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הכרבה תאזו V'Zot HaBerachah

Expanded Commentary

Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

Deuteronomy 33:1

Midrash

"? It is speaking of the Divine Presence. Jacob said to Moses: ‘I am greater than you, as I placed my hands on the heads of Ephraim and Manasseh.’ Moses said to him: ‘I am more exalted than you, as your hands became heavy and you had to switch them, but I placed my hands on the Ark and they became light.’ From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: “When Moses had completed the work, the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting” (Exodus 40:33). Aaron said to Moses: ‘I am greater than you, as I had worn the Priestly garments.’ Moses said to him: ‘I am more exalted than you, as you wore the regular Priestly garments, but I wore the garments of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement.’ From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: “He shall put on the holy linen tunic” (Leviticus 16:3). To what is the matter comparable? It is to two men who were entering a royal banquet. One adorned himself and entered, and he ascended to the royal dais, and the other adorned himself and entered, and he sat down below in the courtyard. Who are they lauding? Is it not the one who adorned himself and ascended to the royal dais? So, Aaron adorned himself, but he did not ascend to the royal dais, but Moses adorned himself and ascended to the royal dais. That is why, “but you have surpassed them all.” Another matter, the Land of Canaan said to Moses: ‘I am greater than you, as I entered the bounds of the Land of Israel.’ Moses said to it: ‘I am more exalted than you, as I entered the borders of the Land of Israel, and I took the Land and went out of it.’ From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: “[Moses went up] to the mountain of the Amorites” (Deuteronomy 1:44). Another matter, the Sanctuary said to Moses: ‘I am greater than you, as I was transported in the vision that Ezekiel saw.’ Moses said to him: ‘I am more exalted than you, as you were transported to the Temple, but I was transported to the Heavenly Academy.’ From where is it derived? It is as it is stated: “He took the Book of the Covenant and read it in earshot of the people” (Exodus 24:7). To what is the matter comparable? It is to a spring that flowed in Rekem, (Rekem is an unknown place) and bathed the cattle of Rachel. When it was in Rekem, it was called the Spring of Rekem. When it arrived in Peltan, it was called the Spring of Peltan. When it was in Sichnayim, it was called the Spring of Sichnayim. Finally, when it arrived in Jerusalem, it was called the Strength of Jerusalem. So too, the Sanctuary, when it was in the vision that Ezekiel saw, it was called the Sanctuary, but Moses was transported to the Heavenly Academy. That is why “but you have surpassed them all.”

Chasidut

- The devotion and service of God is done through fervent worship and studying Torah with love and reverence, leading to attachment to God at all levels.  
- The concept of "chomer b’kodesh m’b’terumah" suggests that purifying one's physicality through constant focus on God's thoughts and complete devotion allows one to attain Supernal Holiness.  
- The use of the term "zot" in various contexts indicates the principal reason or component behind certain events or blessings.  
- Moshe Rabeynu's completion in perfection and blessing of the Israelites before his death is highlighted in the context of his unique closeness to God and devotion.  
- The behavior and characteristics of prophets, like Moshe Rabeynu, are discussed, showing the intrinsic attachment to God and the absence of need for transformation during prophesy.

Quoting Commentary

- The Bartenura discusses the Torah portions and Haftarah readings for specific days during Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Shemini Atzeret  
- The text honors Moses as a role model rather than a saint, highlighting his humility and legacy as a human figure  
- Moses is referred to as "ish" or "man" multiple times throughout the Torah  
- Philosophy on the humility of Moses and its importance in relation to obtaining the Torah is discussed  
- Moses is seen as intimate with the divine, inspiring great respect both in life and in his full stature after death  
- Interpretations of the words "ish" and "Zoth" are discussed to emphasize the significance of Moses, the Torah, and divine wisdom  
- Noah's dedicated and determined nature as a man of the ground is analyzed  
- The Torah is compared to rain and discussed as a guiding instruction that should be passed down from generation to generation

Commentary

- The letter ו at the beginning of וזאת indicates continuation from previous text [Chizkuni]  
- Moses added as his title "the man of G-d" to indicate God instructed him to bless [Daat Zkenim]  
- Moses took the Angel of Death prisoner temporarily to bless tribes [Daat Zkenim]  
- Moses' blessing similar to that of Jacob's [Ibn Ezra on 33:1:1]  
- Moses blessed prophetically, as indicated by title "the man of G-d" [Ibn Ezra on 33:1:2]  
- "Before his death" means close to the time and day of his death [Ibn Ezra on 33:1:3]  
- The term "man of G-d" was a compliment, reflecting unique qualities of Moses [Or HaChaim on 33:1:10]  
- Moses was a man of G-d due to his sincere efforts and journey to reverence God [Or HaChaim on 33:1:12]  
- d unique description of Moses as "man of G-d" means it will never be applicable to anyone else [Or HaChaim on 33:1:13]  
- Moses blessing was a continuation of previous admonitions [Or HaChaim on 33:1:4]  
- Moses blessing was superior in some way to that of Jacob [Or HaChaim on 33:1:5]  
- All of Moses' blessings were because he was a man of G-d [Or HaChaim on 33:1:6]  
- All children of Israel were deserving of blessings at that time [Or HaChaim on 33:1:8]  
- Moses' spiritual powers enhanced close to his death [Or HaChaim on 33:1:9]  
- Midrash links Moses blessing to fulfillment of prophecy from Yaakov's blessing [Rabbeinu Bahya on 33:1:1-4]  
- Moses blessings completed Bileam's incomplete blessings to Israel [Rabbeinu Bahya on 33:1:8-11]  
- Moses was referred to as a man of G-d to indicate his prayers had strength [Ramban on 33:1:1]  
- Title "man of G-d" indicates Moses enjoyed divine favor for his prayers [Rashbam on 33:1:1]  
- Moses was willing to bless due to his role in teaching Torah to Israel [Tze'enah Ure'enah on V'Zot HaBerachah 2-4]  
- Moses called "man of God" because of his justice and commandments [Tze'enah Ure'enah on V'Zot HaBerachah 7]  
- Moses delayed Angel of Death to bless Israel [Tze'enah Ure'enah on V'Zot HaBerachah 8]

Tanakh

God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 3:10). Unlike other prophets who receive visions or dreams, God speaks directly to Moses and trusts him completely (Numbers 12:6-8). The text emphasizes Moses' unique relationship with God compared to other prophets.

Responsa

- The argument that verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed is considered feeble and ridiculous, aimed at winning favor with Gentiles by showing Mohammed is mentioned in the Torah.  
- The promise of Ishmael becoming a great nation does not connote possession of prophecy or law, but merely an increase in numbers.  
- The Divine covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob refers exclusively to those of their descendants.  
- The phrase "from the midst of thee" in the verse about a prophet indicates the prophet will arise from within the Israelites and will not introduce a new law or religion.  
- The distinction between Moses as a true prophet witnessed by ancestors and other miracle workers is fundamental in the Jewish faith.  
- The rule of not adding or diminishing from the Laws of Moses applies to both the written and oral law transmitted through sages of blessed memory.  
- It is warned to be cautious of heretics who may corrupt the faith of young people and it is permitted to slay them for going against the teachings of Moses.

Talmud

- During Sukkot, selections from the offerings of Sukkot in Numbers 29 are read, with the portion of "All the firstborns" read on the Eighth Day of Assembly, including mitzvot and statutes related to helping the poor.  
- Haftara readings during Sukkot include I Kings 8:54–9:1 and Deuteronomy chapters 33–34.  
- Moses' burial place is unknown, as indicated by the verse "And no man knows of his grave," and it is thought that he was buried near Beth Peor to atone for the incident in Numbers 25.

Mishnah

The Mishnah Megillah 3:5 outlines which portions of the Torah are read on specific holidays: Leviticus 22:26–23:44 is read on the first day of Passover and the first day of Sukkot, Deuteronomy 16:9–12 is read on Shavuot, Leviticus 23:23–25 is read on Rosh HaShana, Leviticus 16 is read on Yom Kippur, and Numbers 29:12–39 is read on the other days of Sukkot except for the first day.

Halakhah

• On the first two days of Sukkot, specific passages are read including Shor o kesev o eyz, Hiney yom ba l'Ado-nai, and Vayikahalu el hamelech Shlomo. On the final day, Kol hab'chor is read alongside Vay'hi k'chalot Shlomo.  
• On the following day, Vezot haberachah is read along with Vaya'amod Shlomo or Vay'hi acharei mot Moshe as the haftarah.   
• Other days of Sukkot involve reading passages about sacrifices.   
• Simchat Torah involves special customs such as taking out three Torah scrolls, reading from different sections, and traditional practices like a festive meal and circling the Bimah with Torah scrolls.  
• On Simchat Torah, there is a custom to have many readers from the Torah, call up all the children, and read special sections usually auctioned off, including the option for even a child to finish the Torah.

Kabbalah

- All Israel has a place in the world of worthy souls cut out from under the throne of God, blessed by Moses to purify thoughts and establish wisdom, hidden from living until revealed by Gedaliah Cordovero.  
- A quality allows entrance to the life of the coming world, Jewish people receive goodness and blessings through it, Moshe blessed them before entering the land.  
- Moshe blessed Israel before his death with a brachah, blessing was bestowed due to a specific quality.  
- Moses existed even after death due to a certain aspect, effected ten plagues against Pharaoh through it, and blessed Israel only using 'zot'.  
- Moses blessed Israel specifically with 'zot', a blessing for the Jewish people.

Second Temple

- The chief of the prophets has many names: Moses when interpreting oracles, Man of God when blessing people, and a god of Pharaoh when Egypt is punished for impious deeds.   
- Moses is described as the man of God in Deuteronomy 33:1, reflecting a glorious and holy exchange where he gives himself to God in return for God's protecting care.

Targum

The text discusses the blessings given by Moses to the children of Israel before his death. Different Targums mention these blessings as a Benediction and emphasize Moses as a prophet of God.

Musar

- The interpretation of Psalms 81:5 as a statute for Israel and justice for the G-d of Jacob, referencing Moses and Rabbi Akiva.  
- Studying Torah with the intent of acquiring titles like "Rabbi" or "elder" is seen as negatively nullifying the value of the studies.  
- The comparison between Noach and Moses in terms of righteousness and closeness to G-d.  
- Moses being referred to as both man and divine, showing his growth and understanding of G-d's names.  
- Moses' blessings compared to Jacob's and David's blessings for the Jewish people are seen as the most comprehensive.  
- Moses' intimate relationship with G-d and his role as G-d's agent, possessing a clear vision and being a filter for G-d's Essence.

Deuteronomy 33:2

Midrash

· The right hand of the Holy One is a symbol of protection for Israel, as seen in several verses in the text  
· Israel received the Torah willingly from God when it was presented to them  
· The Lord remembers Israel through various references and symbols mentioned in the text  
· Various prophets and patriarchs are mentioned in the text as examples of faithfulness to God

Jewish Thought

• Joseph is portrayed as a representation of a Jew in Jewish thought, with parallels drawn between his experiences and those of the Jewish people.  
• The Jewish people are described as having a fierce character attribute, as seen in various teachings and references in traditional texts.  
• The Torah was given to the Jewish people because of their inherent fierceness and the strength derived from their connection to the Torah, making them formidable among nations.  
• Daniel saw the third empire as a leopard, symbolizing fierceness and aggression, which aligns with the character attribute attributed to the Jewish people in traditional Jewish teachings.

Talmud

- The nations question being judged for not accepting the Torah  
- The Torah reveals the money of Gentile nations to Jewish people  
- Torah given to Jews because they are impudent, it restrains them  
- Torah given with the right hand, leading to the custom of not wiping with the right hand  
- Torah scroll handed with right hand because Torah was given with right hand  
- Scripture indicates Torah scroll was not inside the Ark  
- Different reasons for each of the two destructions of Jerusalem discussed  
- Necessity of reciting "Peace" at the end of prayer with specific movements discussed

Quoting Commentary

- Bartenurah on Mishnah Bava Kamma 4:3:1 discusses the transfer of money from idolaters to the Jewish people due to their rejection of the Torah.  
- Chizkuni on Exodus 19:12:1 talks about setting boundaries for the people regarding the glory of God appearing and relates it to the Torah offered to gentile nations.  
- Covenant and Conversation on Deuteronomy 33:2 reflects on the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and its importance.  
- Daat Zkenim on Deuteronomy 2:26:1 explains the territorial offers made to different nations and their response to the Torah.  
- Daat Zkenim on Exodus 14:29:1 discusses the freezing of water walls and connects it to the warning to the Israelites.  
- Daat Zkenim on Genesis 1:1 suggests that the reshaping of territories was based on past actions and God's willingness to offer a chance to enemies.  
- Derekh Chayyim 5:20:9 discusses the fitting of brazen-facedness in Gehinnom and shamefacedness in the Garden of Eden based on balance.  
- Haamek Sheilah on Sheiltot d'Rav Achai Gaon discusses the levels of Torah and the different types of laws within it.  
- Haamek Sheilah on Sheiltot d'Rav Achai Gaon explains why God gave Israel the twenty-four sacred books and how prophetic abilities are tied to the Revelation at Sinai.  
- Ibn Ezra on Isaiah 56:9:1 relates the behavior of beasts to human actions and consequences based on scripture.  
- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 26:5:20 links the protection of Israelites to the Torah and its fiery nature.  
- Or HaChaim on Exodus 14:27:1 describes the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea and connects it to the power of Torah scholars.  
- Or HaChaim on Exodus 19:5:11 and 19:5:14 discusses the Torah as a protective force and the indication of Israel as a unique treasure among nations.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya on Deut 33:25:2 and Deut 33:25:2 highlights the connection between old age and youth and the Torah's influence in life.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot 27:34:1 emphasizes the permanence of the commandments and the authority of Moses in conveying them.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot 24:1:6 warns about theological traps and emphasizes the importance of understanding Moses' role in conveying commandments and the manifestations of God at Mount Sinai.

Commentary

The verse states that the Lord came from Sinai, where God's glorious presence emanated towards the Israelites, then shone forth from Seir in the East, and manifested from Paran in the West. This movement from different directions signified God's fondness for the people, and the right side symbolizes fondness for Israel. The fiery law at His right hand refers to the law given through fire and lightning, stemming from God's right side, reflecting the affinity between law and fire. Ibn Ezra discusses the geography of the regions and the direction of God's presence showing fondness, while also addressing interpretations by other individuals like Saadiah Gaon, highlighting the significance of these events in demonstrating God's connection with Israel.

Responsa

- The argument that verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed is considered feeble and ridiculous, aimed at winning favor with Gentiles by showing Mohammed is mentioned in the Torah.  
- The promise of Ishmael becoming a great nation does not connote possession of prophecy or law, but merely an increase in numbers.  
- The Divine covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob refers exclusively to those of their descendants.  
- The phrase "from the midst of thee" in the verse about a prophet indicates the prophet will arise from within the Israelites and will not introduce a new law or religion.  
- The distinction between Moses as a true prophet witnessed by ancestors and other miracle workers is fundamental in the Jewish faith.  
- The rule of not adding or diminishing from the Laws of Moses applies to both the written and oral law transmitted through sages of blessed memory.  
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Chasidut

• The essence of G'd needed to be concealed to allow physical universe creation  
• G'd needed to decrease radiations for creation to tolerate it  
• The world created required stages of lowered brilliance for tolerance  
• Perhaps parts of universe require brilliance reduction for G'd's essence to avoid harming creatures  
• Israelites have an obligation to serve G'd enthusiastically and meticulously  
• Material benefits from G'd not a reward for mitzvah performance, rather encouragement  
• Torah was also offered to descendants of Esau involving Torah with love  
• Moses describing how G'd shone upon people teaches about G'd's love for Israel  
• Torah is called "a law of fire" due to severity of punishments  
• G'd's Torah given to Israel on all levels, not necessary for Israelites but for global application and depths  
• Jews must descend to depths to reach greatness, emuna is means to reach truth  
• Torah offered to Moses on all levels, provides food and connection to Hashem for souls in Gan Eden  
• The Torah referred to as "strength" of gevurah, essence is the light of creation and the light for the upper and lower worlds and fulfilled through mitzvot

Mishnah

- If a Jew's ox gores a consecrated ox, or vice versa, the owner of the ox is exempt from paying compensation  
- The exemption is based on the ox being considered consecrated or belonging to the Temple treasury  
- If a Jew's ox gores a gentile's ox, the owner of the belligerent ox is exempt  
- If a gentile's ox gores a Jew's ox, the owner must pay the full cost of the damage

Halakhah

In Mishneh Torah, it is advised to take leave from the left first during prayer because one should envision standing before the Divine Presence, like in the presence of a king, who is approached from the right side first (Yoma 53b). Sefer Chasidim states one should take a book with the right hand, as the Torah was given with the right hand (Deut 33:2).

Targum

Adonoy revealed Himself at Sinai, Seir, and Mount Paran, giving the Torah to His people and being accompanied by holy angels. The sons of Esau and Ishmael did not receive the law when it was presented to them, but the children of Israel accepted it and promised to obey. The law was given by God's right hand from the midst of a flaming fire.

Kabbalah

• The concept of humility allows one to connect with Hashem and is exemplified by Dovid haMelech's humility in various situations. Various Torah verses demonstrate Hashem's own humility through actions such as aiding the needy or comforting mourners. (Kabbalah|Reshit Chokhmah, Gate of Humility 1:2)  
• The host of heavens represent E”l-א״ל and Elohi”m-אלהי״ם, with E”l-א״ל being associated with merit and Elohi”m-אלהי״ם with guilt. This is reflected in verses like Deuteronomy 33:2 and Kings I 22:19. (Kabbalah|Sha'arei Orah, Fifth Gate, Sixth Sefirah 160)  
• Yesod and Tipheret draw from the right and left sides respectively, as shown in Deuteronomy 33:2. (Kabbalah|Tikkunei Zohar 29b:5)  
• Yod symbolizes Ḥokhmah on the right, related to the fiery law in Deuteronomy 33:2 and the connection between father and son. (Kabbalah|Tikkunei Zohar 35a:24)  
• The Written and Oral Torah are granted through the right and left sides, reflecting Deuteronomy 33:2. (Kabbalah|Tikkunei Zohar 37a:19)  
• The neglect of Torah led to the destruction of the Temples, as Deuteronomy 33:2 indicates a fiery law coming from Hashem's right hand. (Kabbalah|Tikkunei Zohar 57b:12)  
• The written Torah is seen as reflecting both mercy and judgment, with Deuteronomy 33:2 illustrating the giving of the law from Hashem's right hand. (Kabbalah|Zohar, Terumah 13:159)

Musar

- The Torah is described as "light" and "fire", with those who approach too closely being at risk of harm, as seen in the deaths of Nadav and Avihu for entering an area not meant for them [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Korach, Torah Ohr 1].  
- The Ten Commandments during the giving of the Torah correspond to the planets created by God, and numerical values have significance in Moses' encounter with angels opposing him taking the Torah to earth [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Mishpatim, Torah Ohr 71].  
- Links are drawn between sanctity, Torah, and the Jewish people, noting the challenge with Edom's dominion and how the sanctity of Israel relates back to a time of divine presence from Se'ir [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Sefer Vayikra, Torah Ohr, Shmini 18].  
- Moses' blessings to Israel are related to tangible symbols such as the six "pillars," which signify deep kabbalistic concepts, and the connection between Torah, pillars, and sanctity [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Shoftim, Torah Ohr 60].  
- The Tabernacle's construction is related to a king's daughter reaching puberty and necessitating privacy, while the fulfillment of prophecies and promises regarding land also relate to levels of holiness and sanctity [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Terumah, Torah Ohr 28].  
- Debates and arguments found in the Talmud are seen as "fires" related to sacred dialectics and Torah study, promoting healthy discourse and harmony [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, V'Zot HaBerachah, Torah Ohr 18].  
- The Arizal dissects the reasons behind the destruction of certain nations and the symbolic importance of various kings and nations in the context of Jewish history, holiness, and Divine will [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Vaetchanan, Torah Ohr 3].  
- The Zohar discusses the progression of G-d offering the Torah first to Esau, then the Ishmaelites, before turning to Israel, highlighting the rejection of the Torah by certain nations and Israel's eventual acceptance [Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Yitro, Derekh Chayim 9].

Tosefta

• Divine punishment is meted out measure-for-measure, while Divine beneficence is five hundred times greater than punishment.  
• The story of Abraham illustrates the concept of Divine beneficence, with examples including running before angels and receiving a well in the desert.  
• The Israelites in the desert were also recipients of Divine beneficence, such as the provision of manna and quail.  
• The manna was a key aspect of Divine beneficence, sustaining the Israelites for forty years in the desert.  
• Quail were also sent by God to provide food for the Israelites in the desert, demonstrating a form of Divine beneficence.

Deuteronomy 33:3

Jewish Thought

Shemot Rabbah 25 interprets Isaiah 33:16 as a table set in the Garden of Eden with G-d at the head, ancestors and righteous sit around receiving fruits, blessings, and reciting grace. The honor of reciting grace is passed from G-d to archangels, then ancestors to David who proclaims the blessing for the King of Kings while lifting the cup of salvation.

