators explain in Deuteronomy 32:32:1 that idolaters lack counsel and understanding, contrasted with Israel’s ability to produce good fruit. Midrash texts warn against the dangers of overindulging in wine and compare people’s behavior to that of Sodom. Musar teachings connect Noach’s indulgence in wine to Adam’s downfall and discuss the regulations for the Nazirite. Quoting commentary highlights interpretations of biblical verses by Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Siftei Chakhamim, and Rashbam. The Second Temple text uses imagery of the vine of Sodom to warn against drunkenness. The Talmud advises reciting specific verses to prevent negative outcomes in dreams, while the Tanakh recounts the story of Lot and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Targum translations of Deuteronomy 32:32 emphasize the wickedness of idolaters compared to the people of Sodom.

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| חֲמַ֥ת תַּנִּינִ֖ם יֵינָ֑ם וְרֹ֥אשׁ פְּתָנִ֖ים אַכְזָֽר׃ | 33 | Their wine is the venom of asps, The pitiless poison of vipers. |

The venom of serpents symbolizes the cruel punishment of the wicked by a merciless enemy during exile, while the snake in the Garden of Eden represents temptation and disobedience, associated with craftiness and chaos. Hypocrites who make mistakes in Torah learning will wither like grass, leading to intentional sin and spiritual destruction, warning against associating with the ignorant. Noach’s failure to fully restore mankind’s stature due to excessive wine consumption is similar to Adam’s sin, leading to a debasement of spirituality. Psalms 140:4 refers to spider venom, and Proverbs 12:10 emphasizes compassion towards animals. The Targums on Deuteronomy 32:33 compare the people’s wine to serpent venom and malice to cruel reptiles.

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| הֲלֹא־ה֖וּא כָּמֻ֣ס עִמָּדִ֑י חָת֖וּם בְּאוֹצְרֹתָֽי׃ | 34 | Lo, I have it all put away, Sealed up in My storehouses, |

God is aware of the actions of Israel’s enemies and has stored up the consequences of their deeds for a future day of judgment, with punishment being a well-guarded secret known only to Him. The concept of retribution for sin is emphasized, with the idea that sins are recorded and pending retribution, not forgotten, leading to continued wrongdoing if one believes their sins are discarded. The Mishnah states that while everything is predetermined, individuals still have free will, and outcomes are based on one’s actions. The Talmud discusses interpretations of various phrases, while the Targum mentions that the deeds of the wicked are known and stored for judgment day.

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| לִ֤י נָקָם֙ וְשִׁלֵּ֔ם לְעֵ֖ת תָּמ֣וּט רַגְלָ֑ם כִּ֤י קָרוֹב֙ י֣וֹם אֵידָ֔ם וְחָ֖שׁ עֲתִדֹ֥ת לָֽמוֹ׃ | 35 | To be My vengeance and recompense, At the time that their foot falters. Yea, their day of disaster is near, And destiny rushes upon them. |

Various commentaries on Deuteronomy 32:35 offer interpretations of God’s vengeance and recompense, emphasizing the impending punishment for the wicked and the reward for the righteous. The Jewish Thought commentary discusses the role of individuals in hastening the Redemption, while the Midrash highlights the sanctification of the month, the significance of the shofar blast, and the coming judgment on the nations. The Mishnah discusses prohibited actions before gentile festivals, and the Musar commentary emphasizes repentance and understanding the consequences of sin. Quoting commentaries delve into God’s acts of kindness and judgment, the use of the term “festivals,” and prophecies by Balaam and Moses. In the Talmud, rabbis engage in discussions on various religious and legal topics, while the Targum emphasizes God’s role in avenging the wicked and rewarding the righteous.

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| כִּֽי־יָדִ֤ין יְהֹוָה֙ עַמּ֔וֹ וְעַל־עֲבָדָ֖יו יִתְנֶחָ֑ם כִּ֤י יִרְאֶה֙ כִּֽי־אָ֣זְלַת יָ֔ד וְאֶ֖פֶס עָצ֥וּר וְעָזֽוּב׃ | 36 | For יהוה will vindicate God’s people And take revenge for God’s servants, Upon seeing that their might is gone, And neither bond nor free is left. |

Chasidut emphasizes waking up at midnight to connect with Hashem through the good point in each Jew, as seen in Chazal’s discussion on the moment of midnight and Moshe’s disclosure of redemption. David HaMelekh’s praise at midnight is explained by his knowledge, symbolized by the harp above his bed, and the importance of charity in Israel’s redemption is stressed. Halakhah states that out of the sixty commandments, forty-six are obligatory for women, with specific mnemonics for the commandments they must follow and those they are exempt from. Liturgy focuses on repentance, seeking alignment with God’s will, and overcoming struggles against impurity and exile. Midrash discusses God’s joy in punishing nations and careful consideration when judging the righteous, as indicated in Proverbs and Devarim. Musar highlights that both good deeds and suffering for Torah observance will hasten redemption, as explained in the Torah portion of Ha’azinu. Quoting commentary from various sources, including Ramban, Rashi, and Rashbam, provides insights on biblical verses and prophecies. Responsa explain the uncertainty of determining the date of the Redemption and the Messiah’s arrival, cautioning against miscalculations and dismissing astrology’s influence. In the Second Temple period, the brothers facing torture find comfort in God’s kindness, as expressed in Deuteronomy. The Talmud links the arrival of the Messiah to various signs among the Jewish people. Tanakh describes God’s mercy and vengeance on Zion, with the holy people’s power being restored after a specific time. Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 32:36 discuss God’s judgment on Israel with mercy and reconsideration of punishment for his servants.

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| וְאָמַ֖ר אֵ֣י אֱלֹהֵ֑ימוֹ צ֖וּר חָסָ֥יוּ בֽוֹ׃ | 37 | [God] will say: Where are their gods, The rock in whom they sought refuge, |

The text discusses the mocking question about the whereabouts of Israel’s God and the contrast between Israel’s trust in God as a rock of protection and the ineffectiveness of false gods worshipped by the people. In the Liturgy, the Torah passage Deuteronomy 32:37 is referenced in the Seder Ma’amadot 5:8. The Midrash predicts disrespect between generations, rebellion within families, and an increase in insolence and lack of respect before the arrival of the Messiah, noting the Divine Presence’s withdrawal due to arrogance and idol worship. Abarbanel explains in Joel 2:15-17 the significance of blowing a shofar in Zion as a warning of an impending enemy attack and a plea for mercy from Hashem. The Torah commands not to destroy the corners of the beard, questioning where one’s King and strength are. Psalms 79:10 and 115:2 emphasize the importance of God avenging the spilled blood of His servants to show His presence and power to the nations. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 32:37 highlight the questioning of the strength and reliability of idols or false gods trusted by the Israelites. In the Talmud, Titus is identified as the wicked individual who insulted and blasphemed God.

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| אֲשֶׁ֨ר חֵ֤לֶב זְבָחֵ֙ימוֹ֙ יֹאכֵ֔לוּ יִשְׁתּ֖וּ יֵ֣ין נְסִיכָ֑ם יָק֙וּמוּ֙ וְיַעְזְרֻכֶ֔ם יְהִ֥י עֲלֵיכֶ֖ם סִתְרָֽה׃ | 38 | Who ate the fat of their offerings And drank their libation wine? Let them rise up to your help, And let them be a shield unto you! |

The text emphasizes the contrast between the powerlessness of false idols and the protection offered by the one true God, with a focus on the mockery of Israel’s enemies towards their belief in a single deity. The prohibition against drinking wine used for idolatrous libations is derived from Deuteronomy 32:38 and is considered a negative commandment with severe consequences. The song of Moshe (Ha’azinu) is divided into six parts, focusing on God’s favors, the people’s sins, punishments, destruction, and future redemption of Israel. R. Ahawa bar Ze’era discusses the significance of actions and outcomes, contrasting Titus entering the Holy of Holies peacefully with Aaron’s sons being destroyed by fire. Noach’s attempt to restore mankind’s stature through circumcision and wine consumption is marred by debauchery, leading to his downfall. The Gemara discusses the prohibition of benefiting from blood poured before idolatry and the prohibition of wine belonging to gentiles. Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and Targum Jerusalem emphasize divine intervention and protection for those who consumed sacrifices and libations.

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| רְא֣וּ ׀ עַתָּ֗ה כִּ֣י אֲנִ֤י אֲנִי֙ ה֔וּא וְאֵ֥ין אֱלֹהִ֖ים עִמָּדִ֑י אֲנִ֧י אָמִ֣ית וַאֲחַיֶּ֗ה מָחַ֙צְתִּי֙ וַאֲנִ֣י אֶרְפָּ֔א וְאֵ֥ין מִיָּדִ֖י מַצִּֽיל׃ | 39 | See, then, that I, I am the One; There is no god beside Me. I deal death and give life; I wounded and I will heal: None can deliver from My hand. |

Chasidut emphasizes aligning with Divine attributes to reveal God’s glory, achieve complete teshuva, and elevate beyond the Sefirot. Commentary underscores God’s power over life and death, healing, and salvation. Halakhah connects prayer for healing to biblical verses, while Jewish Thought discusses sacrifices, fear of God, and divine presence. Kabbalah delves into the Cause of Causes, Sefirot, and God’s control over existence. Midrash explores prayer, divine knowledge, resurrection, and respect for leaders. Musar discusses the influence of patriarchs’ merit, belief in resurrection, and denial’s consequences. Quoting Commentary provides interpretations from various commentators. Second Temple discusses clear intuition of God’s existence and mastery of dreams. Talmud resolves contradictions regarding God’s abilities and merit transfer between generations. Tanakh describes God’s wrath and people’s unfaithfulness. Targum emphasizes God’s exclusive power over life and death, smiting, and healing, with no other gods beside Him.

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| כִּֽי־אֶשָּׂ֥א אֶל־שָׁמַ֖יִם יָדִ֑י וְאָמַ֕רְתִּי חַ֥י אָנֹכִ֖י לְעֹלָֽם׃ | 40 | Lo, I raise My hand to heaven And say: As I live forever, |

Chasidut emphasizes raising hands in holiness to draw divine blessings, connecting it to purification and divine providence. Commentary discusses God’s oath-taking gesture of raising his hand to heaven as a symbol of swearing and divine justice. Halakhah recommends starting and ending Torah readings with positive matters, except in cases like Parashat Ha’azinu. Jewish Thought highlights the unity and attributes of God, emphasizing praise and trust in His eternal nature. Midrash explains the significance of standing positions in Psalms and God’s oath due to lack of faith. Quoting Commentary includes interpretations of God’s oath and actions in various biblical verses. Targum interprets God’s declaration of eternal life and existence in different contexts.

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| אִם־שַׁנּוֹתִי֙ בְּרַ֣ק חַרְבִּ֔י וְתֹאחֵ֥ז בְּמִשְׁפָּ֖ט יָדִ֑י אָשִׁ֤יב נָקָם֙ לְצָרָ֔י וְלִמְשַׂנְאַ֖י אֲשַׁלֵּֽם׃ | 41 | When I whet My flashing blade And My hand lays hold on judgment, Vengeance will I wreak on My foes, Will I deal to those who reject Me. |

Chasidut explains the protection of the tzaddik from the evil eye and the significance of “yad” and “name” in relation to the Sabbath. Commentary discusses the anthropomorphic language in the Torah and the symbolism of covering bread during blessings. Jewish Thought explores the abstract nature of God and the symbolism of the sanctuary. Midrash emphasizes the importance of justice in divine and human judgment. Musar discusses the concept of litigants before God and their connection to Deuteronomy 32:41. Quoting Commentary highlights God’s vengeance on the Egyptians and the Levites’ rituals in the Temple. Tanakh portrays God’s anger towards nations at ease, and Targum emphasizes the sharpened sword of God for judgment and vengeance.

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| אַשְׁכִּ֤יר חִצַּי֙ מִדָּ֔ם וְחַרְבִּ֖י תֹּאכַ֣ל בָּשָׂ֑ר מִדַּ֤ם חָלָל֙ וְשִׁבְיָ֔ה מֵרֹ֖אשׁ פַּרְע֥וֹת אוֹיֵֽב׃ | 42 | I will make My arrows drunk with blood— As My sword devours flesh— Blood of the slain and the captive From the long-haired enemy chiefs. |

Chasidut explains that enemies sustain themselves from extraneous elements in the mind, which when consumed, lead to their downfall. Halakhah uses metaphoric imagery to describe God’s attributes, while Midrash discusses God’s presence for Israel’s protection and judgment on idolaters. Commentary and quoting commentary provide interpretations of biblical verses related to God’s punishment and protection. In the Talmud, Court decisions made with effort are upheld, showing the importance of exertion. Targum emphasizes God’s punishment on those who harm His people.

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| הַרְנִ֤ינוּ גוֹיִם֙ עַמּ֔וֹ כִּ֥י דַם־עֲבָדָ֖יו יִקּ֑וֹם וְנָקָם֙ יָשִׁ֣יב לְצָרָ֔יו וְכִפֶּ֥ר אַדְמָת֖וֹ עַמּֽוֹ׃ | 43 | O nations, acclaim God’s people! For He’ll avenge the blood of His servants, Wreak vengeance on His foes, And cleanse His people’s land. |

The text discusses how Israel will be praised for their loyalty to God, who will avenge their blood and render vengeance to their adversaries, with the land serving as atonement. Living in Eretz Yisrael leads to forgiveness of sins, and burial there brings atonement. The Liturgy includes prayers for remembrance and vengeance of Jewish martyrs, and the Talmud discusses the use of Aramaic words in the Torah. The Targum versions of Deuteronomy 32:43 emphasize the nations praising God for avenging the blood of His servants and bringing justice to His enemies.

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| וַיָּבֹ֣א מֹשֶׁ֗ה וַיְדַבֵּ֛ר אֶת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַשִּׁירָֽה־הַזֹּ֖את בְּאׇזְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם ה֖וּא וְהוֹשֵׁ֥עַ בִּן־נֽוּן׃ | 44 | Moses came, together with Hosea son of Nun, and recited all the words of this poem in the hearing of the people. |

Moses appointed Joshua as his successor, ensuring his humility by referring to him as Hoshea, with the Torah mentioning them together to transfer authority publicly. The Mishneh Torah outlines scribe traditions for Torah scrolls, the role of a spokesman in teaching Torah, and the importance of attributing teachings to the original sage. In Sifrei Devarim 334:1, Moses’ authority is transferred to Joshua as his time ends. Ramban explains the Song of Ha’azinu written by Moses and Joshua, serving as a testimony of Israel’s history and future redemption. God instructs Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor in Numbers 27:18. Hoshe’a assists Moses in reciting the song in the tabernacle, and the Tosefta states that repetition of names in the Tanach praises individuals like Avraham, Yehoshua, and Moshe, expressing love and encouragement.

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| וַיְכַ֣ל מֹשֶׁ֗ה לְדַבֵּ֛ר אֶת־כׇּל־הַדְּבָרִ֥ים הָאֵ֖לֶּה אֶל־כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 45 | And when Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, |

Moses concluded his speech to the Israelites, as stated in the Targum.

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| וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֲלֵהֶם֙ שִׂ֣ימוּ לְבַבְכֶ֔ם לְכׇ֨ל־הַדְּבָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֧ר אָנֹכִ֛י מֵעִ֥יד בָּכֶ֖ם הַיּ֑וֹם אֲשֶׁ֤ר תְּצַוֻּם֙ אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶ֔ם לִשְׁמֹ֣ר לַעֲשׂ֔וֹת אֶת־כׇּל־דִּבְרֵ֖י הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּֽאת׃ | 46 | he said to them: Take to heart all the words with which I have warned you this day. Enjoin them upon your children, that they may observe faithfully all the terms of this Teaching. |

The importance of attentively focusing on the words of the Torah, passing down teachings to future generations, understanding the deeper meanings of Torah stories, and the significance of garments as symbols of character traits and moral conditions are emphasized in the commentary, Jewish Thought, and Midrash. Rashi discusses the identification of Ibzan as Boaz and the divine intervention in Ruth 4:13, while Targum highlights Moses instructing the Israelites to focus on and teach the Torah to fulfill its commands.

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| כִּ֠י לֹֽא־דָבָ֨ר רֵ֥ק הוּא֙ מִכֶּ֔ם כִּי־ה֖וּא חַיֵּיכֶ֑ם וּבַדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּ֗ה תַּאֲרִ֤יכוּ יָמִים֙ עַל־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אַתֶּ֜ם עֹבְרִ֧ים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּ֛ן שָׁ֖מָּה לְרִשְׁתָּֽהּ׃ | 47 | For this is not a trifling thing for you: it is your very life; through it you shall long endure on the land that you are to possess upon crossing the Jordan. |

Chasidut emphasizes that studying the Torah’s esoteric dimension is crucial for a deeper understanding, while Halakhah stresses the importance of following all Torah commandments for life. Jewish Thought highlights the Torah’s purpose of providing guidance and rewards, and Kabbalah questions the negative effects of toiling in vain. The Midrash warns against reading the Sh’ma in filthy places and emphasizes the Torah’s significance, while Musar underscores the need to fulfill all Torah words for the soul’s completeness. Quoting Commentary discusses the lessons of repentance from the red heifer legislation and the hidden wisdom in Torah narratives, and the Talmud delves into various decrees and teachings on impurity, rewards for careful speech, and helping others with mitzvot. The Targum translations stress the essential nature of the Torah for life and longevity.