Talmud

Moses asked God to exempt Torah scholars from paying taxes, wanting them to be exclusively in God's hands and free from the authority of other nations. The verse in Deuteronomy 33:3 refers to Torah scholars who travel extensively to study and discuss the words of God, pounding their feet from city to city and country to country.

Commentary

- The tribes of Israel are referred to as "peoples," signifying their importance and special standing with God, who cherishes them as His treasure.  
- The twelve tribes of Israel are called "peoples" since each tribe is valued as a separate entity by God.  
- Israelites are seen as being located "between His feet," indicating their close relationship with God and special status as His chosen people.  
- Even when God seems to favor other nations, the Israelites are still under His direct supervision and protection.  
- The phrase "they are at Your feet" could also refer to the Temple, seen as the footstool of God on earth, where His presence manifests itself.  
- The Levites are the "holy ones" mentioned, encircling the ark and obeying God's commandments.  
- The Levites, who are "in Thy hand," are understood to camp around the ark and be under God's care.  
- The term "receiving of Thy words" refers to the Levites being tasked with transmitting the oral Torah.  
- The Levites are tasked with bearing and teaching the words of God upon their lips.  
- The Levites will walk in God's ways, protected by Him, as indicated by the phrase "and they sit down at Thy feet."

Quoting Commentary

• Moses' life teaches about service, human condition, and mortality  
• Torah implies inconclusive ending  
• The Torah is referenced to as an inheritance for the congregation of Jacob  
• Isaiah mentions revolting more when stricken and the importance of repenting  
• Torah alludes to Jewish people's poverty in exile under the Romans  
• Edom is commanded not to make Jewish people perform slave labor and treat them with respect  
• Leadership transition from Judah to the tribe of Levi mentioned in Torah  
• Torah speaks of an assembly of people congregating around Moses  
• Rashi interpreted Israel as the only nation called "nations" and "peoples"  
• Tamar in Ezekiel 47:19 refers to Jericho  
• Tribes were scattered as mentioned in Deuteronomy 33  
• Rashi believed nations refer to Jewish people and Edom  
• Nachmanides rejected Rashi's interpretation, said Yishmael and Esau's descendants are called "nations" while Jewish people referred to as "people"

Midrash

• Resh Lakish suggested the Rabbis did not need a fortified wall because the righteous acts of Israel would guard them more effectively.  
• R. Huna b. R. Chisda was criticized by R. Nachman b. Isaac for taxing the Rabbis, transgressing the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiographa in the process.  
• The Holy One is described as a beacon in the midst of holy myriads, and the Torah was given with a fiery law, according to a Midrash in Tanakh.  
• Israel is metaphorically compared to a stork that will be unharmed when laying eggs high, signifying that when Israel directs their eyes On High, they will soar above adversity.  
• In Sifrei Devarim, it is stated that the Lord loved Israel more than any other nation or kingdom.

Chasidut

The essence of Jewish faith is drawn to the generation by true tzaddikim who embody all the generation's leaders, such as Moshe. Torah scholars travel from city to city accepting and giving the word of God, enclothing the Torah's light in different garments. The term "love" in Deuteronomy 33:3 can also mean "debt" or "punishment", and those who act out of love are in the hand of God. Despite danger, people crowd together to receive the presence of the Divine. Everyone shall receive God's words together as one, raising themselves up to the level of Torah.

Second Temple

Abraham followed God's law as described in Genesis and Deuteronomy, which is understood as the Divine word instructing on what to do and what not to do. By following God's law, Abraham was essentially doing His word, demonstrating that the words of God are the actions of the wise.

Targum

God loved the holy tribes of Israel, leading them out of Egypt and guiding them under the cloud of His word. Despite facing many trials, the Israelites remained faithful to the law and were conducted by God's word, encamped at His feet. The nations were affected by God's love for His people, who were called to be saints and stand in His sanctuary by observing the precepts of the law and following His guidance.

Musar

• The mention of "the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established" in Exodus 15:17 alludes to celestial matters, with the ten fingers symbolizing ten emanations.   
• Yitro's attachment to the Jewish people led to benefits for him as well, even though it was not directly promised by God, as seen in Exodus 18.  
• The sanctity of Israel is represented by the ten fingers on its hands, compared to the Gentile nations, as described in Deut. 33:3.

Deuteronomy 33:4

Halakhah

• The phrase "our Father" in prayers is meant to show a beloved relationship with God, similar to a son.  
• Teaching Torah to non-Jews is prohibited, with Gemara explanations indicating that Torah is a legacy solely for the community of Jacob.  
• The Torah is considered an inheritance for the community of Jacob and is to be shared among all those who desire to convert.  
• Fathers are obligated to teach their sons Torah from a young age, starting with basic verses.  
• The commandment to believe in God is derived from texts indicating 613 commandments were given to Moses at Sinai.  
• The number of commandments practiced for all generations is 613, with temporary commandments not counted as part of this total.

Jewish Thought

- The Torah instructs remembrance with things we learn, with observance linked to remembrance  
- Passover & Purim observances trigger memories of events  
- Remembering Amalek is important as no specific act triggers memory   
- People who do not make notations in their calendar for important events can be faulted  
- Swearing/oaths are used as a means to remember commandments  
- The Great Assembly established Torah teachings and laws  
- Simhat Torah is a joyful celebration where the Torah is revered  
- An infant's knowledge begins with eating bread   
- Torah observance strengthens the connection with God  
- Ultimately, the mission is to bring blessing to humanity and preserve Torah teachings and practices.

Talmud

- Rabbi Ami possibly wrote "Moses commanded us the Torah" 400 times rather than 400 complete Torah scrolls  
- Interpretations of dreams about relations with family members include anticipation of understanding, Torah, wisdom, and reward in the World-to-Come  
- There are 613 mitzvot in the Torah, 365 prohibitions and 248 positive mitzvot  
- Torah study in the presence of an ignoramus causing embarrassment is likened to committing adultery with the betrothed bride  
- Gentiles studying Torah are liable to the death penalty  
- Withholding halakha from students is compared to robbing them of their Torah inheritance  
- Torah is considered an inheritance of the Jewish people from the six days of Creation, and even fetuses curse those who withhold Torah study  
- Torah is the inheritance of the Jewish people, emphasizing the relationship between them and the Torah

Commentary

- Moses commanded the Torah to the Israelites, including the remaining 611 commandments after God gave them the first two  
- The Torah is considered a heritage for the congregation of Jacob, with Torah scholars toiling for the benefit of the masses of the Jewish people  
- Moses dictated the Torah to the Israelites, making the Torah an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob  
- Torah is viewed as an inheritance for all descendants of Jacob, including converts who join the Jewish nation  
- The Torah, as a heritage of the congregation of Jacob, is important for the possession and observance of the land of Israel by the Jewish people  
- The Jewish people wanted Moses to be their intermediary to receive the Torah, leading to the Torah being described as a heritage rather than an inheritance  
- The Torah is considered a heritage for all who gather around the Jewish people, including residents who wish to be near them

Quoting Commentary

- Jewish tradition holds Moses in high honor as a teacher more than any other title.  
- A famous phrase states, "Torah is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob,” highlighting the accessibility of legal knowledge in Judaism.  
- The Torah is recognized as the supreme crown for all Israel over kingship and priesthood.  
- The Jewish people as a whole experienced the "wilderness years," a unique form of spiritual development.  
- Torah is seen as both an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob and a knowledge system that must be actively sought after.

Midrash

- Moses was said to bless the tribes before his death by casting the Angel of Death away and invoking the Name of the Lord to prevent his own death, per Devarim Rabbah 11:5  
- Rabbi Simlai explained that there are 613 commands given to Moses, with 365 negative commands and 248 positive commands, with two being given by God Himself, according to Makkot 3:7  
- The law is seen as an inheritance for the congregation of Israel and withholding knowledge of the law is considered a grave sin, from Sanhedrin 11:14  
- Minors are encouraged to perform certain mitzvot as soon as they are able, such as shaking the lulav and wearing tzitzit, with fathers to teach them the Torah from a young age, states Sukkah 3:4  
- The Torah scroll was given unconditionally as an eternal inheritance, according to Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate Amalek 4:32  
- The Torah is an inheritance for the congregation of Jacob and should be engaged with for its own sake, indicates V'Zot HaBerachah 4:4  
- Various categories of the law were given on conditions, but the Torah and the covenant of Aaron were perpetual and not conditional, per Midrash Tehillim 132:1  
- The Lord's mercy and the giving of the Torah are highlighted in Midrash Tehillim 17:15 and Midrash Tehillim 118:3, respectively

Musar

In Musar, it is recommended to teach children the Hebrew alphabet, Torah verses, and to engage them in Torah study with honey and fasting for a successful and God-fearing life; Israel is crowned with the Torah, Priesthood, and Kingdom, with the Torah being the greatest crown accessible to all; seeking personal gratification and boasting in Torah knowledge is cautioned against to avoid haughtiness and sin. Torah knowledge should not be used for personal gain, but rather to grow and multiply like seedlings, with Torah being compared to a betrothed woman that becomes tainted through boasting.

Chasidut

- Avram always considered events as G’d’s desire.   
- Contrary to most, Avraham died fulfilled.   
- Discussions about inheritance and land allocation in the Land of Israel involve Avram’s descendants.   
- Avram questioned how he would fit into land distribution.   
- Avraham had a special status due to being the first convert.   
- Avram’s question was focused on hereditary aspects.   
- Connections between the Patriarchs and aspects of Torah.   
- Torah and prayer are interconnected.   
- Withholding Torah is like denying someone their heritage.   
- Torah is the heritage and legacy of the Jewish community.   
- The Torah changes humankind's relationship with God.

Liturgy

The morning prayers of Rosh Hashanah includes a repetition by the reader, praising Adonoy as King forever, as well as highlighting the Torah as a tree of life and source of peace and prosperity. The precious Torah is emphasized throughout the liturgy, with angels proclaiming Adonoy's kingship and the greatness of the Torah being glorified by Adonoy for His righteousness.

Kabbalah

- The 613 commandments given by Moses are connected to the secret of the Torah, with the numerical value of 611, as well as to the fear of heaven and the knowledge of God's Name.  
- The first two commandments of the Ten Commandments were spoken directly by God Himself, while the rest were heard through Moses.  
- The Torah specifies that 611 commandments were given through Moses, while two were spoken directly by God, emphasizing the importance and foundation of the Torah teachings.

Targum

Moshe commanded the Torah to the sons of Israel, giving it as a heritage to the congregation of Yaakov, as stated in Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan on Deut 33:4.

Deuteronomy 33:5

Jewish Thought

• Human judges are entrusted by God with the administration of justice on earth, subject to God's judgment if they fail to judge fairly, as seen in Psalm 82.  
• Yitro addresses four possible causes of faulty judgments: bad character, negligence in minor matters, personal biases, and errors in logic or ignorance of the law.  
• Yitro recommends selecting God-fearing individuals with integrity, individuals who hate unjust gain, and refers all major matters to Moses to ensure justice.  
• Moses implements Yitro's advice by appointing 78,600 judges to minimize crime and ensure instant litigation.  
• Ultimately, conduct based on justice and righteousness is seen as superior to sacrifices for achieving atonement in Jewish thought.

Midrash

The Midrash commentary on Numbers 10:2 discusses the crafting of silver trumpets and their significance. It includes an explanation of how gates were raised for the King of glory, highlighting the importance of honoring the Lord. The text also delves into the importance of not cursing a king or wealthy individuals, with various interpretations given in different contexts. Additionally, discussions on the fear of the Lord and the significance of elders are presented, emphasizing the importance of standing and honoring them. Moses is highlighted as a king whose fear of the Lord and Torah study made him a leader. The carrying of Joseph's bones, the honor and respect shown to Torah scholars, and the connection between Torah study and becoming a leader or king are also explored.

Halakhah

- Exile was decreed on the Jews because of the sin of the spies, considered lashon hara  
- Sin of the spies caused Jews to be enslaved by Egyptians with intense labor  
- Mentioning verses related to Divine retribution is avoid on Rosh Hashanah  
- Verses involving retaliation towards gentile nations can be mentioned in Rosh Hashanah prayers  
- The Temple Courtyard and the city of Jerusalem could not expand without consent of a king, a prophet, the Urim V'Tumim, and the Sanhedrin

Commentary

Moses became king in Yeshurun when the people gathered to hear the Torah from him, representing God as their leader and His Torah as a source of blessing. When the Jewish people are united, God can be seen as their true King, but if there is quarreling among them, He cannot be truly seen as their King. Moses was the equivalent of a king, as the heads of the tribes gathered unto him to study the Torah. The tribe's unity is important to ensure the endurance of the kingdom of Israel, as when the people were united under David and Solomon, they were successful, while a split led to decline. The verse "He became King in Yeshurun" alludes to God's sovereignty over Israel, with His yoke constantly upon them when they are gathered in unity and accept His status. The gathering of the heads of the people signifies a blessing and unity among them for God to be their King. Moses was also described as a king through his role as a teacher, prophet, and leader, who was respected and appropriate to bring the Torah to the people. Ultimately, the term "king" refers to both God and Moses, with Israel accepting God's kingship and overlooking Moses as a proper leader.

Quoting Commentary

- Moses was referred to as "king" over Yeshurun, symbolizing his leadership of the people  
- Moses was the equivalent of a crowned king, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:5  
- Moses' position was like a king, as evidenced by his role in the priesthood and kingship in God's design  
- Moses' status is akin to a king, exemplified in the metaphor of Moses as a king in Yeshurun and in his ability to call upon the attributes of Justice and Mercy  
- Moses as king is further reinforced through his interaction with the Tabernacle, showing his unique ability to command and symbolize kingship  
- The action of others towards or under Moses - like Caleb silencing the people - reflects Moses' status as king or leader  
- The literal and symbolic meaning of Moses's role as king is depicted in various scenarios and actions related to Moses and his duties  
- The sacred and lofty nature of Moses' role is seen in how he interacts with others, with his special silver coin, and how he was credited for the Tabernacle's erection.

Chasidut

The presence of a king in Yeshurun is necessary to ensure the inhabitants follow the laws of the state, with God's kingship being advantageous even if all act with truth and righteousness [Mei HaShiloach]. Iggulim and Yosher represent levels and exaltations, with future unity leading to recognition of individual closeness to God [Mei HaShiloach]. The power of unity is unique to Bnei Yisrael, but unity for the sake of Heaven is necessary for true oneness and strength [Sefat Emet]. Korach's lack of true unity led to failure despite claiming the entire nation is holy [Sefat Emet].

Liturgy

- Unity and harmony among Jews enhances the revealed kingdom of Hashem [Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz Linear, Musaf First Day and Second Day of Rosh Hashana, Amidah]  
- Bilaam recognized the uniqueness of the nation of Yisrael in the eyes of Hashem [Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz Musaf First Day and Second Day of Rosh Hashana, Amidah]  
- The name Yisrael symbolizes proclaiming the sovereignty of Hashem, while Yeshurun indicates fulfilling God's will [Machzor Rosh Hashanah Ashkenaz, The Morning Prayers, Akeidah; Machzor Yom Kippur Ashkenaz, The Morning Prayers, Akeidah; Siddur Ashkenaz Weekday Shacharit Preparatory Prayers; Siddur Sefard, Weekday Shacharit, Morning Prayer]  
- Descriptions of the people of Israel as children of God, covenant of Abraham, and Yeshurun from Deuteronomy [Liturgy Shabbat Siddur Sefard Linear, Liturgy Siddur Sefard, Liturgy Weekday Siddur Sefard Linear]

Targum

In three different Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:5, it is described how a king shall arise from the house of Jakob/Yisroel and the tribes of Israel will be obedient to him when the chiefs of the people are gathered together.

Talmud

• The Gemara discusses the use of verses from the Torah to conclude Remembrances and Shofarot on Rosh Hashanah.   
• It is noted that there are only three verses related to Kingship, but ten verses are required.   
• Rabbi Yosei believes that four verses from the Torah should be recited, including the first three and the concluding one.

Musar

- Punishment for those separating from the community involves not wanting to be part of the group serving God, leading to exclusion from sharing in the world to come and causing others to sin.  
- Peace is of great importance in Judaism, symbolized through the creation of light, Torah teachings, and rewards for righteousness.  
- The Sanhedrin originally served as both a court of law and an advisory body, showing the importance of upholding Torah law.  
- The "crowns" of Torah, Royalty, and Priesthood should ideally be unified for proper observance and performance of commandments, with Torah scholars guiding and encouraging adherence to God's law.

Kabbalah

- People of Israel have merited the kingdom by guarding the covenant, considered children of kings (Mishnah Shabbat 14:4)  
- Moses is praised for guarding the sign of the covenant, called a king in Jeshurun (Deut. 33:5)  
- Yitzchak describes Holy One as the King of Israel and as reclining between the wings of Cherubs on the Ark of the Testimony (Shemot 34:282)  
- Their actions can either cause the Holy One to depart or spread a bad odor (Shir Hashirim 1:12)

Deuteronomy 33:6

Midrash

- Rabbi Berechiah interprets the scriptures to show how Reuben's actions impacted his blessings, being given and taken as he acted  
- Aggadat Bereshit 83:1 discusses blessings given to different sons and how they relate to actions taken in their lives, including the importance of Reuben's role in Joseph's rescue  
- Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 13:18 talks about the ritual offerings and their meaning in relation to Reuben's actions towards Joseph  
- Bereshit Rabbah 98:4 discusses Reuben's actions and how they impacted his blessings, including the deal with the mandrakes  
- Devarim Rabbah 2:5 refers to Moses and Reuben in relation to blessing upon arrival and departure  
- Devarim Rabbah 7:5 mentions blessings in city and field, and arrival and departure, and the significance of blessings upon birth and death  
- Ein Yaakov passages elaborate on the concepts of withholding laws and teachings, as well as the resurrection of Reuben in relation to the Torah teachings  
- Midrash Ein Yaakov in relation to Sanhedrin 11:14 discusses the importance of teaching Torah and the rewards for doing so, using Joseph's story and the concept of resurrection as reference points.

Talmud

- Rabba bar Mari and Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani discuss why Reuben and Judah's blessings are connected in Deuteronomy 33  
- Rebbi Berekhiah and Rebbi Yose ben Ḥanina discuss the fate of Datan and Abiram in the pit based on prayers from Moses and Hannah  
- The connection between Reuben and Judah's blessings is explored by Rebbi Samuel bar Naḥman and Rebbi Joshua ben Levi  
- Sotah 1:4:4 discusses the confession of sins by Reuben and Jehudah and their subsequent blessings  
- Rav Yehuda and Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani discuss the connection between the blessings of Reuben and Judah in Deuteronomy 33:6-7  
- Rava, Ravina, and Rav Ashi discuss different verses as sources for the concept of resurrection, including Deuteronomy 33:6 and Daniel 12:2, 12:13  
- Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani and Rabbi Yoḥanan discuss the connection between the blessings of Reuben and Judah in Deuteronomy 33:6-7.

Commentary

- Moses prayed for Reuben to live and not die when crossing the Jordan and battling the Canaanites.  
- The blessings of Reuben include not suffering casualties and continuing to grow in numbers.  
- Moses did not mention Simeon in the blessings due to the incident of Baal-peor and a drop in their numbers.  
- The blessing for Reuben to live is linked to a share in the hereafter which traces back to Jacob’s blessing.  
- Moses hoped for Reuben’s tribe to live forever without diminishing in numbers.  
- The order of blessings by Moses corresponds to the sequence of inheritance for each tribe.  
- Moses prayed for Reuben not to die as a result of the incident with Bilhah and for his descendants to be counted among Israel.  
- Siftei Chakhamim and Siftei Chakhamim suggest the blessings were made for survival in this world and in the World to Come.

Quoting Commentary

- Yehudah acknowledges Tamara's righteousness  
- Human judgments compared to G-d's mercy  
- Reuben admits guilt for defiling Yaakov's couch  
- Yehudah and Reuben not invaded by aliens due to their actions  
- Yehudah defiled G-d who ascends Yaakov's couch  
- Reuben's life to be spared as a blessing from Moses  
- Importance of being released from excommunication by a collegium of laymen or judges  
- Yehudah and Reuben linked due to their actions  
- Kabalistic interpretation of death and soul  
- Levirate marriage and sale of Joseph connected through reincarnation  
- Joseph involved in the sin of the brothers  
- Yehudah's name containing the Ineffable Name  
- Yehudah's blessing related to military victories  
- Nadav and Avihu's deaths and reincarnation  
- Nadav and Avihu died two deaths  
- Kabbalistic interpretation of Nadav and Avihu's deaths  
- Yehudah's outcast status unless he brings back Binyamin  
- Shimon portrayed as a weak tribe in the Torah  
- Reuven's curse and blessing from Moses  
- Promise of Reuben's life despite being few in number

Tanakh

- Jacob is speaking to his son Reuben, addressing him as his first-born and the first fruit of his vigor  
- Reuben is described as exceeding in rank and honor, indicating a level of importance and status among Jacob's children.