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| וַיְדַבֵּ֤ר יְהֹוָה֙ אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֔ה בְּעֶ֛צֶם הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּ֖ה לֵאמֹֽר׃ | 48 | That very day יהוה spoke to Moses: |

The phrase “בעצם היום הזה” signifies a decisive action in broad daylight, emphasizing the importance and inevitability of events. Moses’ unique relationship with God allowed him to communicate directly without needing advance knowledge, unlike other prophets like Bileam. The phrase is used to show that God’s will cannot be stopped by human interference, as seen in instances like Noach entering the ark and the Israelites leaving Egypt. Ramban and Radak explain the significance of the phrase in various contexts, while Targum Jonathan specifies the timing of God speaking to Moses.

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| עֲלֵ֡ה אֶל־הַר֩ הָעֲבָרִ֨ים הַזֶּ֜ה הַר־נְב֗וֹ אֲשֶׁר֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מוֹאָ֔ב אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־פְּנֵ֣י יְרֵח֑וֹ וּרְאֵה֙ אֶת־אֶ֣רֶץ כְּנַ֔עַן אֲשֶׁ֨ר אֲנִ֥י נֹתֵ֛ן לִבְנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל לַאֲחֻזָּֽה׃ | 49 | Ascend these heights of Abarim to Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab facing Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving the Israelites as their holding. |

Moses is instructed to go to Mount Nevo to see the land of Canaan, symbolizing the culmination of his leadership. He appoints Joshua as his successor before his death. Moses dies and is buried in the inheritance of the tribe of Gad, praised by angels and Israel for his justice. The Israelites travel to Iye-abarim, near the border of Moab. Moses calls upon Joseph’s spirit to reveal himself, comparing this event to Elisha making iron float, indicating his ability to bring up Joseph’s coffin.

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| וּמֻ֗ת בָּהָר֙ אֲשֶׁ֤ר אַתָּה֙ עֹלֶ֣ה שָׁ֔מָּה וְהֵאָסֵ֖ף אֶל־עַמֶּ֑יךָ כַּֽאֲשֶׁר־מֵ֞ת אַהֲרֹ֤ן אָחִ֙יךָ֙ בְּהֹ֣ר הָהָ֔ר וַיֵּאָ֖סֶף אֶל־עַמָּֽיו׃ | 50 | You shall die on the mountain that you are about to ascend, and shall be gathered to your kin, as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his kin; |

Moses is instructed by God to willingly prepare for death on Mount Nebo, similar to Aaron’s passing, in order to be gathered to his people and join the righteous in eternal life. Despite Moses’ desire to live, the angel of death insists on his passing, but through prayer and divine protection, Moses accepts his fate. The concept of being gathered to one’s people before death is explored through various interpretations, emphasizing the continuation of existence beyond the physical body and the importance of righteous individuals in Jewish thought and tradition.

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| עַל֩ אֲשֶׁ֨ר מְעַלְתֶּ֜ם בִּ֗י בְּתוֹךְ֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל בְּמֵֽי־מְרִיבַ֥ת קָדֵ֖שׁ מִדְבַּר־צִ֑ן עַ֣ל אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־קִדַּשְׁתֶּם֙ אוֹתִ֔י בְּת֖וֹךְ בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 51 | for you both broke faith with Me among the Israelite people, at the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, by failing to uphold My sanctity among the Israelite people. |

The Israelites broke faith with God at the Waters of Merivah in the wilderness of Tzin, resulting in Moses and Aaron being punished for not sanctifying God, leading to their denial of entry into the promised land. Moses’ failure to sanctify God by striking the rock instead of speaking to it caused consequences, emphasizing the imperfection of humans and the need to follow God’s commandments. The Shekhinah’s presence at the rock where Moses struck it led to consequences, and the Liturgy praises biblical figures for their faithful actions involving water, seeking salvation in their honor. The deaths of Moses and Aaron are discussed in the Midrash, with Moses not allowed to enter the Land of Israel due to the incident at the waters of dispute. Moses and Aaron’s failure to sanctify God’s name at the waters of Meribah resulted in missed opportunities to demonstrate God’s power, with differing interpretations on whether Moses sinned. Moses’ request to die like Aaron was denied, and his soul was stored under the Throne of Glory, while the Targum explains that their punishment was due to being unfaithful, rebellious, and not sanctifying God’s word at the Waters of Contention.

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| כִּ֥י מִנֶּ֖גֶד תִּרְאֶ֣ה אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְשָׁ֙מָּה֙ לֹ֣א תָב֔וֹא אֶל־הָאָ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִ֥י נֹתֵ֖ן לִבְנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 52 | You may view the land from a distance, but you shall not enter it—the land that I am giving to the Israelite people. |

The text discusses Moses breaking faith with God at the Waters of Merivah in the wilderness of Tzin, resulting in him being unable to enter the promised land. Despite Moses’ pleas and requests, God denies him entry, stating that he will not pass through the land alive or dead. Moses is allowed to see the land from a distance, but not enter it during his lifetime, with the promise of entering it beyond death. The Targum translations of Deuteronomy 32:52 also emphasize that Moses will see the land from afar, but not enter it.

# **54**: וזאת הברכה|V’Zot HaBerachah (Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12)

## Deuteronomy 33

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| וְזֹ֣את הַבְּרָכָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר בֵּרַ֥ךְ מֹשֶׁ֛ה אִ֥ישׁ הָאֱלֹהִ֖ים אֶת־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל לִפְנֵ֖י מוֹתֽוֹ׃ | 1 | This is the blessing with which Moses, God’s agent, bade the Israelites farewell before he died. |

Chasidut emphasizes the importance of humility and fear of the Creator, with Moshe Rabeynu having a unique connection to God that allowed him to speak mouth to mouth with Him. The main service to God is through fervent worship and Torah study done with love and reverence. Halakhah details the Torah portions read during Sukkot and Simchat Torah customs, while Kabbalah highlights the blessing bestowed by Moses on Israel and their connection to the divine. Midrash discusses the blessings given by patriarchs and prophets, with Moses blessing Israel with ‘zot’. Musar contrasts Moses with Noach in terms of their spiritual attainment and relationship with God. Responsa refutes claims linking verses in the Torah to Mohammed and emphasizes that the covenant and blessings are exclusively for the descendants of Isaac and Jacob. Second Temple texts describe Moses as a man of God known by different names based on his actions, while the Talmud outlines Torah readings and haftara during Sukkot. Tanakh highlights God’s direct communication with Moses, distinguishing him as a trusted servant. Targum commentaries focus on the blessing Moses gave to the children of Israel before his death, emphasizing his role as a prophet of God.

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| וַיֹּאמַ֗ר יְהֹוָ֞ה מִסִּינַ֥י בָּא֙ וְזָרַ֤ח מִשֵּׂעִיר֙ לָ֔מוֹ הוֹפִ֙יעַ֙ מֵהַ֣ר פָּארָ֔ן וְאָתָ֖ה מֵרִבְבֹ֣ת קֹ֑דֶשׁ מִימִינ֕וֹ לָֽמוֹ׃ | 2 | He said: יהוה came from Sinai, And shone upon them from Seir; [God] appeared from Mount Paran, And approached from Ribeboth-kodesh, Lightning flashing at them from [God’s] right. |

The text discusses the concealment of God’s essence to allow His creations to withstand His radiance, the offering of the Torah to all nations before being given to the Israelites, the significance of the right hand in Torah observance, the special status of the Jewish people, and the importance of humility in connecting with the Creator. It also explores the interaction of God with various nations, the balance of mercy and judgment in the Torah, the criteria for recognizing a true prophet, and the handling of the Torah scroll with respect. Divine punishment is discussed as being meted out measure-for-measure, while Divine beneficence is emphasized as being five hundred times greater, with the protection of God’s descendants mirroring Abraham’s actions towards his visitors.

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| אַ֚ף חֹבֵ֣ב עַמִּ֔ים כׇּל־קְדֹשָׁ֖יו בְּיָדֶ֑ךָ וְהֵם֙ תֻּכּ֣וּ לְרַגְלֶ֔ךָ יִשָּׂ֖א מִדַּבְּרֹתֶֽיךָ׃ | 3 | Lover, indeed, of the people, Their hallowed are all in Your hand. They followed in Your steps, Accepting Your pronouncements, |

The text discusses the concept of love and debt in relation to studying Torah, the unity in receiving Torah, the role of Torah scholars in embodying faith for the generation, and the ability of tzaddikim to share Torah’s light; Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Rashi, Sforno, Kitzur Ba’al HaTurim, Or HaChaim, Rashbam, Tze’enah Ure’enah, Chizkuni, Shemot Rabbah, Resh Lakish, Midrash Tanchuma, Musar, Tur HaArokh, Rabbeinu Bahya, Covenant and Conversation, Second Temple, Talmud, Targum.

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| תּוֹרָ֥ה צִוָּה־לָ֖נוּ מֹשֶׁ֑ה מוֹרָשָׁ֖ה קְהִלַּ֥ת יַעֲקֹֽב׃ | 4 | When Moses charged us with the Teaching As the heritage of the congregation of Jacob. |

Chasidut emphasizes Avram’s faith in God and Baal Shem Tov’s role in sharing Torah knowledge, while Halakhah discusses the crowns of Israel and the obligation to teach Torah. Jewish Thought highlights the deep connection between the Jewish people and Torah, while Kabbalah delves into the commandments and fear of the Lord. Liturgy praises the Torah as a tree of life, and Midrash symbolizes the acceptance of Torah by Israelites. Musar warns against seeking personal gratification from Torah study, and Quoting Commentary emphasizes the democratization of Torah knowledge. Talmud warns against causing embarrassment to those who cannot study Torah and states that Torah is an inheritance for the Jewish people, while Targum highlights the Torah as the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov.

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| וַיְהִ֥י בִישֻׁר֖וּן מֶ֑לֶךְ בְּהִתְאַסֵּף֙ רָ֣אשֵׁי עָ֔ם יַ֖חַד שִׁבְטֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 5 | Then [God] became King in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people assembled, The tribes of Israel together. |

The text emphasizes the importance of unity among the tribes of Israel, stating that Hashem was only considered King when they were united, with the unity and acceptance of God’s kingship being essential for the enduring blessing and success of the Jewish people. The Mishneh Torah states that the city of Jerusalem and the Temple Courtyard cannot be expanded without the consent of the king, a prophet, the Urim V’Tumim, and the Sanhedrin of 71 judges, emphasizing the need to correct sins like lashon hara for redemption to take place. Rabbi Yitzchak explains that the People of Israel have merited the kingdom by guarding the covenant, and the Liturgy highlights the significance of fulfilling God’s will and proclaiming His sovereignty throughout history for enhancing the kingdom of Hashem among the Jewish people.

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| יְחִ֥י רְאוּבֵ֖ן וְאַל־יָמֹ֑ת וִיהִ֥י מְתָ֖יו מִסְפָּֽר׃ | 6 | May Reuben live and not die, Though few be his numbers. |

In Mei HaShiloach, Moshe Rabeynu blessed Reuven with vivacity and joy in his heart, corresponding to Yaakov’s blessings of excess strength and dignity. Reciting Torah sections can mitigate harsh judgments. Moses prayed for Reuben to live and not die, referencing the sin of Baal-peor. Rava proves resurrection by referencing Moshe’s blessing to Reuben. Reuben’s sin with Bilha led to him losing the birthright, priesthood, and kingship, but through repentance, he was granted life. Jacob’s prayer for Reuben to “live and not die” is a plea for the continuation of goodness in his descendants. Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani connects Reuben’s and Judah’s blessings to life in this world and the World-to-Come, and resurrection of the dead. In Genesis 49:3, Jacob acknowledges Reuben’s status as the first-born. Reuvein is wished a long life and to avoid a second death in the Targum.

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| וְזֹ֣את לִיהוּדָה֮ וַיֹּאמַר֒ שְׁמַ֤ע יְהֹוָה֙ ק֣וֹל יְהוּדָ֔ה וְאֶל־עַמּ֖וֹ תְּבִיאֶ֑נּוּ יָדָיו֙ רָ֣ב ל֔וֹ וְעֵ֥זֶר מִצָּרָ֖יו תִּהְיֶֽה׃ | 7 | And this he said of Judah: Hear, יהוה, the voice of Judah And restore him to his people. Though his own hands strive for him, Help him against his foes. |

Chasidut: Moses blesses Shimon under Yehudah due to Shimon’s role in selling Joseph, while Levi is blessed for loyalty during the golden calf incident. Yehuda represents the heart of the Shechina, while Yosef spreads holiness. Commentary: Moses prays for Judah’s success in battle, alluding to Simeon’s blessing within Judah’s and highlighting the importance of acknowledging divine assistance in victories. Jewish Thought: David’s obedience and eagerness to build God’s temple are contrasted with Saul’s failure to follow divine guidance. Kabbalah: Yehuda embodies the Divine quality of Kingship, emphasizing purity and connection to the Above. Midrash: References to Judah’s confession, David’s learning, and Zevulun’s support of Torah scholars are discussed. Musar: Judah’s bones rolled due to lack of progress in studies, while David’s learning matched halachic decisions. Quoting Commentary: Various commentators provide insights on Judah’s confession, Reuben’s repentance, and God shining forth from Seir. Talmud: Judah’s confession and ability to study Torah are linked to Reuben’s confession, with Moses resolving Judah’s ostracism through prayers. Tanakh: Judah’s acknowledgment of Tamar’s righteousness, praise as a lion’s whelp, and challenges in battle are highlighted. Targum: The tribe of Judah is blessed for success in battle and protection against enemies.

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| וּלְלֵוִ֣י אָמַ֔ר תֻּמֶּ֥יךָ וְאוּרֶ֖יךָ לְאִ֣ישׁ חֲסִידֶ֑ךָ אֲשֶׁ֤ר נִסִּיתוֹ֙ בְּמַסָּ֔ה תְּרִיבֵ֖הוּ עַל־מֵ֥י מְרִיבָֽה׃ | 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 explains that the oil of the Chanukah lights symbolizes kindness and halakhot revealing the light of truth, with Levi signifying attachment to God. Commentary highlights the loyalty and dedication of the Levites, especially Aaron, in upholding Torah and executing God’s justice. Kabbalah emphasizes Aaron’s fitness for Temple service through his loyalty and commitment, leading to blessings. Liturgy describes the historical events and rituals in Jewish tradition. Midrash references Moses striking the rock for water. Musar connects the Tabernacle and Aaron to rehabilitation and loving-kindness. Quoting Commentary discusses the virtues of Yaakov, Moses, and Aaron, as well as the tribe of Levi’s commitment to Torah study. Second Temple commentary addresses the unity of Simeon and Levi. Tanakh stresses the importance of proper rulings and loyalty to God. Targum recounts Moses blessing the tribe of Levi for their devotion and faithfulness.

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| הָאֹמֵ֞ר לְאָבִ֤יו וּלְאִמּוֹ֙ לֹ֣א רְאִיתִ֔יו וְאֶת־אֶחָיו֙ לֹ֣א הִכִּ֔יר וְאֶת־בָּנָ֖ו לֹ֣א יָדָ֑ע כִּ֤י שָֽׁמְרוּ֙ אִמְרָתֶ֔ךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ֖ יִנְצֹֽרוּ׃ | 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. |

The tribe of Levi was blessed for their loyalty to God, demonstrated by their rejection of the golden calf and commitment to upholding the covenant and commandments, including circumcision. They were consecrated to serve as priests and were seen as qualitatively superior due to their ability to transcend human limitations and achieve a superior spiritual status. The Levites did not have inheritance of fields and vineyards like other tribes, but were given cities to dwell in and served as a royal guard for God, upholding sanctity and hereditary priesthood. Aaron merited the Urim and Thummim and the ability to perform Temple service by passing a test of disregarding his own family for the service of God, leading to blessings and enrichment in all worlds. The Levites were praised for their faithfulness to the covenant and circumcision, continuing to circumcise their children during the forty years in the desert, which saved the Israelites at crucial moments. The tribe of Levi was consecrated to serve in place of the first-born who failed to rally to Moses, demonstrating complete loyalty to God by rejecting the golden calf.

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| יוֹר֤וּ מִשְׁפָּטֶ֙יךָ֙ לְיַֽעֲקֹ֔ב וְתוֹרָתְךָ֖ לְיִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל יָשִׂ֤ימוּ קְטוֹרָה֙ בְּאַפֶּ֔ךָ וְכָלִ֖יל עַֽל־מִזְבְּחֶֽךָ׃ | 10 | They shall teach Your laws to Jacob And Your instructions to Israel. They shall offer You incense to savor And whole-offerings on Your altar. |

Chasidut explains how incense brings joy to the heart and nullifies the curse of having to work for sustenance. Halakhah details the Levites’ role in serving God and teaching Torah, while Jewish Thought emphasizes the importance of helping the poor and connecting leadership with Torah study. Kabbalah highlights the blessings and enrichment that come from proper service, and the Midrash stresses the significance of the tribe of Levi in upholding religious practices. The Talmud discusses the wealth of those who burn incense and the selection of priests through lotteries, and the Targum emphasizes the priests’ role in teaching the law and offering sacrifices.