Chasidut

- Blessings of Moshe Rabeynu to Reuven heal what Yaakov withheld, providing vivacity, joy, and dignity to Reuven  
- Increase comes from exaltation, as seen by the blessing "let his men be numbered"  
- Each individual is essential in the community, as indicated by the blessing "let his men be numbered"  
- Recite Torah sections to mitigate harsh judgments, including the blessings of Moses to the Jewish people as mentioned in Deuteronomy 33:6-25

Jewish Thought

- Rava happily proves resurrection from Moshe's blessing to Reuben in Deuteronomy 33:6, where it says Reuben will live and not die.

Second Temple

- Abraham prays for grace in hearkening to holy words and learning holy truths  
- Jacob prays for the life of natural goodness, specifically for Reuben to live and not die (Deut. 33:6)  
- It is clarified that Jacob is not praying for immortality and freedom from corruption, as that is impossible for a man.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:6, different Targums focus on Reuvein living forever and avoiding a second death, while also receiving inheritance according to their numbers. They emphasize his youth being counted with other men of Israel and number of youths with young men of his brethren.

Musar

- When all parts of Israel are gathered in peace and harmony, God is perceived as Israel's king  
- Strife among the people prevents God from being perceived as Israel's king

Deuteronomy 33:7

Midrash

• In Psalm 121:1, David speaks of lifting his eyes to the mountains, acknowledging Moses's previous blessings for Judah and David's role as a descendant of him.  
• Abimelech showed respect to Abraham, leading to good relations between Israelites and Philistines.   
• Devil and Philistines stand on one side of the mountain, while Israelites stand on the other, relying on David.  
• Ministering angels support Israelites while the Devil assists the Philistines in their actions, leading to a conflict scenario.  
• When David saw the Philistines on the mountain in 1 Samuel 17:3, he became fearful and recited Psalm 121:1.  
• In Micah 2:12, Jacob and Israel assembling will lead to their redemption, with Reuben, Levi, Benjamin, Simeon, and Issachar as significant figures.  
• Joseph, Othniel, and Joshua are mentioned as filled with wisdom, understanding, and skill, due to blessings like Deuteronomy 33:7 for Judah.  
• Moses's blessings on Judah resulted in wisdom, as in 1 Kings 7:14 and Proverbs 24:3-4.  
• Judah's voice in prayer and cries are emphasized for their significance in calling upon the Lord.

Jewish Thought

- The seventeen years in Egypt were under G-d's Providence; Jacob wanted to be buried outside Egypt  
- Jacob saw Joseph's sons for blessing, crossed hands to give Ephrayim precedence, indicated they would be treated like other tribes  
- David's encounter with Goliath stemmed from pure motives, used Goliath's own sword to kill him, volunteered to build temple for G-d  
- Saul erred in not accepting G-d's discipline, David's obedience to G-d saved his victory  
- The eighteen benedictions of prayer parallel the Priests' blessings, divided into groups of six for various types of requests.

Talmud

- Rabbi Elazar interprets Yashar as Deuteronomy due to Deuteronomy 6:18.  
- Deuteronomy alludes to Judah using a bow.  
- Moses prayed for Judah to understand Torah matters.  
- A homily discusses Reuben and Judah confessing their sins.  
- Judah's ostracism required nullification.  
- Moses prayed for Judah's bones to be assembled, and for him to engage with Sages in Torah study.  
- Reuben and Judah's blessings are connected in the Torah.  
- Reuben and Judah's confessions led to Reuben's blessing.  
- Moses prayed for Judah's engagement in halakha.

Kabbalah

- Listening needs to be constant without pause to revitalize connection to the Above  
- Torah and commandments must be followed constantly without pause as they resemble what is above  
- True Torah scholars do not rest from Torah in this world or the world to come  
- Divine quality of Kingship-Malchut is unique and special to Yehudah, must be guarded and conducted with purity  
- Yehudah was blessed through zot, as written in Deuteronomy 33:7

Commentary

Moses prayed for Reuven's blessing to also apply to Yehudah as both tribes confessed and faced difficulties, leading in battle. Yehudah was asked for its hand to be heard during battle, as it was always in the forefront in warfare. Judah's enemies would be fought with his own hands, supported with G-d's help. Yehudah and Simeon were mentioned together, and Simeon received a portion within Judah's inheritance due to Moses's hinting at Simeon's blessing. Judah was a tribe of warriors, leading battles, and Moses blessed them to return unharmed from war.

Tanakh

Judah acknowledges Tamar's righteousness after recognizing her as the woman he slept with instead of the prostitute, and the intimacy between them ceased. In a prophecy from Jacob, Judah is praised as a lion's whelp, with a rulership that will not depart until tribute and homage is his, and symbolized by his eyes being darker than wine and his teeth whiter than milk. In Judges 9, it is expressed that there would be opposition to Abimelech's rule if someone had control over the people.

Quoting Commentary

• Yoma discusses the halachic decisions of the tribe of Yehuda, whereas Bava Kamma focuses on Yehuda himself and his status in the Heavenly Court.  
• Moshe's prayer on behalf of Yehuda affected his descendants who sat in earthly courts.  
• Yehudah played a crucial role in heavenly court rulings.  
• R. Bahya discusses how the character of Yehudah and his descendants was influenced by Moshe's prayer.  
• Judaism did not rely on military strength for victory in the land of Canaan.  
• God's presence is recognized by those who are experts in praise.  
• The psalmist describes how God raises the soul up from the impurity of the world.  
• Judah was blessed by Moses to be strong in leadership roles.  
• The flag of Judah signifies monarchy and he was blessed with military leadership abilities.

Chasidut

- Shimon did not receive a separate blessing from Moshe due to his involvement in the mass fornication with the Moabite women in Shittim  
- Yehuda's mission was to bring holiness into the mundane world  
- Yosef's mission was to be entirely holy and devoted to Hashem  
- There was a debate about spreading holiness through a few holy individuals versus many individuals on a lower level  
- Yehuda believed in spreading out to bring holiness everywhere

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:7, the Targums Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan all provide blessings for the tribe of Yehudah, asking for God's assistance in battles, vengeance against enemies, and peace for the nation.

Musar

- The bones of Judah were rolling in his casket in the desert until Moses prayed for mercy for him  
- Judah was not able to engage in halachic discussions until Moses prayed for him  
- Judah accepted excommunication upon himself due to a ban placed by his brothers  
- Yehudah's learning was not at the level of halachic decisions until Moses prayed for him  
- Yissachar's full-time dedication to Torah study is highlighted as a pillar supporting the world  
- Zevulun's financial support of Torah scholars is emphasized as important and unique

Deuteronomy 33:8

Chasidut

In Chasidut, Ba'al Shem Tov explains that Levi, meaning "to be joined with God," does not need to exert himself when studying Torah. In Likutei Moharan, it is discussed that the oil of the Chanukah lights symbolizes the revelation of truth through kindnesses and halakhot, represented by "Your truth and your light." The oil is compared to the light of truth in Psalms.

Midrash

• Moses anointed and sanctified the Tabernacle and its vessels   
• God was angry with Israel for worshipping the Golden Calf  
• Moses pleaded for mercy and God reconciled with Israel  
• Umbrage remained in God's heart towards Israel until the Tabernacle was crafted  
• Moses heard a pleasant voice after the Tabernacle was crafted, symbolizing peace between God and Israel  
• The tribe of Levi did not participate in the worship of the Golden Calf  
• Levi was righteous and observed the covenant even in Egypt  
• Moses and Aaron were not allowed to enter the Promised Land for not fully trusting in God  
• Levi was praised for being faithful and tested at Massah  
• Levi did not participate in the sinful acts of the Golden Calf and earned the eternal priesthood for his zeal  
• Levi feared God and leaned towards good actions  
• Moses did not have full faith in God's plan and questioned his ability to lead the Israelites  
• Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were sent before Israel for redemption  
• Moses questioned his role in the redemption of Israel but God assured him of His plans  
• Israel quickly circumcised all slaves and children to partake in the paschal offering  
• Levi was the only tribe that observed circumcision in Egypt and followed God's covenant

Commentary

- Moses spoke about the Levites, specifically referring to Aaron, the High Priest, who was considered pious and was chosen to wear the Urim and Thummim breastplate (Chizkuni, Or HaChaim)  
- Despite being tested and having a misstep in the past, Aaron was holy and forbidden to defile himself even for close family members (Chizkuni)  
- Levi is considered pious while being tested repeatedly, faithful during the incident of Massah/Merivah, only falling short when involved in the waters of Meribah (Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim)  
- The Urim and Thummim are associated with the High Priestly lineage and his descendants (Ibn Ezra)  
- Levi's righteous conduct during testing, such as in Merivah, reflects their loyalty and was a condition for them to teach Torah and fulfill priestly duties (Rabbeinu Bahya, Sforno)  
- The term "whom thou didst strive with at the waters of Meribah" suggests reflecting on the incident in the wilderness where Aaron was tested due to the people's strife, with Moses also being reproached (Siftei Chakhamim)  
- The Levites were commended for staying faithful during trials, showing loyalty to God even when others turned against Moses, and maintained piety throughout their history (Tur HaArokh, Steinsaltz)

Quoting Commentary

- Moses bestowed blessings on the Levites, which were effective in place of Yaakov's failure to bless them  
- Moses reaffirmed Moses' blessing upon the Levites  
- Moses' instructions to strike, not speak to, a rock were similar to previous instructions in Exodus  
- Moses, while rebuking, made reference to water miracles in Deuteronomy  
- Hur was killed in the incident of the golden calf  
- Hur's death impact was felt in future incidents surrounding Aaron  
- Aaron's intentions during the golden calf incident were pure, yet God was angry due to the sin of the people  
- Aaron's sin during the golden calf incident led to the loss of his children  
- The tribe of Levi did not suffer under Egyptian enslavement due to their continued practice of circumcision and Torah study  
- The Israelite women were not persecuted as severely due to their lack of obligation to observe certain commandments  
- Levi and Simeon drank from the same cup, but Levi repaid his debt through faithful actions, leading to a blessing

Liturgy

The text praises God for creating the world, from the heavens and the earth to plants, animals, and man, culminating in the stories of Cain and Abel, the flood, Noah, and the Tower of Babel. It highlights the righteous individuals in history such as Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Levi, leading to the role of the High Priest on Yom Kippur, including the rituals and preparations involving purification and daily service. The commentary connects these stories and rituals to the atonement and forgiveness offered to the Jewish people on Yom Kippur according to Torah teachings.

Tanakh

The text from Malachi 2:6 emphasizes the importance of priests following proper rulings and staying loyal to God. It suggests that priests should guide people away from sin and speak words of integrity and righteousness (Tanakh).

Second Temple

In the commentary on Genesis 49:5, it is explained that Simeon and Levi are two champions united in will. Moses combines the two brothers into one in his blessings, merging their natures and emphasizing their harmony in thought and purpose. This blending of Simeon into Levi symbolizes the unity of hearing and action in these brothers.

Targum

Moshe blessed the tribe of Levi, saying that Aaron was clothed with Urim and Tummim by God, was found pious and faithful in testing at the waters of Meribah.

Musar

- God employed His Ineffable Name in the emanations of creation, from תפארת to מלכות  
- Israel's connection with תפארת through Jacob as ישראל discussed elsewhere  
- Prohibition of making anointing oil or incense for mundane purposes to avoid giving powers to the "left" side  
- Tabernacle as a re-enactment of creation, rehabilitating damage caused by Adam's sin  
- Parallel Tabernacle in Celestial Regions  
- Aaron symbolized man's rehabilitation from sin, representing loving-kindness  
- Verse about Aaron in Leviticus related to original Adam  
- Anomaly in verse 8 regarding אורים ותומים sequence reversed, High Priest consulted God by individual letters protruding on the breastplate.

Kabbalah

Aaron is given the Urim and Thummim for Temple service only if found fit. This is based on his loyalty and disregard for his parents. Once on the proper level, he can teach laws, offer incense, and calm divine anger, bringing peace. Aaron's substance is blessed by the Lord.

Deuteronomy 33:9

Midrash

- The covenant of the Holy One, blessed be He, with Israel is emphasized in the Midrash.  
- The tribe of Levi is described as righteous and devoted, especially during times of idol worship and rebellion within Israel.  
- The Levites are seen as deserving of their role in the community due to their righteousness and dedication to God.  
- Circumcision is highlighted as a sign of the covenant with God and a marker of merit in the eyes of the Holy One.  
- The importance of testing individuals is emphasized as a way for God to assess their righteousness and commitment.  
- Various biblical figures, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the tribe of Levi, are cited as examples of those who withstood trials and were rewarded by God.  
- The tribe of Levi is commended for its loyalty and righteousness during times of spiritual challenges within Israel.  
- Israel's departure from Egypt is attributed to the merits of various individuals, including the tribe of Levi and their dedication to God.  
- Upholding the covenant and observing God's word are seen as crucial for receiving blessings and protection from the Holy One.  
- The wicked and righteous are contrasted, emphasizing the importance of following God's commandments and trusting in Him.

Second Temple

- Levi forsakes father and mother, mind and material body, for God (Deut. 33:9, Deut. 10:9)  
- The danger of Mind being drawn away from God by cleaving to Sense-perception is shown through Levi's choice (Deut. 33:9) and reference to two goats (Lev. 16:8)  
- Mind renounces mortal parents and brethren, seeking wisdom (Deut. 33:9)  
- Flight from worldly distractions to minister to God (Deut. 33:9)  
- Levi honored for rejecting material things and seeking God as his portion (Deut. 33:9, Deut. 10:9)  
- Levi guards God's covenant and expounds judgments and laws (Deut. 33:9)

Commentary

The Levites did not defile the Tabernacle, did not worship the golden calf, executed family members who did, kept the covenant, observed God's word, did not show favoritism in judgment even towards family, sired children for God's service, did not circumcise their sons in the desert, did the rite of circumcision, prevented idol worship, served as a royal guard for God, fought zealously for Heaven, upheld God's covenant, did not show favoritism even to family, and executed those who worshiped the golden calf.

Quoting Commentary

Moses called on all Israelites not involved with the golden calf, only the tribe of Levi completely rejected the golden calf, consecrating themselves as a result; the Levites are known as transmitters of the word of God. The Levites were deemed blessed for having circumcised their sons for God, caution Moses to become blessed through carrying out His instructions now, and Moses recognized their collective loyalty in Deuteronomy 33:9-11. Zevulun's blessing precedes Yissachar's because Torah study needs support for scholars' basic needs.

Chasidut

- Elders and nobles had visions equivalent to Ezekiel and Amos in the book of Exodus  
- Whiteness signifies closeness to the essence of the Creator  
- Levites and priests emerged as qualitatively superior   
- Tribe of Levi attained a higher spiritual status than their ancestors  
- Moses blesses Shimon under Yehudah's blessing to avoid embarrassment  
- Tribe of Levi blessed independently for loyalty to God during the golden calf incident  
- Moses' blessing of the tribes in Deuteronomy 33 includes explanation of the word "וזאת" referring to specific blessings on each tribe.

Halakhah

• Moses circumcised the people of Israel in Egypt, as they had neglected the covenant of circumcision, except for the tribe of Levi.   
• The tribe of Levi did not have a portion in Israel's inheritance, but was chosen for their service in the House of God and to provide cities for them to dwell in and to shelter accidental killers.   
• The tribe of Levi was known for their virtues, wisdom, and adherence to the proper path, as stated in Deuteronomy 33:9.

Targum

The Targums of Onkelos, Jerusalem, and Jonathan all focus on the tribe of Levi, praising them for their commitment to God's commandments and covenant despite not showing mercy to their own family members if they were found guilty or in violation of the law. The Levites are commended for their dedication to the service of the tabernacle and commitment to keeping the word of God.

Talmud

- Ravina related a halakha regarding the tribe of Levi  
- Sons of Rav Pappa bar Abba raised an objection, citing a verse from Deuteronomy 33:9  
- The verse implies some Levites engaged in idol worship and were killed by their relatives

Kabbalah

Aaron is given the Urim and Thummim for Temple service only if found fit. This is based on his loyalty and disregard for his parents. Once on the proper level, he can teach laws, offer incense, and calm divine anger, bringing peace. Aaron's substance is blessed by the Lord.

Deuteronomy 33:10

Midrash

• Elkanah and Micah are contrasted with Elkanah fulfilling obligations to God's image while Micah atoning for sins  
• Incense offering is seen as enriching while burnt-offering is frequent  
• Only young scholars from the tribe of Levi or Issachar can decide Law questions  
• Aaron used incense to calm an angel, showing its significance  
• Levi is praised for avoiding the sin of the Golden Calf  
• The tribe of Levi is commended for continuing to serve God during Israel's idolatry  
• Levites ruled on various disputes and were tasked with teaching judgments to Jacob  
• Levites were circumcised and adhered to God's commands even during Israel's disobedience

Jewish Thought

- Actions and deeds in Jewish thought are seen as causes that can have positive or negative effects, building momentum in a certain direction.  
- The concept of "the reward of a good deed is another good deed" reflects the idea that good causes lead to further good effects.  
- Refinement of one's personality can be achieved even if deeds are not of perfect quality through a combination of action and study.  
- The appointment of judges and kings in Jewish law is discussed in relation to their provisions for sustenance to ensure they can properly fulfill their roles.  
- Judah's tribe is assured of never ceasing from Torah study, with Torah study seen as essential in Jewish thought for achieving perfection.  
- Precepts in Jewish laws aim to promote empathy for the poor and vulnerable, encouraging assistance and avoiding causing harm to those in need.  
- The priestly blessing is connected to the blessing over the Torah, highlighting the importance of establishing Torah within the Jewish people through the holiness of the priesthood.

Quoting Commentary

- The incense should be offered multiple times by a person and helps make them wealthy.  
- Individuals new to preparing incense should take a lot of it, but they should not repeat the process again so that everyone can become wealthy.  
- The incense should not be offered by someone found worthy once to repeat it so that all can be wealthy.  
- A transgression can be brought upon the people by the High Priest if he gives erroneous halachic rulings.  
- Spiritual lineage should be traced back to priests and Levites, but this has not been done.  
- Levites are seen as Torah teachers, and are known for adjudicating individual cases.  
- The Levites become wealthy and blessed through offering incense, and hence its repetition is prohibited.  
- The Levites were designated to teach the Torah and maintain G'd's laws for both Jacob and Israel.  
- The incense was used to counteract G'd's anger and represented the attribute of Justice.  
- The incense was used to draw down blessings from G'd and establish a spiritual connection with Him.  
- Offering strange incense is deemed as a sin, and directing the incense to G'd's attribute of Justice led to Nadab and Abihu's punishment.

Commentary

The Levites are qualified to teach and enforce God's laws to Jacob due to their impartiality and focus on Torah study. They were not given a share of the land to enable them to focus on teaching laws. The reference to incense and burnt offerings relates to the duties of the priests among the Levites. The tribe of Levi spreads throughout the Jewish people to learn Torah. Rashi emphasizes the worthiness of the Levites to teach judgments, while Siftei Chakhamim explains why the blessing of the Levites is praised more than other tribes. The Olah sacrifice is called as such because it is entirely consumed on the altar for God. The Levites, especially the priests, teach God's ordinances and laws to the Israelites as a reward for their righteousness.

Halakhah

- Levites were descendants of the tribe of Levi who taught Torah, served in the Tabernacle, and did not receive a portion of inheritance or spoils of war like the rest of the tribes.  
- Levites were set aside to serve God, teach Torah, and were not involved in material matters.  
- Levites had a positive commandment to be free and prepared for service in the Sanctuary.  
- City of the Levites were prepared to meet the needs of all other tribes, focused on wisdom, not preoccupied with working the land, and had cities of refuge.

Chasidut

- The incense binds the heart's burning with the ruach   
- Incense makes the heart rejoice   
- Incense nullifies the curse of eating bread by the sweat of one's nostrils

Mishnah

- Before the third lottery, only new priests could participate in the incense offering  
- The fourth lottery was open to both new and experienced priests to determine who would take the limbs to the altar   
- The fourth lottery determined who would take the limbs from the ramp to the altar

Targum

The Targum commentaries on Deuteronomy 33:10 all emphasize the role of the Levites in teaching the laws and judgments to the Israelites, offering incense to restrain God's anger, and presenting acceptable sacrifices on the altar. The Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan specifically mention the importance of the Levites in teaching both the laws and judgments of God to the people of Israel.

Talmud

• In Babylon, it was taught that if Yom Kippur fell on Shabbat, they wouldn't sound the shofar or recite havdala, but in Israel, it was equated the sanctity of Yom Kippur with Shabbat based on Rabbi Akiva's opinion (Talmud|Shabbat 114b:1).  
• There is a debate in the Talmud about why those who burn incense become wealthy, questioning whether the same applies to those who perform the sacrifice of a burnt-offering (Talmud|Yoma 26a:4).  
• Rava states that Torah scholars who provide halakhic instruction usually come from the tribes of Levi or Issachar, based on specific verses from Deuteronomy and Chronicles, although scholars also come from the tribe of Judah, those capable of translating abstract Torah analysis into legal principles usually come from Levi or Issachar (Talmud|Yoma 26a:6).