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| בָּרֵ֤ךְ יְהֹוָה֙ חֵיל֔וֹ וּפֹ֥עַל יָדָ֖יו תִּרְצֶ֑ה מְחַ֨ץ מׇתְנַ֧יִם קָמָ֛יו וּמְשַׂנְאָ֖יו מִן־יְקוּמֽוּן׃ | 11 | Bless, יהוה, his substance, And favor his undertakings. Smite the loins of his foes; Let his enemies rise no more. |

Various commentators interpret the blessing on the tribe of Levi differently, focusing on aspects such as increase in possessions, protection from enemies, and acceptance of their work. The Levites did not receive a portion in the inheritance of Eretz Yisrael because they were set aside to serve God. In Kabbalah, reaching proper levels allows individuals to ascend to the service in the Temple and bring blessings and enrichment. The Mishnah discusses offering incense in the Temple as a desirable task bringing blessings, while emphasizing compassion towards the vulnerable. Rabbi Yehoshua validates offerings made by disqualified priests, and the Targums speak of blessing the wealth and offerings of Levi.

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| לְבִנְיָמִ֣ן אָמַ֔ר יְדִ֣יד יְהֹוָ֔ה יִשְׁכֹּ֥ן לָבֶ֖טַח עָלָ֑יו חֹפֵ֤ף עָלָיו֙ כׇּל־הַיּ֔וֹם וּבֵ֥ין כְּתֵפָ֖יו שָׁכֵֽן׃ | 12 | Of Benjamin he said: Beloved of יהוה, He rests securely beside [God], Who protects him always, As he rests between God’s shoulders. |

Chasidut highlights the special qualities of Rachel’s sons, Yosef and Binyamin, linked to Leah and the concept of luz. Commentary emphasizes Benjamin’s unique blessings, purity, and special relationship with God, with the future Temple in his land during the Messiah’s time. Halakhah discusses the interpretation of “ḥupah” for marriage, while Jewish Thought focuses on Benjamin’s significance in hosting the Temple. Midrash emphasizes Benjamin’s role in sanctifying the Holy Name and hosting the Shechina. Talmud discusses Benjamin’s desire to absorb a strip of land with the altar, hosting the Divine Presence in his territory. Targum mentions Mosheh blessing Benjamin for living securely with the Lord and having the Shekinah dwell among them.

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| וּלְיוֹסֵ֣ף אָמַ֔ר מְבֹרֶ֥כֶת יְהֹוָ֖ה אַרְצ֑וֹ מִמֶּ֤גֶד שָׁמַ֙יִם֙ מִטָּ֔ל וּמִתְּה֖וֹם רֹבֶ֥צֶת תָּֽחַת׃ | 13 | And of Joseph he said: Blessed of יהוה be his land With the bounty of dew from heaven, And of the deep that couches below; |

Moses blessed Joseph’s land with sweetness from heaven, dew, and groundwater, ensuring fertility and abundance due to Joseph’s righteousness and role as a provider, echoing Jacob’s blessing. The blessing represented balanced measures and was the most blessed land, ensuring crops even in drought. The blessings from heaven, the deep, and the earth were emphasized, with the Torah avoiding associating God with initiating disaster. Moses blessed the tribe of Joseph with abundant fruit from heaven, dew, rain, and deep waters.

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| וּמִמֶּ֖גֶד תְּבוּאֹ֣ת שָׁ֑מֶשׁ וּמִמֶּ֖גֶד גֶּ֥רֶשׁ יְרָחִֽים׃ | 14 | With the bounteous yield of the sun, And the bounteous crop of the moons; |

Chasidut emphasizes the influence of the stars and Mazal on individuals and objects, with the ability to direct inclinations towards holiness. Commentary discusses the sun’s influence on fruit ripening and the moon’s impact on moisture, highlighting the benefits for agriculture. Halakhah connects the commandment of offering sacrifices on Rosh Chodesh to the significant effects of the sun and moon on the world. Quoting commentary delves into the creation of vegetation on the third day and the symbolism of the garden in Eden. In Talmud, remedies for bulmos involve feeding sheep’s tail with honey and consuming fruits ripened by the sun. The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:14 emphasize the role of the sun and moon in producing bounteous harvests month after month.

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| וּמֵרֹ֖אשׁ הַרְרֵי־קֶ֑דֶם וּמִמֶּ֖גֶד גִּבְע֥וֹת עוֹלָֽם׃ | 15 | With the best from the ancient mountains, And the bounty of hills immemorial; |

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rabbeinu Bahya, Siftei Chakhamim, Steinsaltz, and Chizkuni discuss the blessings of early ripening fruits on the hills of Joseph in Deuteronomy 33:15. Radak, Rashbam, and Rabbeinu Bahya interpret the blessings of grapes and abundance in the land of Yehudah and Joseph in Genesis 49:11 and 49:26. The Talmud describes the locations of the Tabernacle and Temple in Benjamin’s territory, the pleasure of the Dweller in Joseph’s territory, and the altar on the border between Joseph and Benjamin. The Targums on Deuteronomy 33:15 attribute the abundance of the land to the blessings and merit of the patriarchs and matriarchs.

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| וּמִמֶּ֗גֶד אֶ֚רֶץ וּמְלֹאָ֔הּ וּרְצ֥וֹן שֹׁכְנִ֖י סְנֶ֑ה תָּב֙וֹאתָה֙ לְרֹ֣אשׁ יוֹסֵ֔ף וּלְקׇדְקֹ֖ד נְזִ֥יר אֶחָֽיו׃ | 16 | With the bounty of earth and its fullness, And the favor of the Presence in the Bush. May these rest on the head of Joseph, On the crown of the elect of his brothers. |

The text discusses the meeting of Hesed and Truth in the characters of Aaron and Moses, with Moses learning patience through the burning bush and blessing Joseph with the attribute of patience. Blessings upon the land of Joseph emphasize God’s goodwill and bounty, with insights into specific words and phrases provided by various commentators. The term “Shechinah” signifies God’s Divine Presence in a specific place or object. Benjamin’s sons were named based on the experience of his missing brother, Joseph’s bow symbolizes his passion, and Joseph reassures his brothers with gentle words. Joseph was blessed with good land for his righteousness, and the Divine Presence dwelt in the greatness of Joseph. Moses encounters a messenger of God at Mount Horeb in a burning bush, while Jacob blesses Joseph with surpassing blessings. The blessings and favor bestowed upon Joseph are emphasized in all three commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:16.

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| בְּכ֨וֹר שׁוֹר֜וֹ הָדָ֣ר ל֗וֹ וְקַרְנֵ֤י רְאֵם֙ קַרְנָ֔יו בָּהֶ֗ם עַמִּ֛ים יְנַגַּ֥ח יַחְדָּ֖ו אַפְסֵי־אָ֑רֶץ וְהֵם֙ רִבְב֣וֹת אֶפְרַ֔יִם וְהֵ֖ם אַלְפֵ֥י מְנַשֶּֽׁה׃ | 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 are the myriads of Ephraim, Those are the thousands of Manasseh. |

Chasidut emphasizes Yosef’s connection to inner intelligence and charity, while Moses blesses Joseph’s descendants for their military prowess. Halakhah details the requirements for a shofar on Rosh Hashanah, excluding cow horns. Jewish Thought discusses the role of Mashiach ben Yosef in Gog and Magog, and Kabbalah symbolizes the victory over Amalek with cow horns. Liturgy references Joseph as B’chor Shor in prayers for self-improvement, while Midrash discusses the division between light and darkness. Mishnah and Talmud address the suitability of shofarot and blessings of Joseph. Musar highlights the spiritual significance of Amaleik and the concept of “horns.” Ramban refutes theories about Simeon’s involvement in the sin of Baal-peor, and Tanakh mentions Moses transferring authority to Joshua. Targum speaks of the dominance and victory of Joseph’s descendants in battle.

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| וְלִזְבוּלֻ֣ן אָמַ֔ר שְׂמַ֥ח זְבוּלֻ֖ן בְּצֵאתֶ֑ךָ וְיִשָּׂשכָ֖ר בְּאֹהָלֶֽיךָ׃ | 18 | And of Zebulun he said: Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, And Issachar, in your tents. |

Zebulun is associated with business activity to support Issachar in Torah study, with both considered important. Torah study is prioritized in Halakhah, with support for scholars crucial. The partnership between Zebulun and Issachar in providing for Torah study is emphasized in Midrash and Musar, with blessings highlighting their collaboration. Commentary explains the blessings of Zebulun and Issachar, while Tanakh mentions Joseph presenting his brothers to Pharaoh. Targum emphasizes rejoicing in commerce and Torah study for Zebulun and Issachar.