Musar

- The text discusses the importance of supporting men who dedicate themselves to serving the Lord, similar to the tribe of Levi, who were separated to serve God and not involved in the affairs of the world  
- Aaron was consoled by God for not being among the Princes who consecrated the world, with his share being greater as he would kindle the lights of the candelabrum daily  
- The tribe of Levi and the importance of Torah study, with the Levites not receiving a share in land to allow them to focus on studying and teaching Torah  
- The incense offering as an expression of man trying to please God and keep Him in a happy frame of mind  
- The connection between the tribe of Levi, Torah study, and the crowns of Royalty and Priesthood  
- The importance of the Torah in achieving attachment to God, with the tribe of Levi instructing Jacob and Israel in Torah  
- The Priesthood and Royalty as interconnected, with David symbolizing the kingdom of the house of David and Tamar representing the Priesthood in the line of Yehudah, linking to Caleb and Pinchas from the tribes of Yehudah and Levi, respectively

Kabbalah

Aaron is given the Urim and Thummim for Temple service only if found fit. This is based on his loyalty and disregard for his parents. Once on the proper level, he can teach laws, offer incense, and calm divine anger, bringing peace. Aaron's substance is blessed by the Lord.

Deuteronomy 33:11

Quoting Commentary

- Mishnah Yoma 2:4:2 explains that new priests would participate in offering incense due to the blessings and reward associated with it from Deuteronomy 33:10-11.  
- The commentary contrasts King Saul and King David's approaches to Torah study and decision-making, highlighting David's accuracy in halachic rulings and Saul's lack thereof in rendering decisions according to accepted halachah.  
- Aaron's act of interceding during a plague is linked to Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 33:11, emphasizing the importance of offering incense to God.  
- The importance of showing mercy and not stealing from the poor is stressed in various biblical verses and is further elaborated by Solomon to highlight the severity of stealing from the vulnerable.  
- The relationship between Moses and God in their communication is highlighted as an example of their unique closeness and intimacy in Rabbeinu Bahya's commentary on Shemot 34:35:4.   
- Burning incense on the altar was associated with wealth and blessings, as explained by Rambam in Mishnah Yoma 2:4:1, leading to restrictions on who could perform this task in order to maximize blessings for each individual.

Midrash

• Jacob paired Judah with Babylon and Benjamin with Media in terms of kingdoms that would conquer Israel, with Judah likened to a lion and Benjamin to a wolf.  
• Levi was paired with Greece, becoming the third tribe and kingdom, with both having three letters in Hebrew.  
• Joseph was paired with Edom, with Joseph forsooking licentiousness and Edom cleaving to it.  
• Moses paired the tribe of Levi with the kingdom of Greece, blessing them to overcome their enemies.  
• The service of a priest with a blemish is considered defective, while the service of a priestly son born of a divorced woman or Chalutza is lawful.  
• The righteous act through the Holy Spirit, with blessings and actions aimed at overcoming challenges and establishing faithfulness to God.

Commentary

In Deuteronomy 33:11, the blessing requested for the tribe of Levi includes that the work of their hands (their sacrifices), their possessions, and Temple service may be favored by God, and that their enemies - specifically those who rose up against them like the Greeks - are prevented from doing so successfully. The reference to destroying foes and enemies is explained as preventing them from rising against Levi in the future. Tur HaArokh pleads for the tribe to be given human resources as they risk their lives in their tasks to avoid mistakes that could lead to death, and Ramban links the blessing of resources to the wealth of priests performing incense service.

Talmud

• Rebbi Yannai discusses the validity of descendants of Levi in terms of priestly work based on Torah verses.   
• Rebbi Hanina and Rebbi Yose debate about the process of lottery for incense and pan duties with references to Mishnah and Baraita.  
• Shmuel's father and Rabbi Eliezer talk about accepting the work of "profane ones" and offerings despite lineage issues.   
• Rabbi Yehoshua validates offerings of a disqualified priest based on a verse regarding Levi.   
• The relationship between wealth and burning incense is debated, with references to verses about incense and burnt-offerings.

Halakhah

- If a priest is discovered to be a challal after performing service, his previous service is acceptable but he cannot serve in the future.  
- The Levites did not receive an inheritance in Eretz Yisrael or the spoils of war because they were set apart to serve God and teach His ways, living off the provision of God instead of physical power.

Targum

Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan all provide interpretations of Deuteronomy 33:11, focusing on blessing the tribe of Levi's wealth, accepting their offerings, defeating their enemies, and ensuring their adversaries do not rise again. Targum Jonathan specifically mentions the sacrifice and oblation of Levi, the tenth of the tenth, and the hand of Elijah the priest on Mount Carmel.

Liturgy

In the post-meal blessing in the Siddur Edot HaMizrach, one may add a personal prayer after reciting the traditional blessings.

Chasidut

- The text discusses blessings on substance and work of the hands before the Lord  
- It encourages persistence in noble deeds to be great in leading others to righteousness   
- This righteousness will be credited to those who lead others in every city and congregation

Kabbalah

Aaron is given the Urim and Thummim for Temple service only if found fit. This is based on his loyalty and disregard for his parents. Once on the proper level, he can teach laws, offer incense, and calm divine anger, bringing peace. Aaron's substance is blessed by the Lord.

Deuteronomy 33:12

Jewish Thought

The temple was to be erected in the territory of Benjamin, who had not bowed down to Esau. Saul and Mordechai, descendants of Benjamin, defeated Esau's descendants. Esau thought Jacob had offered all his wealth as atonement, but Jacob corrected him, showing that material values should not be overemphasized. Divine help only came after exhausting natural means.

Commentary

- Benjamin's blessing started without 'vav' since it was the only tribe that did not sin and did not have to roll underground during resurrection or be eaten by worms (Alshekh)  
- Benjamin mentioned next to Levi because Temple was near its territory, with God's protective presence constantly manifest there (Chizkuni)  
- Benjamin's territory held God's protective presence, shielding from attackers (Chizkuni)  
- Temple was on Benjamin's territory because its founding father was innocent, born in Israel, and God's presence felt at home there (Chizkuni)  
- Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord, dwells in safety by God with God between his shoulders (Ibn Ezra)  
- God's glory dwelled in Benjamin's portion in Jerusalem (Ibn Ezra)  
- Interpretation of "between his shoulders" suggests God's glory was visible in Benjamin's territory (Ibn Ezra)  
- Benjamin mentioned before Joseph to highlight Temple building in his territory (Rashi)  
- God's presence never left Jerusalem once chosen and does not rest elsewhere (Rashi)  
- Temple was built 23 cubits below a higher spot in Benjamin's territory (Rashi)  
- Temple referred to as between the shoulders due to Mount Zion, not the highest (Steinsaltz)

Halakhah

The interpretation of "chupah" comes from the expression of covering and separating individuals from others, with the chupah symbolizing honor and distinction in marriage. The chupah of honor is established for reciting the seven benedictions, and does not require witnesses for the yichud or wedding benedictions, as the couple is expected to consummate the marriage immediately after. The purpose of the chupah is to signify marriage and the separation of the couple from others, with the Rambam's view that the chupah is bringing the bride into the groom's house for the purpose of marriage, including complete yichud for living together as husband and wife. There is disagreement among Halakhic authorities regarding the necessity of complete yichud in one room for the chupah.

Talmud

• Deuteronomy speaks about whether the Temple belonged to Judah or all of Israel.  
• Judah and Benjamin are said to have had Temple parts.  
• Commentary on Deuteronomy 33:12 varied in texts, mentioning Benjamin's blessing.  
• Benjamin was said to have been gracious in the presence of God.  
• The tractate highlights Benjamin as the host of the Divine Presence more than once.  
• Jerusalem is said to have been divided among the tribes.  
• The Temple might have been originally planned for Ein Eitam.

Midrash

Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10 explains that the four directions of the world were created by God, corresponding to the four banners for Moses: Judah is associated with the east, for kingdom; Issachar with the south, for Torah; Zebulun with the west, for wealth; and Dan with the north, for darkness due to idol worship. Judah is always first due to its significance in encampment, traveling, offerings, and war, while the tribe of Benjamin is noted for its connection to the Temple. In another commentary on the same topic, the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 93:6 discusses Judah's approach in various situations: for war, conciliation, and prayer, showcasing his readiness. Midrash Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Bava Batra 1:43 discusses those over whom the Angel of Death had no dominion, including Judah. The Midrash Ein Yaakov, Sotah 7:21 mentions how Judah acted to sanctify the name of God, showcasing his strength. The Midrash Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate Vayehi Beshalach highlights how Benjamin was rewarded for his actions during the splitting of the sea, leading to the presence of the Shechinah on his portion.

Quoting Commentary

- Moses prayed for the people after breaking the Tablets and purifying them, some commentators question his nerve in asking for forgiveness before the people made amends  
- Saul's ability to make decisions was due to the Divine presence being with the tribe of Benjamin because of the Temple's location in their territory  
- Yaakov's statement about the place alludes to the three Temples, each represented by different elements present or missing  
- The tribe of Binyamin was compensated for being unjustly accused by having the Holy Temple built in their area  
- Judah's speech to Joseph alludes to past family events and uses imagery of lions and oxen  
- The number of Israelites present affects the presence of the Shechinah, with 600,000 being a significant number for revelation and Torah  
- The tribes of Israel were set up in specific locations around the Tabernacle based on qualities and directions, symbolizing celestial arrangements  
- The Shekhinah was said to rest in the territory of Binyamin, with additional commentary referencing Rachel's burial location.

Chasidut

Yaakov's focus on Rachel is emphasized by the uniqueness of her sons, Yosef and Binyamin symbolizing a path from Leah to Rachel. Yosef is described as separate from his brothers, and Binyamin as having God dwelling between his shoulders, indicating a connection to the luz. This highlights the progression from Leah to Rachel in spiritual attainment.

Targum

Mosheh blessed the tribe of Benjamin, stating that they are beloved by the Lord and will be protected, with the Shekinah dwelling within their borders. This protection is compared to a shield over them during the day and the Lord residing between their shoulders [Targum|Onkelos Deuteronomy 33:12]. The tribe of Benjamin is specifically mentioned as having the Shekinah's glory dwelling within their borders, ensuring their security and protection [Targum|Targum Jerusalem, Deuteronomy 33:12]. Additionally, it is noted that the Shekinah will dwell within the borders of Benjamin, offering ongoing protection and security to the tribe [Targum|Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 33:12].

Deuteronomy 33:13

Commentary

• The land of Joseph is blessed due to his resistance to temptation, contrasting with Adam's curse on the land. (Chizkuni)  
• The heavens will provide precious things for Joseph's land. (Ibn Ezra)  
• Moses wished for Joseph's land to receive heavenly dew and rainfall, as well as beneficial waters from below. (Or HaChaim, Ramban)  
• Joseph's land is particularly fertile and blessed by God. (Sforno)  
• Joseph's land will have abundant water from above and below. (Steinsaltz, Sforno)  
• Joseph's land will contain good grain, fruit, gold, and silver. (Tze'enah Ure'enah)  
• Moses did not explicitly bless Simeon due to historical reasons, and instead subtly included him in Judah's blessing. (Tze'enah Ure'enah)

Tanakh

In Genesis 49:25, Jacob blesses his son Joseph with the blessings of God and Shaddai, including blessings from heaven and the deep, as well as blessings related to fertility.

Jewish Thought

- The blessing of Yosef mentions that his land is blessed by the Lord  
- This blessing is on the right side, in opposition to the quality of Din on the left side  
- The gematria of this blessing equals 985

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:13, different Targums convey the blessing of the tribe of Joseph by Moses, focusing on the fruitful land blessed by Adonoy with dew, rain, and water from the depths of the earth. The blessings are linked to the land's productivity and abundance through divine favor.

Quoting Commentary

- The Torah does not associate God with initiating disaster if it can be avoided  
- The blessings of the deep are emphasized as beneficial and vital for life  
- Asher was blessed by Moses to have many children and be favored by his brothers, which was fulfilled through strong and numerous descendants who were leaders and warriors.

Midrash

- The Midrash Sifrei Devarim 353:1 discusses how Joseph's land was the most blessed of all lands.  
- This is based on the verse in Devarim 33:13 which states that Joseph's land is blessed by God.

Deuteronomy 33:14

Talmud

- Fruits should not be gathered from a place that faces the sun as stated in Deuteronomy 33:14.  
- Remedies for bulmos include a sheep's tail with honey, fine wheat flour with honey, barley flour with honey, and ripe figs from the east side of a tree.  
- Ripe figs are found first on the side where the sun rises, making them sweet and flavorful.

Commentary

- Chizkuni explains that fruit trees start growing at the beginning of the month, with different categories beginning to grow and ripen at each new moon.  
- Ibn Ezra notes that the fruits of the seed and vineyard are dependent on the sun.  
- Ibn Ezra also discusses how the moon produces its yield through moisture in the air, as it has a different influence compared to the sun.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya highlights the association of the sun with fire and the moon with water, both impacting crop ripening, and emphasizes the beneficial effects on harvests in the territory of Joseph.  
- Rashi explains that the land produced sweet fruit due to exposure to the sun.  
- Siftei Chakhamim suggests that the plural "moons" indicates the monthly yield of fruits produced by the earth each month.

Quoting Commentary

- Commentary by Chizkuni on Genesis 1:15:1 talks about the function of luminaries like sun and moon to illuminate earth and sustain life for plants and living creatures.   
- Malbim on Isaiah 54:12:3 refers to shoham stone as symbol of wealth and success, linking it to sunlight's bounty.   
- Midrash BeChiddush ties Egyptian slavery to prematurely ripened fruits and impurity, avoiding early redemption, and the implications of the three generations mentioned in the Haggadah.   
- Rabbeinu Bahya on Bereshit 2:8:1 highlights how God personally created the garden in Eden with trees designed to never decay, suggesting an eastern location for it.   
- Radak on Genesis 1:11:1 and Genesis 1:14:2 emphasizes how earth was equipped for vegetation growth, luminaries impacting plant growth, separation of day and night, moon's influence on crops, and the division of time into hours, seasons, days, and years.

Chasidut

- Stars have an effect on human service of God through their influence on the body and constitution, not the soul  
- Maimonides discusses using inclinations for holiness to avoid falling into transgression  
- R. Nahman b. Yitzhak's failure to use his star's inclination for holiness led to his struggle with temptation  
- The presence of Mazal influences wisdom and choice fruits, extending even to inanimate objects and the smallest elements of nature as indicated in various Talmudic and Midrashic texts.

Targum

The verses in Deuteronomy 33:14 mention how the earth produces bountiful harvests with the help of the sun and moon, yielding fruits and produce at the beginning of each month.

Halakhah

- The power of the sun and moon affects all living beings and plants on Earth, as noted in Deuteronomy 33:14.  
- People avoid certain activities during the renewal of the moon, such as cutting trees, casting off from waters, and drawing blood.  
- Renewal of the moon brings novelty and requires sacrifice to honor God.  
- A sacrifice is commanded on every Rosh Chodesh in addition to regular offerings, according to Numbers 28:11.

Deuteronomy 33:15

Commentary

Moses references the choicest mountains created during the first six days of creation, specifically the mountains of Ephrayim. The precious things that grow on the tops of ancient hills are blessed. The hills in Joseph's territory were created before all others and are everlastingly productive. The blessing of Joseph's land comes from the mountains and hills. Additionally, the fertility of Joseph's land denotes the blessing of the patriarchs and matriarchs.

Talmud

All covers in the Tabernacle and Temple were in Benjamin's part due to his central location. Despite other references to the Temple being in Judah or Ephraim's territory, Benjamin was chosen. The atonement sacral meat was consumed in Joseph's part. The altar was situated between Benjamin and Joseph due to the border turning eastward. The Divine Presence dwelt in Joseph's greatness.

Targum

The verse in Deuteronomy 33:15 from Targum Onkelos speaks of the first fruits from the early mountains and sweetness from the perennial hills. Targum Jerusalem interprets it as abundance in fruitfulness for the righteousness of the holy fathers and mothers. Targum Jonathan mentions the goodness bestowed through birthright from the mountain tops and hills, inherited by blessings from the fathers and mothers.

Quoting Commentary

- Pharaoh sent petitioners to Joseph for bread; Joseph told them to return after circumcising themselves  
- People told Pharaoh that all stored food had rotted; Pharaoh instructed them to go back to Joseph and follow his instructions  
- Joseph's selling of grain in Egypt led to blessings as seen in Proverbs 11:26, Genesis 49:26, and Deuteronomy 33:15  
- Radak on Genesis 49:11:1 praises the quality of land given to the tribe of Yehudah, with abundant vineyards and wine  
- Rashbam on Genesis 49:26:3 explains the expression "as far as the furthest hills of the world" as emphasizing the extent of Joseph's blessing, similar to other biblical descriptions of vastness

Deuteronomy 33:16

Midrash

• Joseph comforted his brothers, assuring them they intended harm for good reasons  
• Joseph compares his brothers to elemental forces and stars, emphasizing their unchanging significance  
• Joseph clarifies his intentions towards his brothers, affirming his loyalty and lineage  
• Joseph rejects the idea of harming his brothers or going against his family or God  
• The Midrash concludes that if Joseph's comforting words could ease his brothers' hearts, then God will provide even greater comfort to Jerusalem  
• The descendants of Benjamin and Naphtali are described, with detailed explanations for each name  
• Explanations for the symbolism of various elements in Jacob's blessing to Joseph are provided, including references to the images of his parents and locations in Israel  
• Interpretations of Jacob's blessing, highlighting Joseph's unique position among his brothers and his separation from them due to circumstances like his time away from them and his abstinence from wine

Tanakh

- Moses was tending his father-in-law's flock when he came to Horeb, the mountain of God (Exodus 3:1)  
- A messenger of יהוה appeared to Moses in a burning bush that was not consumed (Exodus 3:2)  
- The blessings of Joseph from his father surpass those of his ancestors and reach to the eternal hills (Genesis 49:26)

Jewish Thought

- Term used in reference to God for Divine Presence or Providence  
- Indicates Divine Presence manifesting constantly in a place or object  
- Examples given with biblical references  
- Term must be interpreted based on context as referring to either Shechinah or Providence

Commentary

• the Earth refers to flat land, in contrast to mountains and hills (Ibn Ezra)  
• The Earth's fullness includes not only produce but also gold and silver (Ibn Ezra)  
• "Good will of Him" primarily refers to heaven, but alternative interpretations have been suggested (Ibn Ezra, Or HaChaim)  
• The blessing to rest on Joseph's head refers to two outstanding virtues of loyalty and forgiveness (Or HaChaim)  
• The term "let the blessing come" refers to the blessing mentioned in previous verses, with a commentary on the elongated form of the word (Ibn Ezra)  
• God's goodwill to rest on Joseph's head indicated in the text (Steinsaltz)  
• The odd word choice in the verse, "tavothah," hints at a time lapse in redemption for the tribe of Joseph (Rabbeinu Bahya)  
• Focusing on the Divine manifestation at the burning bush in the context of the blessing (Ramban, Sforno, Tur HaArokh)  
• Reference to the extended blessing from God resting on Joseph (Siftei Chakhamim, Rashi)

Talmud

- Rabbi Ḥiyya heard that all covers in the Tabernacles and Temple were only in Benjamin's part, as it was located between his shoulders  
- Even though Judah was chosen over Joseph, Benjamin was also included in this choice for the location of the Temple  
- The pleasure of the Dweller was in the senna of Joseph, where sacral meat given for atonement was consumed  
- The altar was situated on the border of Joseph, which turned eastward to Taanat-Shilo  
- The Divine Presence dwelt in the greatness of Joseph, as mentioned in Moses' blessing to Joseph  
- Offerings of lesser sanctity may be consumed in any place overlooking Shiloh, even in the portions of tribes described as hating Joseph.

Chasidut

- Yaakov's focus on Rachel is connected to achieving the concept of Leah first  
- Moshe embodied Truth and Tsedek, while Aaron embodied Hesed and Peace  
- Moshe's patience was tested by God through the burning bush  
- Moshe blessed Yosef with the attribute of patience for Israel's redemption  
- The First Temple represented a rectification of the heart, while the Second Temple was compared to the body  
- Shilo, First Temple, and Second Temple brought some rectification for sins before the days of the Messiah

Quoting Commentary

• The midrash in Pesach Haggadah discusses the pressures and tasks the Egyptians forced upon the Israelites, aiming to weaken and oppress them.  
• Rashi on Exodus 15:2 explores the wording "my might and my praise," questioning translation and punctuation in biblical text.  
• Rashi on Isaiah 12:2 discusses the strength and praise of God as salvation in Hebrew grammar.  
• Radak on Psalms 3:3:2 comments on the repetition in the term "salvation" as indicating the lack of salvation for a specific individual.  
• Rashi on Isaiah 22:16 and Song of Songs 6:12 debate the presence of a superfluous yud in certain Hebrew words.  
• Rashi on Zechariah 11:17 discusses "worthless shepherd" and the yud's use as a pronoun.  
• Sforno connects blessings directly from God to Joseph in Genesis 49 in relation to blessings of the land.  
• Tze'enah Ure'enah mentions Joseph's blessing to have good grain and fruit due to his righteousness compared to Adam.