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| עַמִּים֙ הַר־יִקְרָ֔אוּ שָׁ֖ם יִזְבְּח֣וּ זִבְחֵי־צֶ֑דֶק כִּ֣י שֶׁ֤פַע יַמִּים֙ יִינָ֔קוּ וּשְׂפֻנֵ֖י טְמ֥וּנֵי חֽוֹל׃ | 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. |

The tribes of Israel, particularly Zebulun and Issachar, will gather at Mount Moriah for festivals, with Zebulun drawing wealth from the seas for Torah study and having hidden treasures in the sand, potentially leading to conversions. The Hillazon and Amidah prayer are discussed in Halakhah, while Guide for the Perplexed explains the actions of incorporeal beings. Rabbi El’azar mentions seven seas in Kabbalah, the psalm of the sons of Korach emphasizes God’s sovereignty in Liturgy, and Midrash discusses Moses blessing Israel and Zebulun and Issachar’s partnership in Torah. Musar touches on the repair of the world and the consequences of separating from the community. Zebulun’s connection to the sea and hidden treasures is highlighted in a quote from Commentary, and in Talmud, God reassures Zebulun of the value of his territory. The Issacharites were skilled in interpreting signs in Tanakh, and Targum discusses the tribes gathering at the mountain of the sanctuary for offerings and utilizing resources from the sea and sands.

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| וּלְגָ֣ד אָמַ֔ר בָּר֖וּךְ מַרְחִ֣יב גָּ֑ד כְּלָבִ֣יא שָׁכֵ֔ן וְטָרַ֥ף זְר֖וֹעַ אַף־קׇדְקֹֽד׃ | 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. |

Moses blessed Gad for their enlarged territory towards the east, praising their strength and prowess in battle. The Midrash discusses Miriam’s sequestering, Moses’s burial, and Joseph’s selection of five men. The commentary on Genesis 49:19 and Deuteronomy 33:20 highlights Gad’s courage and military prowess, with the tribe known for their strength and bravery in defending their territory. The Reubenites and Gadites will lead Israel into battle, while Targum emphasizes Gad’s strength in defeating rulers and kings.

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| וַיַּ֤רְא רֵאשִׁית֙ ל֔וֹ כִּי־שָׁ֛ם חֶלְקַ֥ת מְחֹקֵ֖ק סָפ֑וּן וַיֵּתֵא֙ רָ֣אשֵׁי עָ֔ם צִדְקַ֤ת יְהֹוָה֙ עָשָׂ֔ה וּמִשְׁפָּטָ֖יו עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 21 | 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. |

Chasidut emphasizes the connection between charity and embracing mishpat, with references to Deuteronomy and Psalms. Commentary highlights the role of Moses and the tribe of Gad in fulfilling the righteousness of the Lord during the conquest of the land. Jewish Thought stresses the importance of keeping the Torah’s chukim for future generations and the merit of rectifying oneself and others. Kabbalah discusses the connection between the Father and the Righteous-One, ensuring the lowly do not return ashamed. Midrash recounts the story of Jonah being thrown into the sea and swallowed by a great fish. Mishnah contrasts the accountability of leading others to righteousness versus sin. Musar discusses Moses’ role in defeating adversaries of the Jewish people and the negative traits that led to the downfall of Korach and others. Quoting Commentary attributes righteousness to Moses and sin to Jeroboam. Talmud describes Moses’ burial place in the portion of Gad and his role as an inscriber of righteousness. Tanakh mentions the instructions for the fighting men to cross the Jordan armed. Targum discusses the burial plot of Moses and his righteous actions. Tosefta recounts Serakh informing Moses of Joseph’s burial and the thigh as the starting point of transgression.

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| וּלְדָ֣ן אָמַ֔ר דָּ֖ן גּ֣וּר אַרְיֵ֑ה יְזַנֵּ֖ק מִן־הַבָּשָֽׁן׃ | 22 | And of Dan he said: Dan is a lion’s whelp That leaps forth from Bashan. |

Dan is likened to a lion’s cub due to living near the border and exhibiting bravery and strength, with their tactics compared to those of lions attacking enemies. The tribe of Dan took portions in both the northwest and northeast regions, guarding the borders to prevent enemy forces from entering Israelite territory. In Midrash, Jacob’s sons are compared to wild beasts, emphasizing their strength and fierceness. Moses appointed judges to execute sinners, with Phineas taking action against those who worshipped Baal Peor. Moses blesses the tribe of Dan, describing their land as watered by streams from various locations.

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| וּלְנַפְתָּלִ֣י אָמַ֔ר נַפְתָּלִי֙ שְׂבַ֣ע רָצ֔וֹן וּמָלֵ֖א בִּרְכַּ֣ת יְהֹוָ֑ה יָ֥ם וְדָר֖וֹם יְרָֽשָׁה׃ | 23 | And of Naphtali he said: O Naphtali, sated with favor And full of יהוה’s blessing, Take possession on the west and south. |

The tribe of Naphtali was blessed with abundant land and early ripening fruit, symbolizing possession of treasures in both present and future worlds. The cup of blessing must be full, undiluted, and washed before being blessed, with water added at the blessing “ha-aretz.” The term “male” in Hebrew signifies completion and attainment of excellence, illustrated through biblical examples. The Torah is considered a blessing, symbolized by the letter ב, providing nourishment and guidance for inheriting both this world and the next. Rabbi Yochanan and R. Jose, son of R. Chanina, state that reciting a blessing over a full cup of wine results in a boundless inheritance in both worlds. Moses blessed the tribe of Naphtali with favor and blessings from the Lord, inheriting land near the Sea of Galilee and to the south.

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| וּלְאָשֵׁ֣ר אָמַ֔ר בָּר֥וּךְ מִבָּנִ֖ים אָשֵׁ֑ר יְהִ֤י רְצוּי֙ אֶחָ֔יו וְטֹבֵ֥ל בַּשֶּׁ֖מֶן רַגְלֽוֹ׃ | 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. |

The month of Shevat is associated with the Tribe of Asher, known for their abundance of olive oil symbolizing wisdom, with blessings from Moses in Genesis and Deuteronomy. Asher’s prosperity through olive oil made him well-liked by his brothers, reflected in the beauty and marriages of his daughters. The Midrash discusses various aspects of the tribes, highlighting Asher’s association with illumination and Dan with darkness. The tribe of Asher in the camp of Dan was blessed with many sons, possibly due to generosity in charity, with tithing related to unlimited blessings. Ramban, Kli Yakar, Rashbam, Radak, Rashi, and others elaborate on Asher’s blessings, emphasizing the abundance of olive trees and oil. The Talmud discusses Asher’s tribal portion and abundance of oil, as well as the number of nails permissible on shoes for decoration on the Sabbath. Mosheh blesses Asher’s tribe with many sons and favor from their brothers, with an abundance of olives and oil for bathing and nourishment.

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| בַּרְזֶ֥ל וּנְחֹ֖שֶׁת מִנְעָלֶ֑ךָ וּכְיָמֶ֖יךָ דׇּבְאֶֽךָ׃ | 25 | May your doorbolts be iron and copper, And your security last all your days. |

Chasidut emphasizes the connection between strength in youth and blessings in old age, as exemplified by Moshe Rabbeinu passing down wisdom to future generations. The blessing to the tribe of Asher promises security, prosperity, and strength, symbolized by protection from invaders and the flow of abundance even in old age. The Midrashic texts highlight the prosperity of Eretz Yisrael and the importance of Torah scholars in guiding others towards wisdom and life. In Talmud, the rules regarding wearing nail-studded work-boots on the Sabbath are discussed, with differing opinions on the number of nails considered a decoration. Targum texts emphasize the enduring strength and vitality of the tribe of Asher in old age compared to their youth.

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| אֵ֥ין כָּאֵ֖ל יְשֻׁר֑וּן רֹכֵ֤ב שָׁמַ֙יִם֙ בְּעֶזְרֶ֔ךָ וּבְגַאֲוָת֖וֹ שְׁחָקִֽים׃ | 26 | O Jeshurun, there is none like God, Riding through the heavens to help you, Through the skies in His majesty. |

Chasidut connects G’d’s attributes to the behavior of the Jewish people, emphasizing divine assistance and uniqueness. Jewish Thought discusses God’s dominion over celestial bodies and the significance of the number ten in creation. Kabbalah explores the importance of righteous actions and the relationship between divine names. Midrash delves into the structure of the Earth, firmaments, and the significance of Torah study. Musar highlights the kindness of studying Torah לשמה. Quoting Commentary references interpretations of the firmament, celestial camp, and God’s powers. Talmud mentions discrepancies in scrolls found in the Temple courtyard and discusses God dwelling above celestial beings in Aravot. Targum emphasizes the incomparable nature of the God of Israel residing in the heavens.