Targum

Deuteronomy 33:16 in the Targum versions describes blessings of sweetness and richness coming from the earth, the favor of the Divine presence, and being visited upon Joseph and a distinguished man among his brothers. The Targum Jonathan version also mentions fruits of the earth and the favor from Eloah toward Joseph and a leader in Egypt, making them a diadem of grandeur on their heads.

Deuteronomy 33:17

Midrash

- In Aggadat Bereshit 79:6, the text compares Joseph to a lamb and the tribes to a wolf, stating that Benjamin did not leave his father's side after Joseph was sold until Joseph revealed himself to them. It discusses the future Messiah from Joseph and David's line, saying there will be no jealousy between Ephraim and Judah.  
- Bamidbar Rabbah 14:1 identifies three kings and four commoners that do not have a share in the World to Come. It discusses Bilam, Do’eg, Aḥitofel, and Geḥazi among them. The text also mentions different interpretations regarding the anointed ones and their roles in redemption.  
- Expounding on Numbers 7:49, Bamidbar Rabbah 14:5 explains the significance of the offerings presented by Elishama son of Amihud, connecting them to figures like Jacob, Joseph, and their characteristics. The text delves into the symbolism of the offerings and how they relate to the various patriarchs.  
- In Bamidbar Rabbah 20:4, the text talks about Moav aligning with Midyan against the Israelites. It discusses the power of speech and how Balak, initially a prince, became king of Moav. It provides a parable comparing the relationship between Moav and Midyan to dogs fighting and a wolf intervening.   
- In Bamidbar Rabbah 2:7, the discussion centers on the insignias and banners of each tribe, depicting colors and symbols based on the precious stones on Aaron's heart. Each prince had a banner correlating with the gemstone assigned to their tribe.

Jewish Thought

• Reuben's sin of entering his father's bedroom constituted an irreversible desecration, leading to the loss of his birthright transferred to Joseph  
• Shimon and Levi's actions against Shechem were reprehensible due to careful planning, contrasting with Reuben's hasty error  
• Yehudah's heroic deeds did not turn against his own family, leading to him being honored and promised hereditary royalty  
• Samson's leadership is highlighted, and Gad's eventual re-emergence after captivity is noted  
• Joseph's rise to greatness attracted jealousy from his brothers, leading to reconciliation and reassurance on his deathbed  
• In messianic times, a single flag will symbolize "One nation, One G'd," ending rivalry between tribes  
• Mashiach ben Yosef is related to an ox and the concept of the horns of an ox, symbolizing war against nations, particularly in the war of Gog and Magog  
• Setting up people of Truth in the Holy City is seen as the best path to counter the Sitra Achra and prepare for Redemption

Quoting Commentary

• The Bartenura commentary on Mishnah Rosh Hashanah explains that the shofar is not called a Shofar because of a verse, and Rosh Hashanah is learned from the Jubilee year.  
• The Chizkuni commentary on Numbers describes how the names of the forefathers were inscribed on flags, with different symbols representing each tribe and how the Tabernacle was surrounded by different camps.  
• The Midrash BeChiddush on Pesach Hagaddah explains that the word "numerous" is not about quantity but about growth and stature, using metaphors from the land to describe birth and growth.  
• Another commentary by Rabbeinu Bahya discusses the symbolism behind the flags of the tribes, with each flag representing a different creature and linking them to the angels surrounding God's throne as described by Ezekiel.  
• Rabbeinu Bahya's commentary on various verses from Genesis provides a midrashic approach, linking the symbolism of names and events to further theological meanings.  
• The commentary from Radak explains the use of metaphors like horns and lions in biblical verses, providing interpretations of these symbols within the texts.  
• Rambam's commentary on the Mishnah Rosh Hashanah addresses the use of terminology and references the halakha regarding the horn of a cow and its distinction from a shofar.  
• Ramban's commentary on Deuteronomy discusses the blessing of the tribes by Moses and the significance of specific language used in these blessings in relation to each tribe's inheritance and history.

Talmud

- Talmud commentary on Bava Kamma 17a:10 explains reward for Joseph and Issachar  
- Bava Kamma 17a:11 discusses Joseph's enemies falling before him and Issachar's understanding  
- Bava Kamma 2b:4 elaborates on primary category of Goring derived from Exodus and I Kings  
- Berakhot 56b:15 advises reciting Deuteronomy 33:17 if seeing an ox in a dream  
- Rosh Hashanah 26a:4 differentiates between shofar and keren from Deuteronomy 33:17  
- Sotah 11b:20 compares Israelites to animals based on Deuteronomy 33:17 and Genesis 49

Commentary

Moses calls Joshua the "firstborn" due to being chosen by G-d from Joseph's descendants (Chizkuni). The horns represent Ephrayim's warriors, and Menashe also had a great leader, Gideon (Chizkuni). Majesty refers to the tribe of Joseph's large number (Ibn Ezra). Ephrayim had myriads while Menashe had thousands (Or HaChaim). Joshua is compared to an ox with the strength and beauty of a re’em (Rashi). Moses blesses Ephrayim first, then Menashe, in ascending order (Or HaChaim). Joseph is compared to an ox, symbolizing power, and firstborn signifies regency (Siftei Chakhamim). Joseph resembles an ox for the strength to subdue kings with the beauty of a re'em's horns (Sforno). Ephrayim and Judah together will prevail over nations (Sforno). Manasseh is blessed as thousands are referenced to Gideon's victories (Rashi). Aurochs horns symbolize Joseph's splendor and power geographically extended to nations (Steinsaltz). Joshua's position is foreshadowed by Moses' blessing (Tur HaArokh).

Tanakh

- In Judges 8:10, only Zebah and Zalmunna remained of the Kedemites after a battle, with 15,000 soldiers left out of the original 120,000 fighters.  
- In Numbers 27:20, Moses is instructed to invest someone with his authority so that the Israelite community may obey them.

Musar

- Amaleik, descendant of Eisav, is associated with the concept of an "other god" as its value is 240, same as the words "other god," while the holiness side corresponds to "the spirit of Hashem" with the same value  
- Moshiach son of David overcomes the husk of the donkey, while Moshiach son of Yosef is linked to the ox  
- The Midrash discusses the significance of "horns" in Jewish tradition, symbolizing figures like Abraham, Isaac, Moses, the Torah, priesthood, prophecy, and the Holy Temple  
- Camp flags are depicted with images of a lion for Yehudah, Adam for Reuben, an ox for Ephrayim, and an eagle for Dan, aligning with their characteristics and positions in the camp  
- The statement from Genesis 34:27, "My flock," alludes to Israel as G–d's people, while other references connect the "ox" to Joseph and the "donkey" to Issachar, with teachings about their descendants and roles in Israel's history

Chasidut

• Hishtachavu l’Hashem b’hadrat kodesh corresponds to the upper unification/marital relations of Shabbat.  
• Yosef represents "the grandeur of holiness," as in Deuteronomy 33:17.  
• Focusing on the inner intelligence of every matter is necessary.  
• The inner intelligence shines for him in each thing, even in dark and obscure places.  
• Charity is connected to the holy mouth of the tzaddik, as mentioned in Rosh HaShanah 6a.  
• The tzaddik is described as "The firstborn of his oxen, grandeur is his" in Deuteronomy 33:17.  
• The speech of the tzaddik's holy mouth carries a double connotation, enabling charlatans to gain strength.

Mishnah

The Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah 3:2 discusses the primary mitzva of Rosh HaShana - sounding the shofar. All shofarot except for the horn of a cow are fit for blowing because it is a horn and not a shofar. Rabbi Yosei questions this distinction, pointing out that all shofarot are called horns, as seen in the example of a ram's horn being used for Rosh HaShana (Joshua 6:5).

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:17, three different Targum commentaries elaborate on the blessings given to Joseph's descendants. They are prophesied to have power and strength to defeat enemies and nations to the ends of the earth, with the myriads representing Ephraim's house and the thousands representing Menasheh's house. The birthright and honor are specifically mentioned to belong to Joseph's descendants, with references made to individuals from the tribes of Ephraim and Menasheh who will achieve great victories over their enemies.

Halakhah

The minimum size of a shofar for Rosh Hashanah is such that a person can hold it in their hand and see it sticking out on both sides, as long as it has a cavity inside. Shofars from rams, ewes, male goats, and female goats are fit to blow with on Rosh Hashanah, while those of oryx and cows are not due to not having a cavity. Despite a prophetic vision in Daniel mentioning a horn on a goat, it is understood to be without a cavity and therefore disqualified. Other horns of animals are also not fit for use as shofars. (Sefer HaChinukh 405:3)

Liturgy

• The liturgy for the Selichot prayer on the Second Day of the Ten Days of Penitence in the Nusach Ashkenaz Lita tradition emphasizes the prayer for improvement, correction of ways, blessings, enrichment of the downtrodden, and restoration of the glorious majesty of Joseph.   
• The liturgy in the Nusach Lita Linear tradition also includes the reference to Joseph as B’chor Shor from Deuteronomy 33:17.  
• The Selichot prayer on the Third Day of the Ten Days of Penitence in the Nusach Polin tradition includes similar themes and references.

Kabbalah

The Shekhinah is represented by "horns of a cow", linked to the First and Second Messiahs Yod and Vav, corresponding to the First and Second Temples. The horns of re-eim symbolize Ḥesed and Gevurah, representing the war against Amaleq. The fourth exile is likened to a pit where an ox has fallen, filled with evil people akin to snakes and scorpions who uproot the words of sages. Messiah the son of Joseph is connected to Deuteronomy 33:17, ensuring he and his descendants are not violated among the nations due to the sin of Jeroboam.

Deuteronomy 33:18

Midrash

Elyasaf, the prince of Gad, presented his offering on the sixth day, corresponding to the exodus from Egypt and the partnership in the Torah. The dish and basin represent the sea and land, with significant symbolic meanings related to Moses's mother Yokheved. The silver and gold vessels symbolize plunder at the sea and in Egypt. The total weight of the offerings corresponds to the years Israel spent in Egypt. The burnt offerings symbolize the leadership of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Other offerings correspond to the good attributes of Israel in Egypt.

Commentary

Moses blesses Zevulun to rejoice in his seafaring trade, providing for Issachar's Torah study by ensuring his safety at sea, while Issachar is blessed to be successful in guarding his fertile land from potential thieves and reaping the benefits. Zevulun and Issachar are in a partnership where Zevulun supports Issachar financially, allowing him to study Torah without worry. Zevulun is encouraged to face his journeys joyfully and confidently, as his success in trade is tied to Issachar's Torah study success. Moses highlights the importance of their partnership, ensuring joy for Zevulun in both this world and the next, and blessings from celestial and terrestrial regions. Moses offers Zebulun lengthy blessings because of his precursor role in Issachar's Torah study, emphasizing the mutual benefits of their collaboration. Additionally, Zebulun's success at sea is connected to the unique resource he provides for Israel involving the hilazon fish, which will help protect them from the evil inclination. Through this partnership, both tribes are granted blessings and success in their respective endeavors.

Tanakh

Joseph handpicked five of his brothers to present to Pharaoh. [Tanakh|Genesis 47:2]

Musar

Love of Torah can be shown by discreetly supporting Torah scholars, as they dedicate themselves to their studies; it is similar to the joy of Shabbos. Providing income and honoring scholars is important, as one must give gifts in a dignified manner. Supporting Torah scholars financially is crucial, as shown in various biblical examples. Torah support can be seen as equally important as Torah study itself, and financial support is rewarded by Hashem.

Halakhah

• Torah study is a must for all Jewish men, regardless of their circumstances, and even if unable themselves to study, they should support others who do  
• Torah must be studied with dedication and sacrifice, going beyond physical comforts and material pleasures  
• Torah study in a house of study is recommended for better retention, and raising one's voice during study aids in long-term acquisition of knowledge

Chasidut

Zevulun was beloved to Yissachar, with Zevulun representing business activity and being instructed to rejoice in going out. The service of Torah is considered more intrinsic and loftier than business activity. Business activity is equated with journeys and is necessary despite attempts to prevent it. Business activity is emphasized as a crucial aspect for Zevulun.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:18 according to various Targums, Moses blesses the tribe of Zebulon, advising them to rejoice when going out for commerce or to calculate times of festivals, while the tribe of Issakar is encouraged to rejoice when coming in from their learning or schools.

Quoting Commentary

The tribe of Issachar was honored on the second day for their command of Torah, preceding Reuben due to their reputation for studying Torah without worrying about livelihood thanks to Zevulun's support. Eliab was given the name "it behooves me to be called father" for supporting Issachar in Torah study. Issachar should have received a blessing before Zevulun by birth, but Zevulun was mentioned ahead of him due to financial support. Zebulun supported Issachar in Torah study, mirroring the relationship between nations and Jerusalem. Moses blessed Zebulun before Issachar due to their intertwining relationship. Judah was specifically mentioned twice as he belonged to the weaker brethren, unlike Zebulun and Asher who were strong. Tzidon was named a great trading center, a model for Zebulun's prosperity. The names of the weak brothers were not repeated in Moses' blessing. The tribe of Issachar supported Torah study while Zebulun engaged in business, fulfilling Moses' blessing.

Deuteronomy 33:19

Halakhah

• The Amidah prayer reflects God's eternal love, present in acts of lovingkindness, creation, redemption, and protection.  
• The Hillazon, from which the Techelet dye was made, was hidden and difficult to attain, leading to questions about its significance and use.  
• Even if the correct Hillazon was found, its blood could not be used to dye Techelet due to restrictions from the Sages.  
• The signs of the Hillazon include emerging from the sea to the mountains, burying itself in the earth, and procreating while rooted in the earth.

Midrash

- Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 13:17 discusses why Judah and Issachar's princes are named differently  
- Zebulun and Issachar had a special partnership in the Torah and business  
- Zebulun presented the third offering due to their Torah partnership  
- The offerings of Zebulun and Issachar symbolized their unique relationship  
- Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 82:5 speaks about how Jacob's descendants will act like other nations when sacrificing  
- Elijah's actions on Mount Carmel are used as an example in this text  
- Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 1:8:1 discusses speech that alludes to different meanings and how it becomes tiring  
- Midrash Tanchuma Buber describes Moses blessing Israel before the Angel of Death  
- Midrash Tanchuma V'Zot HaBerachah 3:1 details Moses' interaction with the Angel of Death  
- Midrash Tehillim 119:8 speaks about how the Lord rewards the wicked and the righteous based on their deeds.

Commentary

Zebulun's wealth will be derived from the sea, receiving hidden treasures when ships wreck (Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 33:19:1). Zebulun will draw their wealth from the sea, leading to abundance and prosperity (Daat Zkenim on Deuteronomy 33:19:2). Zebulun will have such wealth that treasures will be hidden in the sand, including the Tarith, Chalazon, and white glass, located in the territory between Issachar and Zebulun (Rashi on Deuteronomy 33:19:4). The connection between Zebulun and Issachar is explained by an agreement that the merits of Torah study by Issachar would be financially supported by Zebulun (Daat Zkenim on Deuteronomy 33:19:3). The tribes of Zebulun and Issachar will draw wealth and prosperity from the sea, leading to leisure to study the Torah (Rashi on Deuteronomy 33:19:3). When interacting with other nations, the tribe of Zebulun will draw others to the worship of God on the mountain of Zion, offering sacrifices of righteousness (Steinsaltz on Deuteronomy 33:19).

Jewish Thought

• The action of bodies upon each other prepares the substance for receiving the action of an incorporeal being, or Form.  
• Incorporeal beings, in receiving and imparting power, are not limited by a particular side, distance, or time.  
• God, as an incorporeal being, has created the Universe and causes changes through Divine influence.  
• The term "influence" is used to describe the action of incorporeal beings, such as God and angels.  
• Some people imagine God's actions as commands to angels, who then carry them out through direct contact.  
• Imagining God giving commands in words is considered the work of the imagination, which is linked to "evil inclination."  
• The term "influence" is also applied to the forces of the spheres in Astrology, even though stars and spheres are corporeal and have limitations in their actions.

Quoting Commentary

During the Geonic Period, scholars from Babylonia completed the Babylonian Talmud, creating an expansive and informative body of knowledge. Moses' blessings highlighted the qualities and roles of different tribes, such as Zebulun's involvement in trade and navigation. Each tribe had unique markers and allegiances that reflected their ancestral heritage, such as the symbols on their standards. The arrangement of the tribes around the Tabernacle reflected the directions of the compass and celestial patterns, with each tribe representing different virtues and attributes. Adhering to these arrangements symbolized honor and greatness for the people of Israel.

Tanakh

- The Issacharites were skilled in interpreting signs of the times  
- They were able to determine the best course of action for Israel  
- They had 200 chiefs and all their kinsmen followed them  
- This passage highlights the importance of wisdom and leadership among the Issacharites in Israel [Tanakh|I Chronicles 12:33]

Liturgy

- The psalm calls on all nations to recognize God's sovereignty and sound blasts of the horn unto Hashem during a royal coronation ceremony.  
- The pride of Yaakov refers to the Holy Temple which is an inheritance where Hashem's spirit resides in glorious splendor.  
- The sound of the teruah on Rosh Hashana symbolizes shattering punishment for transgressions, inspiring true repentance and forgiveness from Hashem.  
- Sing praises to God are reserved for those who are skillful and of superior intelligence.  
- Hashem has the power to shield those who trust in Him and is greatly exalted.

Talmud

Zebulun questioned God about unequal distribution of land, God responded about unique resources in Zebulun's territory including the ḥilazon and tarit creatures as well as sand for white glass. God assured that those who take these resources without payment will not prosper in business [Talmud|Megillah 6a:7-8].

Targum

• Peoples (tribes of Israel) will assemble at the mountain (Beis Hamikdosh) to slaughter righteous offerings for good will.  
• They will consume the wealth of nations and reveal hidden treasures of sand.  
• The house of Zebulon will come together to offer true oblations at the mountain of the sanctuary, eating the revenue of the seas and discovering hidden treasures in the sands.  
• Many peoples will pray at the mountain of the sanctuary, bringing oblations of truth and being nourished by the great sea.   
• They will dye threads in purple using shell-fish blood, make mirrors and glass vessels from the sands, and discover treasures of their coasts.

Musar

• Those who separate from the community and do not participate in the service of God are akin to opponents of sanctifying God and will not have a share in the world to come, as they scorn the word of God and cause others to sin (Musar|Sha'arei Teshuvah 3:168).   
• The repair work on the world will be complete when both body and soul are elevated to the level of Adam before his sin, allowing for everlasting life and unity among the people of Israel under God's protection, resembling the attributes of different animals in Ezekiel's vision (Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Vayeshev, Miketz, Vayigash, Torah Ohr 86).

Kabbalah

Rabbi El'azar mentions the existence of seven seas, with one higher sea above them all, referencing a biblical passage about the bounty of the seas being suckled by someone unspecified.

Deuteronomy 33:20

Midrash

• In Bereshit Rabbah 95:4, Joseph took five brothers before Pharaoh, carefully selecting those who were not considered mighty based on their name repetition in Moses's blessing.  
• Another midrash, Sifrei Bamidbar 106:1, discusses Miriam's sequestration for seven days, comparing it to the concept of a rebuke from a father, and mentions the honor given to Moses and Joseph for their burials.  
• In Sifrei Devarim 355:1, it is noted that Joseph selected five brothers with doubled names to present before Pharaoh, connecting it to the mention of Gad in Devarim.

Commentary

- Gad's territory was enlarged towards the east, providing space suitable for grazing livestock.   
- Gad is compared to a lion, feared by enemies and unwavering in battle.   
- The blessing of expanding Gad's territory eastward was due to his prowess in battle and need for vast grazing land.   
- Gad's territory was suited for grazing, leading to the acquisition of large numbers of cattle and sheep.

Quoting Commentary

- Netziv argues that pilpul allowed Gad to inhabit the land opposite Beis-pe’or  
- Gad was able to dwell on the far bank of the Jordan despite being isolated due to bravery  
- Gad settled on the east bank of Jordan because of having been in the vanguard during previous battles  
- Moses' blessing of Gad highlights his courage and military prowess  
- Gad acted courageously on the battlefield and showed strength in settling conflicts  
- The Talmud mentions a high level of manslaughter in Gad due to a dangerous combination of courage and materialism  
- Sforno contrasts Gad's actions with Dan, highlighting Gad's group-oriented mode of operation  
- Gad's borders would expand to the east, giving him the strength of a lion to defend his territory  
- The tribe of Gad proposed the idea of settling on the east bank of the Jordan, showing their fearlessness.

Tanakh

The Gadites and Reubenites will lead the Israelites into battle, leaving their children in fortified cities. The meaning of "hasten" in Hebrew is uncertain (hushim). Their goal is to establish the Israelites in their new home while protecting their families from the inhabitants of the land.