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| מְעֹנָהֿ֙ אֱלֹ֣הֵי קֶ֔דֶם וּמִתַּ֖חַת זְרֹעֹ֣ת עוֹלָ֑ם וַיְגָ֧רֶשׁ מִפָּנֶ֛יךָ אוֹיֵ֖ב וַיֹּ֥אמֶר הַשְׁמֵֽד׃ | 27 | The ancient God is a refuge, A support are the arms everlasting. He drove out the enemy before you By His command: Destroy! |

Chasidut emphasizes removing desires for money and idolatry, ascending with lights to enjoy the inheritance of the patriarchs, and following counsel and the merit of the Patriarchs for healing and understanding. Halakhah details the procedures after Hakafos with three Sifrei Torah, while Jewish Thought explores the concept of dominion over things and the importance of belief in God. Kabbalah delves into God’s role as creator and sustainer, the mysteries of the Torah, and the dependence of all existence on God. Midrash discusses the support of the world by various elements, the importance of studying Torah and prayer, and the relationship between God and the world. Musar highlights G-d as the “place” of the world, favoring the Jewish people for their humility, and adding stature to G-d through good deeds. Quoting Commentary includes explanations from various commentators on topics such as marriage restrictions for a priest’s daughter, the modesty of the righteous, and the inability of the world to contain God. Talmud recounts instances of discrepancies in Torah scrolls found in the Temple court, the creation of the world, and discussions on God as the “Place” of the world. Targum emphasizes the eternal God’s power, protection of His people, and scattering of enemies through His Word.

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| וַיִּשְׁכֹּן֩ יִשְׂרָאֵ֨ל בֶּ֤טַח בָּדָד֙ עֵ֣ין יַֽעֲקֹ֔ב אֶל־אֶ֖רֶץ דָּגָ֣ן וְתִיר֑וֹשׁ אַף־שָׁמָ֖יו יַ֥עַרְפוּ טָֽל׃ | 28 | Thus Israel dwells in safety, Untroubled is Jacob’s abode, In a land of grain and wine, Under heavens dripping dew. |

Chasidut explains that foreign thoughts stem from the corruption of mishpat related to the eyes, illustrated by the verse “They came to AYN Mishpat.” Jewish Thought discusses the positive aspects of loneliness for spiritual growth, while Kabbalah emphasizes Jacob’s descendants dwelling securely alone in exile. Liturgy praises God for His path through the Reed Sea and the dew in the skies. Midrash highlights Israel’s connection to dew and God’s peace, and Mishnah details the roasting of the Paschal lamb. Quoting Commentary offers interpretations of various biblical verses, and Talmud discusses Israel’s solitude in terms of wealth and sorrow. Tanakh includes blessings for abundance and security, and Targum describes Israel living securely in a land of blessing.

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| אַשְׁרֶ֨יךָ יִשְׂרָאֵ֜ל מִ֣י כָמ֗וֹךָ עַ֚ם נוֹשַׁ֣ע בַּֽיהֹוָ֔ה מָגֵ֣ן עֶזְרֶ֔ךָ וַאֲשֶׁר־חֶ֖רֶב גַּאֲוָתֶ֑ךָ וְיִכָּחֲשׁ֤וּ אֹיְבֶ֙יךָ֙ לָ֔ךְ וְאַתָּ֖ה עַל־בָּמוֹתֵ֥ימוֹ תִדְרֹֽךְ׃ | 29 | O happy Israel! Who is like you, A people delivered by יהוה, Your protecting Shield, your Sword triumphant! Your enemies shall come cringing before you, And you shall tread on their backs. |

Chasidut warns against leaders wielding the sword of pride, obtained through converts, to rule over the people arrogantly (Likutei Moharan). In Jewish Thought, prosperity and ruin are tied to God’s pleasure and anger, respectively, with Gersonides explaining God’s foreknowledge. Kabbalah discusses Israel’s ascent to the Unlimited One-Ein Sof through the middle line, while Liturgy and Midrash emphasize God’s role in Israel’s victories. Musar discusses how blessings were used differently by Samael and Rahav, leading to the Torah being bestowed upon Israel. Talmud highlights the importance of delighting in Shabbat, and Tanakh recounts the deception of the Gibeonites by Joshua. Targum emphasizes Israel’s unique blessings and protection from God.

## Deuteronomy 34

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| וַיַּ֨עַל מֹשֶׁ֜ה מֵעַרְבֹ֤ת מוֹאָב֙ אֶל־הַ֣ר נְב֔וֹ רֹ֚אשׁ הַפִּסְגָּ֔ה אֲשֶׁ֖ר עַל־פְּנֵ֣י יְרֵח֑וֹ וַיַּרְאֵ֨הוּ יְהֹוָ֧ה אֶת־כׇּל־הָאָ֛רֶץ אֶת־הַגִּלְעָ֖ד עַד־דָּֽן׃ | 1 | Moses went up from the steppes of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, opposite Jericho, and יהוה showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan; |

Moses was granted supernatural eyesight on Mount Nebo to see the entire land of Israel prophetically, including future events in different regions. On Simchat Torah, a custom involves everyone in the congregation reading the Torah to increase joy. Moses’ death and burial are described in the Midrash, emphasizing the power of prayer and the significance of his requests being granted by God. In Musar, Moses asks for a successor to unite the Jewish people, reaching the fiftieth level of understanding before his death, symbolized by his ascent to Mount Nebo. The Talmud notes Moses’ physical strength until his death and the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael. In Tanakh, the Danites set up a sculptured image and Jonathan serves as a priest for them. The Targum emphasizes the land shown to Moses and the mighty acts of future leaders, while the Tosefta describes Moses’ burial by the Shekhinah and the significance of divine retribution.

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| וְאֵת֙ כׇּל־נַפְתָּלִ֔י וְאֶת־אֶ֥רֶץ אֶפְרַ֖יִם וּמְנַשֶּׁ֑ה וְאֵת֙ כׇּל־אֶ֣רֶץ יְהוּדָ֔ה עַ֖ד הַיָּ֥ם הָאַחֲרֽוֹן׃ | 2 | all Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; the whole land of Judah as far as the Western Sea; |

God showed Moses the land of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, Judah, and the western sea, revealing their prosperity, ruin, and future events, including wars and victories of various tribes and kings, as well as the resurrection of the dead. The regions mentioned in the verse are identified according to the tribes that settled there, with the “last sea” referring to the Mediterranean Sea. The Targum commentary on Deuteronomy 34:2 mentions the territories of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah, as well as the leaders and kings associated with these regions until the destruction of the sanctuary. Rabbeinu Bahya, Ramban, and Rashi provide insights into the significance of Hebrew terms for directions and emphasize the exclusivity of certain gifts to the Jewish people, such as prophecy, Torah, the land of Israel, and resurrection of the bodies.

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| וְאֶת־הַנֶּ֗גֶב וְֽאֶת־הַכִּכָּ֞ר בִּקְעַ֧ת יְרֵח֛וֹ עִ֥יר הַתְּמָרִ֖ים עַד־צֹֽעַר׃ | 3 | the Negeb; and the Plain—the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. |

Chasidut explains the significance of Jericho in symbolizing the connection to ethereal levels and the idea that the end is embedded in the beginning, while the sages disagreed with the practice of reciting the Shema without pausing after “today.” Rashi, Steinsaltz, Chizkuni, and Midrash provide interpretations of various terms and concepts related to the land and God’s revelations. Mishnah discusses the protocol for allowing remarriage based on hearsay testimony, with Rabbi Akiva arguing against relying on women’s testimony. The Talmud mentions Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi’s beliefs about the Temple’s location and the descendants of Jethro, while Tanakh and Targum provide further insights and interpretations related to Jericho and surrounding areas.

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| וַיֹּ֨אמֶר יְהֹוָ֜ה אֵלָ֗יו זֹ֤את הָאָ֙רֶץ֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר נִ֠שְׁבַּ֠עְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָ֨ם לְיִצְחָ֤ק וּֽלְיַעֲקֹב֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר לְזַרְעֲךָ֖ אֶתְּנֶ֑נָּה הֶרְאִיתִ֣יךָ בְעֵינֶ֔יךָ וְשָׁ֖מָּה לֹ֥א תַעֲבֹֽר׃ | 4 | And יהוה 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.” |

Moses was shown the land of Israel to fulfill the oath to the patriarchs, but forbidden to enter to prevent his blessing from invalidating future events. Communication between Moses and the patriarchs after death is debated, with the Talmud suggesting the dead can communicate. Moses’ soul ascended to heaven immediately upon death. Fathers are obligated to teach their sons Torah from a young age, aligning with the Mishnah’s instruction to start studying Scripture at five. Moses’ viewing of the land was interpreted as a vision of the future, distinct from other mortals. Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer have different interpretations of how Moses saw the land, with the Midrash discussing future generations and the number of benedictions a man should pray each day. Philo emphasizes the allegorical meaning of Abraham’s migration and the importance of faith in God’s promises. The Talmud discusses the number of mitzvot in the Torah and the disrespect of relieving oneself in a cemetery. God promised Moses that the land of Israel would be given to the descendants of the patriarchs, but Moses would only see it with his eyes.