Targum

• Targum Onkelos Deuteronomy 33:20: Gad is blessed and compared to a lion who kills rulers and kings.  
• Targum Jerusalem Deuteronomy 33:20: Gad's borders are widened, and when he goes to war, his enemies are slaughtered, with their heads cut off from their bodies.  
• Targum Jonathan Deuteronomy 33:20: Gad is blessed for his wide borders, described as resting like a lion but fierce in battle, killing kings and rulers with their heads severed from their bodies.

Deuteronomy 33:21

Jewish Thought

• G-d's tolerance depends on who he needs to relate to, with spiritual beings closest to him requiring minimal effort to tolerate  
• Transgressions of biblical characters healed by their descendants following G-d's commandments  
• Moses recognized as an ideal intermediary and savior for Israel due to his qualities and actions  
• One who rectifies himself and others will have a multiplied merit attributed to him, as bringing merit to the masses is highly valued by sages  
• Keeping the chukim of the Torah is essential for the future of humanity, with those following Torah considered to be participating in God's righteousness and the ultimate purpose of the Torah

Midrash

called a prophetess from the beginning; rather, she was called a prophetess because she spoke prophetically to her father.

Talmud

• Moses is referred to as the inscriber  
• Moses died and was buried in different tribes' territories  
• Moses was transported by God Himself to his burial place  
• Torah study is only interrupted once the soul departs from a dying person  
• R. 'Aḳiba continued to teach until the death of his son, then prioritized honoring the dead  
• Moses is considered righteous for causing many to be righteous, as opposed to Jeroboam who caused many to sin

Commentary

• The line "he chose a first part for himself" in Deuteronomy 33:21 suggests proactive territorial choices by Gad and alludes to the lands formerly belonging to Sichon and Og.   
• Gad knew that Moses was buried in this portion of land despite territorial disputes with other tribes and chose it for the significance of their lawgiver's burial place.   
• Gad also played a significant role in the conquest of the land and displayed righteousness by fulfilling promises made to Moses.

Quoting Commentary

- Chizkuni pointed out that Nebo may relate to the boundary between the territories of Reuven and Gad with the terrace of that range; Gad located the grave of the lawgiver  
- Chizkuni highlights God's reasoning for denying Moses entry into the Holy Land, connecting it to the generation of Israelites in the desert and the role of Moses as a binding figure between God and the people  
- Chizkuni delves into the idea that the Torah begins with the word "Bereshit" to establish God's ownership of the earth and the rights of the Israelites to the land, also addressing the land rights of the Canaanites  
- Daat Zkenim discusses the building of 13 Torah scrolls by Moses, one for each tribe, and the dispensation of one of these scrolls; explaining the significance of places and the addition of divine observers  
- Daat Zkenim highlights the miraculous nature of processes associated with the building of the well from which the Israelites benefitted, indicating evidence of God's approval of Moses' actions  
- Derekh Chayyim reflects on the impact of individuals on collective entities and the spiritual repercussions of their actions, examining the contrasting examples of Moses and Yerovam  
- Haamek Sheilah discusses the expansion of land possession from Reuven to Gad, attributing the protection of the land from idol worship to Moses' burial site and the settlement by the tribe of Gad   
- Ibn Ezra comments on the use of the word "Bereshit" in Genesis, examining interpretations related to its meaning and significance in the creation narrative  
- Kli Yakar analyzes the setting up of the Mishkon as a divinely-guided endeavor, emphasizing God's involvement in human actions and achievements   
- Or HaChaim provides a variety of insights, including interpretations of different verses relating to Moses' life, death, and role, bearing kabbalistic and expository understandings   
- Rabbeinu Bahya offers interpretations of verses and concepts related to divine intentions and human responses, exploring themes such as jealousy among angels and the nature of divine-wisdom interactions

Tanakh

• Joshua instructs the fighting men of the Israelites to leave their wives, children, and livestock in the land Moses assigned to them on the side of the Jordan  
• The fighting men are to go armed and lead their kindred across the Jordan River  
• The plan is for the men to secure the land for their families before returning to them to settle in their new territory (Joshua 1:14)

Chasidut

- Giving charity allows one to embrace the attribute of mishpat, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:21 and Psalms 99:4.  
- The 248 mitzvot correspond to the 248 limbs of the body, with Moshe being associated with reminding people of the mitzvot.  
- Traveling by "sefinta" alludes to the root of Divine Will and the burial place of Moshe, as discussed in Deuteronomy 33:21.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:21, Targum Onkelos and Targum Jerusalem both describe a place prepared as a burial site for Moshe, hidden with precious stones and pearls where he acted righteously before the Lord. Targum Jonathan also mentions the same site for Moshe, stating that he took his portion among the first and taught the orders of judgments to the people of Israel.

Mishnah

- Whoever causes multitudes to be righteous will not be held accountable for sins, while those who cause multitudes to sin will not be able to repent  
- Moses is an example of someone who was righteous and caused others to be righteous  
- Jeroboam is an example of someone who sinned and caused others to sin

Musar

The rebellion led by Korach was fueled by jealousy, while Datan and Aviram were driven by greed, and the two hundred and fifty men desired higher status. Moses praised the tribe of Gad for going beyond their required duty during the conquest of the land, showing righteousness and justice in their actions. Aaron questioned why Moses wanted to bring his family to share in the people's misery in Egypt. The tribe of Gad was commended for their piety in voluntarily being in the vanguard during war. G-d defeated adversaries in the Celestial Regions before earthly judgment, showing the importance of Israel in maintaining stability on earth. Moses and Israel ascended spiritually to humble nations and receive the Torah, in line with the belief that the universe was created for Israel and the Torah.

Kabbalah

- The descent of the Father is through the Righteous-One  
- The Righteous-One is the shureq with one point  
- The portion of the lawgiver is hidden there  
- The connector of the two thighs of truth is found there  
- The depth composed of 24 letters of the second Unity  
- Psalm 74:21 states "Let not the lowly return ashamed"

Tosefta

- Moses found out where Joseph was buried through Serakh, daughter of Asher  
- Moses went to the Nile and called for Joseph's coffin to surface, which it did  
- The text compares this event to Elisha making iron float  
- Some traditions say Joseph was buried in the crypt of kings  
- Moses took Joseph's coffin from there, alongside the Holy Ark  
- Moses's bones were carried by the Shekhinah to the valley between Reuben and Gad  
- The angels eulogized Moses, praising his justice and law-keeping  
- The text draws parallels between transgressors in different biblical stories and their punishments  
- Initiators of transgressions suffered consequences first, followed by others in similar events

Deuteronomy 33:22

Midrash

- The text discusses the offerings made by the princes of different tribes, highlighting their significance and symbolism in relation to respective biblical figures like Moses and Samson  
- The Midrash also focuses on Judah's role in defending Benjamin from Joseph, and the anger of Judah when provoked  
- Joseph chooses five men from his brothers based on their strength and significance in Moses' blessing  
- The text further speaks of Samson's strength and actions in avenging his people  
- Jacob blesses the tribes, likening them to various animals and rendering them lions and serpents  
- Joseph's reaction to seeing Benjamin and his exchange with his steward, linking happiness at Benjamin's relationship to his mother  
- Other parts discuss the tribe of Dan and its importance, as well as further biblical insights and interpretations.

Commentary

- Dan is described as a lion's whelp, exhibiting bravery and physical strength while guarding the borders  
- The tribe of Dan takes advantage of opportunities in the well-irrigated Jordan region, leading to potential conflicts with enemies coveting the area  
- Dan's might compared to a lion's whelp leaping from Mount Bashan, linked to the Holy Spirit aiding Samson in his valiant deeds  
- Dan is associated with the attribute of Justice as seen through a kabbalistic lens  
- Dan is compared to a lion due to his proximity to the border, similar to other tribes who also strategically settled across the land  
- Lions traditionally did not inhabit Bashan, but Moses describes Dan's tactics in seizing opportunities to conquer beyond their original territory  
- The origin of the Jordan River from Bashan and its path through Dan's territory is highlighted  
- Dan's territorial expansion is noted, with connections to the cave of Pamias and Leshem  
- Dan strategically moves to the Bashan region after feeling confined in their original territory, situated west of Judah on the Mediterranean coastline.

Quoting Commentary

- Blood spurts out during slaughter, with the subject being המסכנת (Mishnah Chullin 2:6:4)  
- The tribe of Reuven is listed first due to biological seniority in the tribe count listing in Bamidbar 1:20:1  
- Different tribes were listed in different orders according to seniority and familial relationships  
- Shimon instigated against Joseph, suffering consequences and sin-atonement in Bamidbar 1:20:1  
- Betzalel from tribe of Yehudah, Oholiov from tribe of Dan, both described as lion cubs (Shemot 38:22:2)  
- Comparison of the Temple to a lion, symbolizing construction and destruction in the Jewish history (Shemot 38:22:2)  
- Weaker brothers were not brought before Pharaoh for military service (Genesis 47:2:1)  
- Dan resembled Judah and was blessed as a lion cub occupying Bashan (Tribal Lands, Chapter 8; Dan 35, 70)

Talmud

• Moses was instructed to appoint judges to execute sinners involved in idolatry, resulting in 78,600 judges executing 157,200 individuals.  
• Phineas took action when no one else did, killing Zimri ben Salu and the Midianite woman with a spear.  
• Six miracles occurred during Phineas's act of killing, including the angel closing their mouths, preventing them from crying out.   
• Phineas's action stopped a plague from further decimating the people.

Targum

Moses blesses the tribe of Dan as being strong like a lion, with their land watered by streams flowing from Masnon, Batanea, or Mathnan.

Musar

- In Musar, when spelling the Ineffable four-lettered Name as words, it equals 45, same as the numerical value of אדם, and spelling מאה equals the Ineffable Name as well.  
- In Musar, it is questioned how Dan can be described as both a serpent and a lion in Jacob's blessing.

Deuteronomy 33:23

Midrash

In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10, the text discusses the significance of the different directions and tribes in the Israelite camp with each direction corresponding to specific attributes and tribes. Judah is associated with light and kingship, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin with strength, Dan with darkness due to idol worship, and others. In Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 95:4, Joseph chooses five men based on the repetition of their names in Moses's blessings, excluding those whose names were not repeated to present before Pharaoh. In Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 99:12, the text explores the beauty and blessings associated with the tribes of Asher and Naphtali. In Midrash Ein Yaakov Berakhot 7:8, reciting grace over a full cup of wine is linked to receiving boundless inheritance. Midrash Ein Yaakov Berakhot 7:19 expands this idea, stating that it grants an inheritance in both this world and the world to come.

Talmud

- The Sea of Tiberias was in the portion of the tribe of Naphtali, who also received additional land to the south for fishing.  
- Reciting a blessing over a full cup leads to receiving God's blessing and inheriting two worlds.  
- Conditions imposed by Joshua regarding collecting grass, relieving oneself, and grazing in forests.  
- Rebbi Aḥa connects the cup of Grace to being full, decorated, and washed, leading to inheriting both this world and the World to Come.

Commentary

- Naftali is sated and aware of being favored, with the fruit of his land ripening early  
- Whoever blesses G-d for the fruits of Naftali's land will be filled with G-d's blessing   
- Early ripening fruit is more satisfying, leading to gratitude  
- A kabbalistic interpretation sees Naftali inheriting the world to come and the present world if following G-d's ways  
- Naftali was full of everything its inhabitants could desire, and his portion included the Sea of Kinneret and fishing-coast  
- Naphtali's portion bordered the Sea of Galilee and included the Valley of Beit She'an

Jewish Thought

The term male is a homonym that denotes one substance entering and filling another, such as in the filling of a pitcher or an omer. It also signifies the completion of a fixed period of time, as seen in the completion of days for delivery or the completion of forty days. Additionally, male denotes the attainment of the highest degree of excellency, such as being filled with the blessing of the Lord, wisdom of heart, or wisdom, understanding, and cunning.

Quoting Commentary

- The banner of Dan, Asher, and Naftali was in the north, symbolizing the blessing of Asher as the most generous among the tribes  
- Naftali was satisfied with favor and enjoyed blessings near the Sea of Kinneret  
- The Sacred Language uses terms like kedem for east and achor for west, with specific symbolic meanings  
- Naphtali is compared to a hind bearing good tidings and is content with his blessings near the sea  
- Naphtali inherits the sea and the south per Deuteronomy 33:23, and Moses praised him for his agreeable and content character, symbolized by a wick representing social connection and agreeability.

Targum

- Targum Onkelos interprets Deuteronomy 33:23 as Naftoli being satisfied and blessed by Adonoy, instructed to occupy the sea and its southern coast.   
- Targum Jerusalem presents Moses blessing the tribe of Naphtali with favor and blessings from the Lord, owning land to the west of the sea of Genesareth and to the south.   
- Targum Jonathan depicts Naphtali being satisfied with favor, delighting in the fish of the sea in his portion, blessed with fruits of the vale of Genesareth, inheriting the water of Sopheni and the sea of Tebaria.

Kabbalah

- The Torah begins with the letter ב to signify a blessing, as indicated by Deuteronomy 33:23.  
- The Sea mentioned in the verses represents the Torah as a source of blessing and Wisdom.  
- The verse "The filling is God's blessing" indicates that wherever the letter ב is found, it signifies a blessing.  
- The Torah is described as nourishing and providing advice, similar to a king who uncovers a spring and plans a garden.  
- Moses linked following his decrees to inheriting both the current world and the World to Come.  
- Inheritance in the context of the verse refers to inheriting God, symbolized by a king revealing all his treasures to his son.  
- The concept of the Torah being like a full cup of blessing and associated with both sea and dry land is discussed in the Tikkunei Zohar.

Musar

- The tribe of Asher in the camp of Dan is blessed with many sons, possibly as a reward for giving charity generously.   
- The blessing of tithing is related to the promise of unlimited blessings from God for fulfilling tithing obligations, with the interpretation that one will become weary of exclaiming "enough!"   
- The Torah's beginning with the letter "bet," symbolizing blessing, signifies the expansion and intensification of abundance provided by God, ensuring eternal blessings.   
- Israel is seen as the purpose of the creation of the universe, and the Torah begins and ends with words that connect to this idea, emphasizing the eternal nature of blessings represented by the Torah.

Halakhah

The ten things required for the cup of blessing include rinsing, washing away, undiluted wine, a full cup, crowning, wrapping, holding with two hands, grasping with the right hand, raising a hands' breadth, setting eyes upon it, and passing it on to household members. The blessing is said over the cup after water is put in it, especially for birkat ha-mazon, as the intention is compassion. A full cup of blessing earns a boundless inheritance or two worlds. R. Yohanan and R. Yosi bar Haninah discuss this concept. The acronym for the four main requirements is HaMiShaH, or SiMHaH, to bring joy.

Deuteronomy 33:24

Midrash

- The Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 2:10 discusses the arrangement of the Israelite tribes in the four directions of the world, with Judah corresponding to the east, Reuben to the south, Ephraim to the west, and Dan to the north.  
- The commentary explains the significance of each tribe and their roles in relation to Torah, repentance, and offerings.  
- The Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 95:4 interprets Joseph's selection of five of his brothers to present before Pharaoh based on their might, as indicated by the repetition of their names in Moses's blessing.  
- The Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 99:12 talks about the beauty and blessings associated with the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, and Joseph.  
- The Midrash Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Menachot 9:1 shares a story about the abundance of oil in Asher's portion of land.  
- The Midrash Tanchuma Vayechi 13:1 and Tanna DeBei Eliyahu Rabbah 9:1 touch on the beauty of Asher and the negative influence of Queen Jezebel on King Ahab.

Chasidut

- Shevat is related to the Tribe of Asher  
- Asher is known for producing rich bread and delicacies fit for royalty  
- Their portion of land had a lot of olive oil  
- Wisdom is associated with places where olive oil is found

Commentary

Asher was blessed by all other tribes based on his abundance of oil, enjoying more children than any other tribe. His land's oil supply was so significant that his brothers anointed themselves with it. Asher's feet were symbolically described as being dipped in oil due to his territory's richness in olive oil. His abundance of oil made him popular among his brothers, as they would buy oil from him. Moses blessed Asher's land to be exceptionally fruitful and well-liked by his brothers, as demonstrated by the surplus of oil he produced.

Quoting Commentary

- Chizkuni on Genesis 49:20:2 states that Gad and Asher will provide royal delicacies, with Asher's soil providing richer oil  
- Daat Zkenim on Genesis 49:19:1 explains that Asher will provide for the needs of the troops of Gad  
- Kli Yakar on Genesis 49:20:1 discusses how Asher's provision of oil for the Temple indirectly provides for the world  
- Bahya on Numbers 2:2:9 explains that the tribe of Dan needed atonement due to darkness brought by idolatry, with Asher and Naftali bringing light through oil and spiritual qualities  
- Bahya on Genesis 49:20:1 describes Asher's oil production leading to rich food, similar to Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy  
- Radak on Genesis 49:20:1 discusses the abundance and quality of the food produced in Asher  
- Ramban on Genesis 33:10:1 talks about the atonement needed for the tribe of Dan due to idolatry and bringing light by Asher and Naftali  
- Rashbam on Genesis 49:20:1 explains the importance of olive oil from Asher's territory  
- Rashi on Genesis 47:2:1 and Genesis 49:20:1 discusses the differentiation between stronger and weaker brothers and the role of olive oil from Asher  
- Rashi also discusses the beauty of Asher's daughters and their marriages in I Chronicles 7:31:1  
- Tribal Lands, Chapter 11; Asher 19 and 42 explain the history and landscape of Asher's land, linking it to olive oil production.

Talmud

• Rebbi Tanḥum from Kefar Gun states that one can collect grass without uprooting, relieve oneself behind a wall, and graze in forests in the name of Rebbi Eleazar ben Rebbi Yose  
• Rebbi Yose the Galilean discusses the inheritance of the territory of Naftali, with Rebbi Aqiba identifying "lake" as Lake Huleh and "South" as Lake Tiberias   
• Rabban Gamliel and Rebbi Joshua encounter a sinking Jehudah ben Pappos on the road   
• The Jerusalem Talmud discusses the tradition of wearing shoes with nails on the Sabbath, with different opinions on the number of nails and rules regarding scraping   
• In Menachot 85b, Moses blesses the tribe of Asher, mentioning oil, with a story of a messenger seeking oil from the city of Laodicea   
• The messenger doubts a poor-looking man's ability to provide oil until he is served oil in a golden basin by his maidservant, aligning with the blessing of the tribe of Asher.

Targum

In Targum Onkelos, Deuteronomy 33:24, Asher is blessed with sons and will have his foot in oil. In Targum Jerusalem, Deuteronomy 33:24, Asher will be blessed by his children and his land will produce oil abundantly. In Targum Jonathan, Deuteronomy 33:24, Asher will be blessed, provide for his brethren in the years of release, and have an abundance of olives to bathe his feet in.

Musar

The tribe of Asher is described as being blessed with many sons, possibly as a reward for his virtuous behavior of giving charity generously. The camp of Dan, which Asher was a part of, is also associated with the practice of tithing, with the promise of unlimited blessings from God for those who fulfill this obligation. The tribe of Naftali, another partner in the camp of Dan, is described as being sated with favor and full of the Lord's blessing. (Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Bamidbar, Nasso, Beha'alotcha, Torah Ohr, Bamidbar 88)

Deuteronomy 33:25

Midrash

In Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 14:4, Rabbi Yehoshua discusses novel ideas in the study hall, emphasizing the importance of Torah study. He explains that matters of Torah direct those who study them from paths of death to paths of life, comparing Torah to a movable goad and an implanted nail. The text also explores Rabbi Yehoshua's practice of reciting blessings during Sukkot, while Sifra discusses how Eretz Yisrael will be abundant while other lands will experience famine, leading people to buy from Israel and enrich it. Vayikra Rabbah further elaborates on the idea that all lands will bring silver and gold to Israel, making it wealthy.

Commentary

In Deuteronomy 33:25, Moses blesses Asher to have vigor in old age, compared to his prime. Iron and copper are metaphorical for sinews and bones, used as protection and strength for the body. The bars of iron and brass in Asher's portion represent protection and land boundaries. The word 'dovekha' in 'as your days, so shall be your strength' has no known neighbor, with various interpretations from Aramaic roots to gentle movement or continuous speaking. The mention of iron and copper in the blessing of Asher refers to protection, safety and prosperity. Another interpretation of 'and as your days, so shall be your strength' refers to an abundance of prosperous flow. Moses wishes for Asher to enjoy prosperity in old age as in youth, with oil flowing abundantly. Moses emphasizes the constant security and honor that Asher will experience while the earth remains.

Jewish Thought

The term male is a homonym that denotes one substance entering and filling another, such as in the filling of a pitcher or an omer. It also signifies the completion of a fixed period of time, as seen in the completion of days for delivery or the completion of forty days. Additionally, male denotes the attainment of the highest degree of excellency, such as being filled with the blessing of the Lord, wisdom of heart, or wisdom, understanding, and cunning.