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| וַיָּ֨מׇת שָׁ֜ם מֹשֶׁ֧ה עֶבֶד־יְהֹוָ֛ה בְּאֶ֥רֶץ מוֹאָ֖ב עַל־פִּ֥י יְהֹוָֽה׃ | 5 | So Moses the servant of יהוה died there, in the land of Moab, at the command of יהוה. |

The Talmud describes the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as being like a divine kiss from God, symbolizing their great love and knowledge of Him. Moses’ death was marked by his soul being removed from his body by a kiss from God, leading to mourning in heaven. Moses’ ability to stand next to God at the revelation is highlighted, and his burial place remains unknown to prevent desecration. Moses’ death is discussed in various commentaries, with Ramban emphasizing his blessing being fulfilled as a man of God, and lessons in leadership highlighting his role as a servant of God.

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| וַיִּקְבֹּ֨ר אֹת֤וֹ בַגַּי֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מוֹאָ֔ב מ֖וּל בֵּ֣ית פְּע֑וֹר וְלֹא־יָדַ֥ע אִישׁ֙ אֶת־קְבֻ֣רָת֔וֹ עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה׃ | 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. |

Chasidut explains that Haman symbolizes idol worship, countered by Moshe who received the Torah to eliminate idolatry and was buried opposite Beit Pe’or to signify the elimination of idolatry. Commentary from Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Sforno, Rabbeinu Bahya, Steinsaltz, Chizkuni, and others discusses the burial of Moses and the mystery surrounding its location. Jewish Thought reflects on God’s sorrow, Moses’ unfulfilled longing, and the negative experience of his death, contrasting with Elijah and Enoch’s ascension to Heaven. Kabbalah emphasizes the importance of humility in connecting with the Creator. Midrash highlights instances of steadfast love in the Torah, including God burying Moses. Mishnah states that God personally buries righteous individuals. Musar discusses the duty of burying the dead and the importance of emulating God’s ways. Quoting Commentary from various sources emphasizes the reflexive use of pronouns in the Torah and the unknown burial place of Moses to prevent it from becoming a place of worship. Second Temple texts mention the translation of virtuous individuals to another place of abode. Talmud discusses Moses’ burial by God, the unknown location of his grave, and the importance of acts of kindness. Targum and Tosefta provide additional details on Moses’ burial location and the Divine retribution on initiators of transgression.

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| וּמֹשֶׁ֗ה בֶּן־מֵאָ֧ה וְעֶשְׂרִ֛ים שָׁנָ֖ה בְּמֹת֑וֹ לֹא־כָהֲתָ֥ה עֵינ֖וֹ וְלֹא־נָ֥ס לֵחֹֽה׃ | 7 | Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigor unabated. |

Chasidut interprets Moshe’s burial as symbolizing his ascent into Ein Sof and Malkhut, with tefillin representing fear of God and the repair of imagination to receive light. Moses’ physical vitality and appearance remained unchanged even after his death, attributed to the divine presence with him. Jewish Thought highlights Moses’ vitality and fierce leadership, while Midrash details his significant encounters and mourns his passing. Musar emphasizes Moses’ undiminished strength and the rejection of his prayers, and quoting commentary discusses the significance of Moses’ undimmed eyes and unabated strength at 120 years old. The Second Temple commentary reflects on the differences in the years of the guilty and the sage, while the Talmud discusses Moses’ physical strength and symbolic connections. Finally, Targum notes that Moses died at 120 with no change in appearance or vitality.

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| וַיִּבְכּוּ֩ בְנֵ֨י יִשְׂרָאֵ֧ל אֶת־מֹשֶׁ֛ה בְּעַֽרְבֹ֥ת מוֹאָ֖ב שְׁלֹשִׁ֣ים י֑וֹם וַֽיִּתְּמ֔וּ יְמֵ֥י בְכִ֖י אֵ֥בֶל מֹשֶֽׁה׃ | 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. |

The children of Israel mourned Moses for thirty days in the plains of Moab, as stated in Deuteronomy 34:8. Halakhah dictates that mourning for Torah scholars should not exceed 30 days, with eulogies not surpassing twelve months. Moses’ leadership was marked by a lack of small talk, while Aaron’s focus on peace and unity led to a more profound mourning for him. Aaron’s death was foretold by God to Moses, and both Moses and Aaron were mourned for thirty days. Moses’ relationship with the oral Torah is symbolized by his title as “husband of the spiritual bride.” Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi instructed to reconvene study sessions after thirty days of mourning, following the example of the mourning for Moses. The Israelites mourned Aaron’s death for thirty days after learning of his passing.

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| וִיהוֹשֻׁ֣עַ בִּן־נ֗וּן מָלֵא֙ ר֣וּחַ חׇכְמָ֔ה כִּֽי־סָמַ֥ךְ מֹשֶׁ֛ה אֶת־יָדָ֖יו עָלָ֑יו וַיִּשְׁמְע֨וּ אֵלָ֤יו בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ וַֽיַּעֲשׂ֔וּ כַּאֲשֶׁ֛ר צִוָּ֥ה יְהֹוָ֖ה אֶת־מֹשֶֽׁה׃ | 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 יהוה had commanded Moses. |

In Chasidut, the ability to produce worthy students and instill wisdom is connected to the House of God, as seen in Moshe laying hands on Yehoshua and the spelling of Chanukah being hinted at in the verse about Yehoshua being filled with wisdom. Halakhah dictates that on Simchat Torah, the Torah is read by more than a quorum to increase joy, with everyone in the congregation reading. In Jewish Thought, the freewill offering is more pleasing to God than other offerings, symbolizing a desire for close communion with Him. The destruction of the First and Second Temples coincided with days of merit and punishment, and elders appointed by Moses were significant to God. In Talmud, Moses transferring authority to Joshua is likened to giving credit to the one who pours wine. In Targum, Yehoshua was filled with wisdom after Moshe laid his hands on him, and in Tosefta, Moses and Ezra are highlighted as ideal Torah teachers with authority to implement the script and language.

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| וְלֹא־קָ֨ם נָבִ֥יא ע֛וֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל כְּמֹשֶׁ֑ה אֲשֶׁר֙ יְדָע֣וֹ יְהֹוָ֔ה פָּנִ֖ים אֶל־פָּנִֽים׃ | 10 | Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—whom יהוה singled out, face to face, |

The text discusses Moses’ exceptional spiritual heights and unique relationship with God, as evidenced by his prophecy and direct communication with God, setting him apart from all other prophets. Moses’ prophecy is distinguished by its superiority and miraculous nature, with the Torah emphasizing the eternal nature of his prophecy and the impossibility of another prophet like him arising. Moses’ ability to access a deeper understanding of God and communicate directly with Him is highlighted, contrasting with other prophets who required prayer and doubt before performing miracles. Moses’ prophetic insights and special relationship with God are emphasized, with his unique connection to the divine symbolized by his ability to know HaShem face to face and speak to Him mouth to mouth. The text emphasizes the transient nature of life and inevitability of death for all, despite one’s righteousness or wickedness, with Moses ultimately accepting his fate and preparing for death. Moses’ prophetic abilities and leadership qualities set him apart from all other prophets in Israel, with a level of intimacy with God that is unparalleled.

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| לְכׇל־הָ֨אֹתֹ֜ת וְהַמּוֹפְתִ֗ים אֲשֶׁ֤ר שְׁלָחוֹ֙ יְהֹוָ֔ה לַעֲשׂ֖וֹת בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם לְפַרְעֹ֥ה וּלְכׇל־עֲבָדָ֖יו וּלְכׇל־אַרְצֽוֹ׃ | 11 | for the various signs and portents that יהוה sent him to display in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his courtiers and his whole country, |

Moses performed unprecedented miracles publicly with the Great Name of God, setting him apart from other prophets who needed to pray before performing miracles. His close relationship with God allowed him to perform great signs and wonders, distinguishing him as the prophet par excellence. Moses’ prophetic commission was evidenced by the miracles and deeds he performed, showcasing his authority as a leader chosen by God.

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| וּלְכֹל֙ הַיָּ֣ד הַחֲזָקָ֔ה וּלְכֹ֖ל הַמּוֹרָ֣א הַגָּד֑וֹל אֲשֶׁר֙ עָשָׂ֣ה מֹשֶׁ֔ה לְעֵינֵ֖י כׇּל־יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃ | 12 | and for all the great might and awesome power that Moses displayed before all Israel. |

Chasidut emphasizes the existence of two Torahs, written and oral, with events written about before they occurred, illustrating free will and foreseen events in the Torah. Halakhah details rules for reading the Torah in a synagogue and writing it, including a prayer for salvation and the coming of the Redeemer. Jewish Thought raises questions and critiques about Moses’ actions and choices in the story of the burning bush. Kabbalah discusses the 42 letters at the end of the Torah and their division into three hands. Midrash describes various events in the journey of the children of Israel and Moses’ actions. Musar highlights the symbolism of the Ten Commandments and the distinction between the written and oral law. Quoting Commentary discusses the unique position of Deuteronomy in the Torah, emphasizing teaching and learning. Talmud outlines rules for finishing Torah scrolls and discusses Moses’ actions in various texts. Targum praises Moshe for his displays of strength and power.