Talmud

It is forbidden to wear nail-studded work-boots on the Sabbath, but allowed to wear shoes decorated with nails. There are different traditions about the number of nails for decoration, with opinions ranging from five to thirteen. Scarping old boots or sandals on the Sabbath is not allowed, but oiling or dipping them in water is permitted. Olive oil produced in the Sabbatical year must be used for personal needs, not for preparing leather products. Anointing one's foot in a boot or sandal is not allowed, but oiling the foot before putting on footwear is permitted.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:25 in Targum Onkelos, it states that their locks are mighty as iron and copper, and their declining days will be as strong as their youth. In Targum Jerusalem, it mentions the people of Beth Asher being strong as iron and brass, with their old age reflecting their youth. In Targum Jonathan, it emphasizes the strength of the tribe of Asher, comparing their soundness to iron and their feet to brass, stating that they will remain strong in their old age like they were in their youth.

Quoting Commentary

• Rabbeinu Bahya states that references to "bread" in Torah can be understood as spiritual nourishment, with the land of Israel providing ideal conditions for Torah study.  
• Torah scholars in Israel are compared to those eating "bread of troubles," reflecting the advantage of studying Torah in the Land of Israel with its resources.  
• Moses praises the land of Israel for its abundance of raw materials like iron and copper, which contributes to its completeness and lack of shortcomings.  
• The availability of necessary resources like ores is highlighted as a blessing in Moses' description of the land of Israel.  
• Sages in Taanit 4 interpret the mentioning of iron in relation to the Land of Israel as symbolizing the strength of Torah scholars.  
• Rashi on Genesis 47:2:1 discusses how Moses differentiated between the weaker and stronger brothers of Joseph when bringing them before Pharaoh, showing favor towards the strong.  
• Rashi on Nahum 3:17:1 explains the significance of the word "princes" in Hebrew, showing various examples of the use of the letter mem as a radical in different contexts.

Chasidut

The pasuk in Devarim 33:25 discusses the importance of guarding one's youth to ensure a good old age. The righteous remember Hashem in their youth to avoid bad days in old age, as seen in Koheles 12:1 and Tehillim 92:14. For Bnei Yisrael, transcending natural limitations allows strength to remain even in old age. Moshe Rabbeinu's ability to pass down wisdom to future generations is emphasized, showing the enduring legacy of Torah inheritance.

Deuteronomy 33:26

Jewish Thought

- Rabbi Eleazar interprets a verse referring to children not yet of school going age  
- The first commandment to sanctify the moon raises concerns of idol-worship  
- The observances related to the new moon prove the impotence of heavenly bodies as deities  
- Idolatry can be divided into three kinds: belief in the object as deity, intermediary, or essential for welfare  
- Observing the new moon and leap years demonstrates Jewish control over the calendar  
- Numbers have independent significance in the Torah  
- The number ten holds particular importance in Torah  
- The term "riding upon the heavens" has been figuratively applied to God to show dominion  
- Different motions of spheres and stars serve as proof of design in the universe  
- The sages compare God's interactions with the world to being led by human actions

Midrash

• Midrash|Bamidbar Rabbah 12:4 explains that the world is like a palanquin and relates different elements of creation to symbolic meanings such as the earth, sun, and Torah.  
• The text discusses the significance of figures like King Solomon and the foundation stone in creation and creation stories found in Psalms, Genesis, and Proverbs.  
• The commentary connects various elements of creation to the activities of righteous figures in the world and mythical beings like the Leviathan and the Behemoth.  
• The Text also breaks down the structures supporting the world, stating that the Earth is supported by pillars, based on Psalms, Job, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, and legends such as the Baraitha and Resh Lakish’s description of the celestial layers.

Talmud

- Describes the different divine beings in the firmaments, including ofanim, seraphim, angels, and the Throne of Glory, with God residing above them in Aravot as stated in Psalms 68:5.  
- Uses verbal analogy to show that Aravot is called "heaven" based on the word "rides."  
- Mentions three scrolls found in the Temple courtyard, with discrepancies in the text regarding certain words and numbers.  
- Explains the process of confirming two versions and annulling the one that differs.

Commentary

- Israel is encouraged to serve the Lord wholeheartedly, as there is no power comparable to Him.   
- Moses blesses all of Israel, acknowledging that their God is unlike any other.   
- God is described as mighty and rides on the heavens, which stands by His might.   
- God's actions on behalf of Israel are highlighted, stating that there is no one comparable to Him.   
- The Jewish people have a direct line to God, unlike other nations, and their share of worldly goods is different.   
- God is described as riding the heavens, in control and always available to assist His people.   
- The concept of God "riding" the heavens is analyzed, emphasizing the power dynamics.   
- Israel is told that there is none like their God, who rides the heavens to help them.

Chasidut

• Moses describes how G’d imposes restrictions on Himself based on how His people behave towards each other, reflecting their attributes (Chasidut|Kedushat Levi, Deut. Eikev 12).  
• Pharaoh and his army symbolize tefilin, representing the aspect of uncovered lights revealed through Imma (Mother), with tefilin being described as chariots (maRKeVot) that shine from the supernal Imma (Chasidut|Likutei Moharan 38:10:2).

Kabbalah

- The importance of abstaining from emitting semen in vain is explained in Tana Devei Eliyahu, linking it to being able to offer sacrifices like a High Priest.  
- The secret of the names E”l-א״ל and Elohi”m-אלהי״ם as "the heavens-Shamayim-שמים" is discussed, connecting them to HaShem-יהו״ה and the Shechakim-שחקים.  
- When the children of Israel are righteous, they help HaShem-יהו״ה ride upon the heavens and are granted rewards such as victory and miracles.  
- The names E”l-א״ל, Elohi”m-אלהי״ם, and HaShem-יהו״ה are linked to the concept of "the heavens-Shamayim-שמים" and HaShem's dwelling place.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:26, Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan all emphasize that there is no God like the God of Israel, whose Shekinah dwells in the heavens and whose aid is in the high expanse. The Targums highlight the incomparable nature and majestic presence of God in the heavens as a source of help and strength for the people of Israel.

Quoting Commentary

- The kabbalistic approach to Bamidbar 14:17:4 discusses how the Jewish people's observance of commandments can influence the manifestation of God's powers, either reinforcing them or causing them to wane based on their behavior.  
- The commentary on Bamidbar 2:2:5 discusses the placement and significance of the camp of Reuven, connecting it to the archangel Michael and other celestial beings, as well as the camp of the Levites.  
- A commentary on Bereshit 28:12:9 explores the usage of the term "Yeshurun" in reference to the Jewish people, connecting it to their experiences at Mount Sinai and their spiritual decline over time.  
- A commentary on Deuteronomy 33:27 by Rambam emphasizes the preexistence of God as a fundamental belief.  
- Tosafot Yom Tov on Pirkei Avot 3:18:8 discusses the concept of different disciplines like arithmetic, measurement, and astronomy as appetizers leading to the greater wisdom of theology.

Musar

- The Midrash of Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakaneh states that studying Torah for its own sake is an act of kindness to God  
- This is based on the verse "רוכב שמים בעזרך ובגאותו שחקים" which implies that God helps those who study Torah sincerely

Deuteronomy 33:27

Midrash

- Scripture references from Deuteronomy 33:27 and Psalms 90:1 show that God is the dwelling place for His world, not the other way around  
- The righteous maintain the world by their merits  
- There are different explanations regarding the number of pillars the world stands on, with the sages suggesting twelve or seven pillars  
- The text highlights the importance of Torah study and prayer for forgiveness and redemption  
- The story of Mordekhai from the book of Esther is used as an example of the power of prayer and humility  
- An emphasis on the significance of words of Torah and prayer as a means of forgiveness and connection to God  
- The Midrash uses allegorical language to explain the relationship between God and the world, showing that He is above and sustains the world

Jewish Thought

- Refraining from contact with one's wife during menstrual cycle leads to merit of eighth day, symbolizing ascendancy over impurity  
- Success in battle attributed to God, not might of Jewish sword  
- Torah provides steps to help overcome physical urges and yetzer hara  
- Baal teshuvah seen as superior to saint in moral stature  
- Torah endeavors to assist in overcoming urges and yetzer hara  
- Discussion on the domaining of rakab in relation to ruling and control  
- Reflection on how the Creator can be sustained in thoughts without physical senses falling upon Him  
- Implications of God's existence everywhere and knowledge of past and future events without change, separation, concealment, or interruption

Talmud

- Rabbi Yosei describes the layers of the world's foundation: earth on pillars on water on mountains on wind on a storm on the arm of the Holy One  
- Rabbi Ile'a states the world endures through restraining oneself during a quarrel  
- Rebbi Abba and Rebbi Jehudah discuss the world's creation from water, turning to snow and then to land  
- Rebbi Hananiah ben Aqashia discusses God's omnipresence and existence outside space and time  
- Three scrolls found in the Temple courtyard had discrepancies that were resolved through comparison and elimination.

Commentary

Chizkuni interprets the everlasting arms as supporting the universe and carrying its weight, ruling both upper and lower regions, while also expelling specific enemies like Amalek, Sichon, and Og. Daat Zkenim views G-d as a source of refuge and support, expelling enemies and destroying Amalek, with a condition of security for the Jewish people. Ibn Ezra describes G-d as supporting the universe and expelling enemies, emphasizing His eternal nature with no beginning or end. Rashi and Siftei Chakhamim comment on the dwellings of G-d and His power over the mighty and enemies, emphasizing His eternal nature and ability to banish foes. Sforno highlights G-d's eternal nature, support of His creation, and expulsion of enemies, emphasizing His power over nations. Tur HaArokh sees the abode of G-d as timeless and ancient. The JPS 1985 Footnotes express uncertainty over the meaning of specific Hebrew terms.

Kabbalah

• All existence depends on the existence of God and is only supported by His will and word  
• God is the primary cause of all created beings, above and below, and is the necessary existence  
• The Temple built by humans will be destroyed and rebuilt by God at another time  
• God is the one who created everything from nothing, without needing something to create upon  
• Israel dwelt securely, and the abode of Jacob is alone and led by Y”Y without any foreign god

Quoting Commentary

- Merit as a Merkavah de-shechinah leads to eternal life like Elijah; if all reached this state, world uninhabited  
- Longing to express love for God allows one to function as a Chariot of the Divine Presence  
- Daughter of a priest marrying a non-priest may not eat terumah  
- The power of G'd is influenced by the conduct of the Jewish people  
- Contrasts between righteous and wicked individuals in speech and actions  
- The righteous are pillars of the earth, preserving the world in their merit  
- The Unity of G'd is believed to be absolutely preexisting  
- G'd is the place of the world, but cannot be contained by it

Halakhah

- After Hakafos, three Sifrei Torah are left out  
- Many people are called up to read portion Vezos haberachah repeatedly  
- End with all young boys being called up  
- Proper for bar mitzvah boy to say berachah, others listen  
- Verse Hamalach hagoel is recited over young boys  
- Chasan Torah reads from Me'onah to end in first Seifer Torah  
- Chasan Bereishis reads in second Seifer Torah  
- Maftir is read in third Seifer Torah  
- Eminent person often called up for Chasan Torah  
- Person can be called up multiple times for different readings  
- When only two Sifrei Torah, Vezos haberachah and Bereishis read in each, first Seifer used for Maftir

Chasidut

- In Likutei Moharan 23:3:1, the enemy is driven from holiness, symbolized by the command to destroy idolatry and the desire for money.  
- In Likutei Moharan 57:4:1, the lights of Shabbat help a person ascend and delight in it, connecting them to Avraham and Yitzchak as the "arms of the world" and allowing them to enjoy the inheritance of Yaakov.  
- In Likutei Moharan, Part II 5:2:7, the concept of counsels is discussed, with a reference to the merit of the Patriarchs as the "arms of the world" bringing healing and guidance.

Targum

God's dwelling is eternal and upholds the world with His power in all Targums. He banishes enemies and commands their destruction through His word. (Targum|Onkelos, Targum|Targum Jerusalem, Targum|Targum Jonathan)

Musar

• G-d's love for the Jewish people is not based on their numerical superiority, but rather on their humility and self-perception as insignificant compared to other nations.  
• Great men among Gentile nations often responded arrogantly to the greatness bestowed upon them by G-d, in contrast to Jewish leaders and prophets who considered themselves lowly and insignificant.  
• The continued existence of the universe is believed to be permitted due to the humility and self-effacement of figures like Moses and Aaron, who maintained a humble attitude.  
• G-d is described as the "Place" of the world in Bereshit Rabba, with the world not being His "place," illustrating the idea of G-d's relationship to the world.  
• A Divine Presence in our world complements G-d in His Heavenly Domain, just as sacrificial service by the Jewish people adds stature to G-d in His Celestial Regions, explaining the significance of good deeds in repairing the universe.

Deuteronomy 33:28

Midrash

- Israel wanted to be like the dew, but God replied that it would happen when they merit it, referencing Elijah and God controlling dew  
- Jacob relied on God when dwelling securely, reliant upon the Lord only, according to R. Berechiah  
- The Holy One, blessed be He, created dwelling places for His people to do His will and be in awe of Him, comparing Israel to a hired singer  
- Moses decreed upon Israel, but four prophets abolished those decrees, challenging the need for sacrifices and offerings in favor of words of Torah and prayer  
- Israel, beloved before the Lord, had the order of creation reversed when manna fell from heaven and dew rose from the earth as a sign of deep sleep and the cessation of prophecy  
- Mordekhai's greatness was achieved through constant prayer, humility after achieving prominence, and a commitment to returning to prayer even after success, paralleling a need for prayer in facing curses and enemies.

Jewish Thought

Isaac was suspicious of Jacob pretending to be Esau, using senses of touch, taste, and smell for confirmation, leading to Jacob receiving the blessing meant for Esau. Esau's anger was directed at the deceitful means by which the blessing was obtained, prompting Rebecca to send Jacob away to protect him. The importance of loneliness and separateness in religious identity is emphasized as a positive attribute, reflecting spiritual personality and honor, as seen in stories of Moses, Elijah, and Abraham. Loneliness is depicted as a source of security, self-esteem, significance, and confidence.

Commentary

- "עין יעקב" metaphor for descendants of Yaakov  
- His heavens will provide land with ample dew  
- Security of Israel's tenure linked to G'd of Yaakov  
- Dew will make land fruitful as before Adam's sin, seen as prophecy for Messiah's times

Quoting Commentary

- Joseph closing Jacob's eyes was an accepted custom, symbolizing the transfer of his remains to Machpelah   
- In another interpretation, "eyes" refers to essence or fountain, implying Joseph as a fitting successor to care for all needs  
- שפוד is related to שבט (staff or spear), possibly derived from the root פד (separate or split)  
- ברקת שבט refers to weaving, specifically combing or beating the yarn  
- The firmament and dry land being named heavens and earth implies they embody those qualities intrinsically   
- מטר לקחי symbolizes Moses praying that his words will be deeply understood by his listeners, likened to rain nourishing the earth  
- Balaam's mention of Jacob and Israel as dwelling alone and his recognition of their strength as a unified nation   
- יערף drops like dew, associated with safety and tranquility, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:28.

Tanakh

- Genesis 27:28: God will provide abundance of blessings including dew of heaven, fat of the earth, new grain, and wine.  
- Genesis 48:21: Israel foretells God will be with Joseph and bring him back to the land of his ancestors after his death.  
- Psalms 4:9: The speaker feels safe and secure enough to lie down and sleep, attributing this security to the Lord.

Chasidut

- The main cause of foreign thoughts is the corruption of mishpat, which is linked to AYNin  
- AYNin is referenced in Genesis 14:7 and Deuteronomy 33:28

Liturgy

Praise of God's path through the Reed Sea, skies dripping with rain and dew, Krias Shema recited morning and evening in synagogues, Hashem being exalted and dwelling on the cherubim at the Holy Ark.

Talmud

Rabbi Yosei bar Ḥanina states that Moses issued four decrees upon the Jewish people, later revoked by four prophets. Amos revoked Moses' decree that Jewish people will only dwell in safety when spiritually elevated like Jacob. Rava explains that rejection of God's directive led to Jewish people dwelling in sorrow instead of wealth and prominence. Additionally, Rava states that marrying younger females to older males and vice versa resulted in a city full of people.

Mishnah

In Mishnah Pesachim 7:1, it is discussed how to roast the Paschal lamb: Rabbi Yosei HaGelili says to insert a spit of pomegranate wood into the lamb's mouth until it reaches the anus, then roast it with legs and entrails inside, but Rabbi Akiva disagrees, saying to suspend the legs and entrails from the spit above the animal's head outside it to avoid cooking them.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 33:28, Targum Onkelos, Targum Jerusalem, and Targum Jonathan all discuss how Israel will live securely in a land of grain and wine, with dew dripping from the skies above them as a sign of blessing according to Jacob's benediction.

Kabbalah

In Tikkunei Zohar, it is mentioned that Jacob had no 'refuse' in him, leading to his descendants dwelling securely alone in exile. It is emphasized that they are led by Y"Y alone, with no foreign god accompanying them (Tikkunei Zohar 30b:16, 36b:18). Additionally, Tikkunei Zohar 30b:7 discusses a tiqun for Day 8.

Deuteronomy 33:29

Halakhah

- On Shemini Atzeret night, the same prayers as the previous night are recited along with kiddush and the blessing over time  
- During the morning service, three Torah scrolls are used; the first scroll is read by five congregants, with the last reader starting and ending the portion of Zot HaBerakhah  
- The reason for reading Zot HaBerakhah on this day is due to King Solomon blessing Israel on the eighth day of the festival  
- In the second Torah scroll, the reader begins with Bereishit and in the third, the final selection is read with the haftara starting from Joshua 1:9  
- The Amidah prayer includes references to God's attributes as King, Helper, and Shield, with mentions of loving-kindness, strength, and protection based on various verses  
- A midrash from Tractate Pesahim discusses a banquet for the righteous in the future, with blessings given by biblical figures like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and David  
- The promise of a world to come is referenced in Moses' words at the end of the Torah, connecting the rewards of mitzvot to eternal happiness, salvation of the soul, and God's protection as a shield

Midrash

- Isaiah states that one who slaughters a bull without bringing it as a sacrifice is akin to slaying a human.  
- Before the tabernacle was set up, all high places were permitted, but after its establishment, they were no longer permitted.

Jewish Thought

• Gersonides and Maimonides discuss limitations of God's foreknowledge and power in relation to human decisions  
• Gersonides suggests God only knows decisions that align with natural laws, not truly free decisions  
• Zohar discusses righteous individuals as hard to replace, needing proper partners to be righteous  
• Midrash references various domains people rely on instead of God, like nature and astrology  
• Akeidat Yitzchak discusses the reward for good deeds within the family and society as collective or individual  
• Jacob's blessings to his sons are analyzed in terms of their actions and future consequences  
• Joseph reassures his brothers despite their ill intentions, acknowledges God's role in the greater plan  
• Devarim Rabbah emphasizes how the commandments apply to all aspects of life  
• Israel is seen as having an automatic right to life after death, according to Akeidat Yitzchak  
• Prophets describe ruin and prosperity as results of God's anger and pleasure, respectively

Talmud

In Talmud Berakhot, Rav Ashi discusses the greatness of Israel as a chosen nation in Deuteronomy. In Talmud Megillah, Mordecai shows his disdain for Haman by quoting scripture to justify his actions. In Talmud Shabbat, it is stated that delighting in Shabbat leads to being rescued from exile, with specific foods mentioned as a way to find delight in the day.

Quoting Commentary

- Chizkuni notes that the letter ו and the short vowel kametz in the word במותי is extraneous in Deuteronomy 32:13:2.  
- Chizkuni explains that Jacob's use of past tense in Genesis 48:22:2 is a declaration of certainty about God's promises regarding the Israelites receiving their ancestral land in the future.  
- Covenant and Conversation point out that happiness appears twice in the Torah, while joy is highlighted throughout Deuteronomy.  
- Daat Zkenim and Ibn Ezra discuss the metaphor of riding on high places in Deuteronomy 32:13:1 and Isaiah 53:9:1 respectively.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya interprets the reinforcement of God's attribute of Mercy in relation to Israel's observance of commandments, with a focus on the influence of Jewish behavior on God's powers, as seen in Psalms 60:14 and Deuteronomy 33:29.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya and another commentary link the uniqueness and survival of Israel as a nation to blessings and predictions in Deuteronomy 33:29, Daniel 7,11, Bereshit 49:1:1, and Bamidbar 23:9:3.  
- Everett Fox's commentary explores the tribal blessings in Deuteronomy 33:1-29, highlighting comparisons to Jacob's deathbed blessing in Genesis.

Commentary

Enemies may pretend to be your friends to deceive you; voluntary isolation is a sign of maturity in God's people. Among the nations, Israel benefits from God's direct protection, shielded from evil, and elevated over enemies. Israel's fortune lies in not having to rely on intermediaries for protection, with the promise of a celestial existence in the afterlife. God serves as a shield and sword for Israel, assuring future victory even in the face of adversity, while enemies may seek to deceive or humble themselves in the face of Israel's triumph. The text reiterates the unique position of Israel in being protected directly by God, ensuring a future reward that transcends earthly success.

Tanakh

Joshua 9:9 reports that the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites by pretending to come from a distant land because of the fame of their God, based on the reports of what God did in Egypt. The Gibeonites' clever deception led to an alliance with the Israelites.

Chasidut

- Israel is incomparable and happy according to Deuteronomy 33:29 and Exodus 15:11  
- Some leaders in the generation wield the sword of pride and exalt themselves undeservedly over the people  
- These leaders obtain the sword of pride through converts who instill pride in the Jewish people  
- Leaders may rule over the people through their own arrogance, not appointed by Heaven  
- These leaders are a scourge to the world and can damage those who do not submit to their rule

Kabbalah

- Jewish people adhere to the middle line-Kav HaEmtza’ee and can ascend to the Unlimited One-Ein Sof  
- All seventy ministering angels of the nations cannot ascend higher than the place to which they adhere  
- The Sefirah of Splendor-Tiferet ascends above until the Unlimited One-Ein Sof and becomes glorified  
- The ministering angels of the nations surround the letter Vav of the Name HaShem, but cannot ascend past it

Targum

• Targum Onkelos emphasizes Israel's fortune as a people saved by the Lord, with Him as their shield and aid in victory over enemies.  
• Targum Jerusalem highlights Israel's happiness and victory over enemies when diligently following the law and commandments.  
• Targum Jonathan praises Israel as a people saved by the Word of the Lord, highlighting their strength and victory over enemies and kings.

Liturgy

- Liturgy from Shabbat Siddur Sefard Linear  
- Comes from the Maariv service for the conclusion of Shabbos  
- Includes the verse "But you will tread on their high places" from Deuteronomy 33:29

Musar

- Torah uses זרח for Samael and הופיע for Rahav  
- Samael gave up his "light", used for killing  
- Rahav's blessing used sparingly for Jewish people's continuity  
- G-d offered Torah to all nations, received similar response  
- Gifts taken from nations and given to Israel

Deuteronomy 34:1

Jewish Thought

Moses requested to cross the Jordan to ensure the conquest of the West Bank, but was denied due to the people's unworthiness. Moses was instructed to prepare Joshua for leadership in the conquest of the land and reminded the people their survival depends on observing mitzvot. The relationship between the Jewish people and G'd is emphasized, with the purpose of punishments being to lead Israel to repentance and forgiveness. The eventual redemption of the Jewish people will be less astounding than their selection, showing G'd's special relationship with them. The text also emphasizes striving to draw closer to G'd, being faithful to one's mission on earth, and creating a truly human habitation. Rituals such as marriage and raising children are seen as part of the mission to create ideal human beings.

Talmud

- Rav Yehuda believes the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael are determined by the areas shown to Moses before his death.  
- Moses' physical strength is highlighted in Deuteronomy 34:7 and in his ability to ascend Mount Nebo with one step.  
- Moses dies and is buried in the portion of Reuben, with Mount Nebo located in that portion according to Numbers 32:37–38.

Commentary

Moses waited to ascend Mount Nebo until blessing his people, which was previously called Har Ha'avarim. Mount Nebo is also known as Rosh Hapisga and is related to Gilead in the territory of Reuven. Moses saw the entire land of Canaan, including Gilead and Dan, with his physical eyes, more than Joshua would conquer. Moses saw as far north as Dan and was shown the entire land of Israel by God, described in great detail by various commentators such as Ramban and others. Moses' supernatural eyesight was granted by God to see the land in all its detail.

Midrash

- R. Judah explains how Moses was carried from the place he died to the place he was buried, with the help of the Shechina and ministering angels  
- Moses' requests were all granted by God, including seeing the whole land of Israel and the Temple  
- The phrase "ad Dan" symbolizes the future apportionment of the land of Israel among the tribes  
- The importance of prayer is emphasized through the examples of Moses, Hezekiah, and Jacob  
- The dialogue between God and Moses regarding his entry into the Promised Land illustrates the power of prayer in changing decrees  
- Moses' final journey on Pisgah symbolizes God showing him the entirety of the land of Israel  
- Moses' ascent from the plains of Moav is highlighted as a spiritual journey.

Tanakh

- The Danites established a sculptured image for themselves  
- Jonathan, son of Gershom and grandson of Manasseh, served as a priest to the Danite tribe  
- This priesthood continued until the land went into exile

Halakhah

- On Simchat Torah, more than a quorum reads the Torah in order to increase joy  
- Everyone in the congregation reads, including those not accustomed to reading on other days  
- Only one individual reads from "And Moshe ascended" to "And Yehoshua son of Nun" in Parashat Zot HaBerakhah  
- These verses should not be divided into two parts  
- The entire order of Torah readings for Simchat Torah is detailed in the commentary

Quoting Commentary

• Malbim suggests that Job's struggle was a search for Providence and the immortality of the soul, similar to Moses seeking God's glory.  
• Or HaChaim explains that Moses saw the land of Israel through a miraculous expansion of his vision with hidden light.  
• Rabbeinu Bahya comments on the covenant between Lavan and Jacob regarding crossing demarcation lines with hostile intent.  
• Rashi relates God's gifts to Heman and others as impossible without divine intervention.  
• Sforno and Siftei Chakhamim comment on Moses's positive gaze versus Balaam's evil intent.  
• Tribal Lands explores biblical locations such as Abel-shittim and Tel Nimrin, which have historical and spiritual significance in the Bible.

Targum

Moshe went up from the plains of Moav to Mount Nevo and the Lord showed him the entire land from Gil’od to Don (Targum Onkelos). The Lord showed Moshe the whole land of Gilead unto Dan of Kesavan from the summit of the mountain of Nebo (Targum Jerusalem). The Word of the Lord showed Moshe all the strong ones of the land and the mighty acts of Jeptha of Gilead and Shimeon bar Manoah of the tribe of Dan (Targum Jonathan).

Musar

• Moses asked God to appoint a successor who could understand and lead all the Jewish people, as each person had a unique mind. God showed Moses all future Jewish leaders until the Messiah, who would have a perfect mind. Moses understood that only God knows the minds of all His creatures and requested a leader who could handle the opinions of the Jewish nation.  
• Moses, with good intentions, regained spiritual achievements at the time of his death, reaching the fiftieth level of understanding. Despite praying not to be involved in every generation, Moses was involved in mystical aspects for the sake of the Jewish people's rehabilitation. The word "בי" refers to considering leap months.  
• Israel feared death if they continued to acquire greater insights, asking Moses to serve as their intermediary. They knew Moses had reached the fiftieth level of understanding. G-d told Moses during his lifetime, the fiftieth level of understanding would not be attained on earth, only after death. Moses achieved this level again upon his death, with the Torah describing it as an ascent.

Tosefta

Moses' bones were carried by the Shekhinah, traveling four mils from Reuben to Gad. The thigh is where divine retribution begins in cases of transgression. Individuals and groups throughout history who initiated transgressions were the first to be struck down as punishment.

Deuteronomy 34:2

Commentary

God showed Moses the land of Israel in its prosperity and ruin, including Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah. He also showed him historical battles and future events, symbolized by the reference to the "last sea" as the west boundary of Israel, where the dead will live again (Sifrei Devarim 357). The regions mentioned in the verse are identified according to the tribes that settled there. (Steinsaltz)

Midrash

God showed Moses Barak, Joshua, Gideon, David, and all the west, as evidenced by the references in Deuteronomy 34:2 to Naftali, Ephraim, Menasheh, Judah, and the western sea. This indicates that Moses was able to see various individuals and territories, including specific rulers such as Joshua and David, as well as regions like Naftali and Judah during his lifetime.

Targum

- Enumeration of lands including Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah up to the western sea in Onkelos Deuteronomy 34:2.  
- Mention of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah up to outer sea in Targum Jerusalem Deuteronomy 34:2.  
- Reference to specific events and individuals in the tribes of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh, as well as the kingdom of Judah in Targum Jonathan Deuteronomy 34:2.

Quoting Commentary

- The Hebrew terms for the directions in the world are explained: East is referred to as מזרח, קדם or פנים, West as מערב, ים or אחור, South as דרום, נגב or ימין, and North as צפון, אסתן or שמאל.  
- The exclusivity of certain gifts to the Jewish people, such as prophecy, Torah, the land of Israel, and resurrection of the bodies after an interval, is discussed, with passages from the Torah cited to support these claims.  
- The Sea of Reeds, mentioned in the story of the Israelites crossing the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians, is identified as the furthest boundary of the land of Israel.  
- The significance of Hebrew terms such as kedem (east), achor (west), negev (south), and tzaphon (north) are explained in relation to the orientation of the world and the sacred language.  
- The Talmudic mention of the Divine Glory being in the west and the concept of the sea representing the Torah are also referenced in the commentary.

Deuteronomy 34:3

Talmud

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi plans to prepare the fields of Jericho when the Temple is rebuilt, knowing that they were consumed by the Kenites, descendants of Moses' father-in-law; God promised to reward Jethro and his descendants when His Presence left, supported by charity and later becoming Torah scholars in Jabez, led by a good and righteous man.

Commentary

• The city of date palms is called so because it was exceptionally excellent. (Chizkuni)  
• נגב refers to the South Country or the cave of Machpelah in Hebron. (Rashi)  
• הככר is the Plain, where Solomon casted the vessels of the Temple. (Rashi)  
• Moses' view of the land started from the Valley of Jericho to Tzo’ar on the bank of the Dead Sea. (Steinsaltz)

Quoting Commentary

- Zoar was referred to as the Palmenstadt due to its abundance of palm trees, similar to Jericho   
- Zoar was known for its palm trees even in the Middle Ages   
- Baal Tamar refers to Jericho, known as the city of dates   
- The most fertile part of Jericho was left unparcelled when the Israelites were dividing the land, to be given to the children of Jethro as a substitute for the land where the Temple was built

Tanakh

- King cast in earthen molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan.   
- This method of casting was significant and used for practical purposes.   
- The location of the casting was in a specific geographical area with strategic importance.

Chasidut

In the commentary from Mei HaShiloach, Volume I, it is discussed how the men of Jericho would recite the Shema without pausing after "today," indicating that Words of Torah would be fixed in their hearts according to God's will. The city of Jericho is associated with scent, which represents the highest perceptions of Divinity and the ability to sense the approaching salvation. Dates, the last of the seven species, symbolize looking towards the end of the matter. The sages did not agree with the men of Jericho's practice of hastening salvation, emphasizing that it is only by God's will. Jericho's influence is seen in its inhabitants' ability to connect to ethereal levels and draw from the end, despite being the first city conquered by Yehoshua in Israel.

Midrash

- God showed Moses the graves of the forefathers in the south, specifically in Chevron  
- He also showed Moses the overturning of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as Gog and his hosts in the valley of Jericho  
- The valley of Jericho was shown symbolically as all of Eretz Yisrael being cultivated  
- Moses was shown Devorah in the city of palm trees until Tzoar, and the wife of Lot in Tzoar  
- Rabbi Simlai addressed heretics who asked about multiple gods, explaining that the singular term "medaber" signifies the presence of one God with diverse manifestations of might among the people

Mishnah

Rabbi Akiva recounts an incident with Neḥemya of Beit D’li in which he declares the tradition allowing a woman to remarry based on the testimony of a single witness, leading to Rabban Gamliel allowing wives to remarry based on hearsay testimony. Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua disagree, but Rabbi Akiva maintains that a woman's testimony must be as convincing as the innkeeper in a story he recounts.

Targum

• Targum Onkelos Deuteronomy 34:3 mentions the Negev, the plain, the valley of Jericho, and the city of date-palms up to Tzo’ar.  
• Targum Jerusalem Deuteronomy 34:3 includes the south, the plain of Jericho, and the city known for cultivating palms, which is Zeir.  
• Targum Jonathan on Deuteronomy 34:3 speaks of the king of the south joining the king of the north to destroy the land's inhabitants, Ammonites, Moabites, dwellers in the plain oppressing Israel, and captives of Elijah's and Elisha's disciples dispersed from Jericho and the city of palm trees. It also mentions generations of affliction, punishment of the wicked Armalgos, and the battle of Gog with an expected rise of Michael to deliver during a great tribulation.

Deuteronomy 34:4

Jewish Thought

- G'd showed Moses the land of Gilead but told him he would not enter it  
- Sages interpreted Moses always ascended  
- Moses' view of the land was a vision into the future, not the physical space

Midrash

God showed Moses all that had been and would be, including future generations and events. Moses saw Gehenna and was told only the wicked and those who betray God would be sentenced there. He asked to enter the land through a tunnel, but was denied. The oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was fulfilled for their descendants. Moses saw the land but could not enter. The land was promised to the twelve tribes and adorned by the righteousness of the people. Moses was shown Eretz Yisrael as a set table, giving him a view of the entire land. Moses's request to enter the land in any way was denied by God, neither as a king nor a commoner, neither alive nor dead.

Talmud

- Rabbi Yonatan reconsidered his opinion on dead people conversing based on Deuteronomy 34:4.  
- Rebbi Zeïra stated that relieving oneself in a cemetery is disrespectful to the dead and a blasphemy to God.  
- Rebbi Jonathan and Rebbi Ḥiyya discuss the concept of the living and the dead based on Proverbs 9:5 and Ezekiel 18:32.  
- Rabbi Simlai teaches that there are 613 mitzvot in the Torah, 365 prohibitions, and 248 positive mitzvot.

Halakhah

Fathers are obligated to teach Torah to their children once they begin to speak, with selected fundamental verses emphasized as key. The child should be taught gradually until they are six or seven, at which point they should be taken to a teacher for further organized study of the Torah. The interpretation of the Mishnah in Avot regarding the age to begin Torah study may vary, with consideration given to the child's health. Ultimately, the goal is for the child to develop a strong foundation in Torah study at a young age.

Second Temple

Philo discusses the spiritual significance of Abraham's migration, interpreting "land" as the body, "kinsfolk" as senses, and "father's house" as speech. He explores the idea of alienating oneself from these to reach higher realities, using examples like Abraham leaving Lot and Israel leaving Egypt. Philo emphasizes the importance of faith in God and highlights the difference between seeing and possessing the perfect good. He also reflects on the Divine presence and inspiration in the context of literary composition.

Targum

Adonoy tells Moses that he will not enter the land promised to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, instead he will only see it with his eyes. This is the end of the word regarding the land promised to the ancestors of Moses.

Commentary

• Torah specifies that G'd told Moses to relay message to patriarchs after death  
• Moses not crossing into land of Israel indicates soul ascending directly to heaven  
• Moses is told to say to three patriarchs that oath has been fulfilled  
• Rashi explains that Moses is permitted to see land to relay message to patriarchs  
• Moses' death outside land of Israel saves generation's chance for resurrection  
• Moses would have lived even longer if not for the sin committed and oath taken

Quoting Commentary

Or HaChaim on Genesis 15:13- Repeated ידע תדע to convey pleasant and unpleasant messages regarding Israel's past and future status, as well as to confirm fulfillment of G'd's sworn oath to the patriarchs regarding the land.  
Rabbeinu Bahya on Bereshit 9:13- Meaning of "I have given" used as both past and future tale of fulfillment by God, equivalent to an oath, with comparisons to promises to Avraham regarding land.  
Ramban on Deuteronomy 34:1:1- Highlights various specific territorial references when discussing Moses' sight of all of Israel to confirm its abundance and beauty.  
Tribal Lands, Chapter 1; Reuven 105- Moses' view of Israel as a promise to the forefathers but a place he would not enter.  
Tur HaArokh on Genesis 26:3- Explanation for the addition of Yitzchok to God's oath to Avraham regarding the land of Israel, as well as future implications for Yitzchok's blessings to nations.

Deuteronomy 34:5

Commentary

• Moses died in a location unknown to prevent enemies from gaining benefit or desecrating his grave, unlike the Patriarchs  
• Psalms 118:17 recounts Moses' desire to live and continue proclaiming God's works, being told by God it was impossible  
• story of Moses' soul being comforted by God before departure  
• alternate interpretations of "by the command of the Lord" include literal kiss of death by God, no need for spiritual preparation  
• Moses only referred to as a "servant of the Lord" after death, righteous are exalted in death  
• Midrashic explanations for Moses' death compared to Elijah and Chanoch  
• God directed Moses' death, which was written with teardrops according to some traditions

Talmud

- Moses asked to die as Aaron did, and God eventually granted his request, storing his soul under the Throne of Glory with a kiss  
- The Angel of Death could not find Moses in any realm, and eventually asked the angels who revealed that only God knows where Moses was stored  
- A tannaitic dispute arises over whether the generation of the desert will be granted eternal life or not, with interpretations varying among Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Yosei HaGalili  
- There is debate among the Sages about who wrote the last eight verses of the Torah, with some attributing it to Joshua and others to Moses  
- The Angel of Death had no power over the deaths of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, as they died "by the mouth of the Lord"  
- Moses died and was born on the seventh of Adar, and it is also taught that Joshua wrote part of the Torah  
- Rabbi Elazar suggests that Miriam died with a kiss from God, connecting her death to that of Moses  
- Various interpretations are given for God's statement "And Moses, the servant of God, died there" (Deuteronomy 34:5), including referring to Moses as a great scribe of Israel.

Kabbalah

- Seeing the Land of Israel from a distance has virtue according to scripture  
- Moses was granted a great elevation when he saw the land before his death, even though he did not enter it  
- This teaches that there is merit in viewing the Land of Israel, even if one does not physically enter it.

Quoting Commentary

Moses' blessing to the Israelites as he dies in Moab concludes with his burial site being unknown; the Torah refers to him as "the man Moses" and "the servant of the Lord," highlighting his humility and greatness. His title as the servant of God is mentioned eighteen times in the Tanakh, emphasizing the Jewish concept that leadership is serving. Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership originated in the Torah with Moses. A kabbalistic interpretation of the Torah discusses the concept of "death by divine kiss," seen in the deaths of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and other righteous individuals. The Torah does not explicitly mention the deaths of Miriam and other women as being through a kiss from God. Moses did not die in the traditional sense, showing that the righteous do not die the way others do; the Torah describes their deaths as "and he breathed his last." Moses is described as the man of God in a blessing before his death, indicating that his prayers are favored by God. Moses' leadership abilities as a prophet were suited to inspire the Jewish people when God was closely involved, but he struggled when God distanced himself during challenges like Korach's rebellion. Moab plays a central role in the Israelites' journey, being the land of Moses' unknown burial site. Solomon's words about giving a straightforward reply being like giving a kiss is linked to righteous individuals deserving to die with a kiss from God, as seen in the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and others, without the presence of the Angel of Death.

Midrash

• Rabbi Yoḥanan identifies ten written instances regarding Moses's approaching death and eventual demise, with the High Court eventually sealing Moses's fate to not enter the Land of Israel.  
• Moses pleads with God in prayer, even consecrating a fast and seeking to void the decree barring his entry into the Land of Israel post-death.  
• Moses has a confrontation with the angel of death, ultimately, the Holy One bless be He takes Moses's soul with a kiss.  
• Joshua wrote the last eight verses of the Pentateuch after Moses died, and a similar fate befell many esteemed individuals that came before Moses.

Jewish Thought

- Our Sages referred to the deaths of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam as "nothing but a kiss"   
- They died in the midst of pleasure from the knowledge of God and their great love for Him  
- Figuratively, the knowledge of God united with intense love for Him is called a kiss  
- This kind of death is seen as deliverance from death  
- Other prophets and pious men have their knowledge of God strengthened when death approaches, but are not at the same level as Moses, Aaron, and Miriam

Chasidut

The author explains that the word "desert" in the Talmud does not refer to physical desert but to the people speaking to God through prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. The word "expire" in Numbers actually means "perfection," as the people had accepted their fate without protest. The Torah suggests that the Israelites who did not reach the Holy Land after leaving Egypt would receive a Divine "kiss" upon their death. Moses chose men for a significant mission, hoping they would rise above material concerns, with God being aware but not responsible for their failure. The Torah implies that those who died with the word "there" died by a heavenly kiss from God. Additionally, Moses believed that these men could also achieve a heavenly assist through their own efforts.

Second Temple

Moses is described as being advanced by God to soar above species and genus, being stationed beside God and translated through the Word of the Supreme Cause, without room for adding or taking away. This highlights how God values the Wise Man, using the same Word to draw the perfect man from earthly things to Himself.

Targum

- The Targum Onkelos states that Moses died in Moav by the word of the Lord  
- The Targum Jerusalem states that Moses died in the land of Moabaee according to the decree of the Lord's Word  
- The Targum Jonathan provides details about Moses' birth and death, mentioning the crowns of the Law, Priesthood, kingdom, and a good name that he possessed, and how he was gathered by the kiss of the Word of the Lord in the land of Moab.

Musar

Moses did not want to publicize his escape from Pharaoh to avoid being informed against again, similar to what happened in Egypt. Moses is seen as a reincarnation of Abel/Shet, with his soul briefly inhabiting different bodies before being in his destined body. This explains why Moses' body did not weaken and why his grave could not be located, as his body did not decay like a typical cadaver. Moses' body and soul were well-matched, allowing him to stand next to God during the revelation. (Musar|Shenei Luchot HaBerit, Torah Shebikhtav, Shemot, Torah Ohr 21)

Deuteronomy 34:6

Midrash

Midrash|Aggadat Bereshit 51:1: Commentary connects the raising of David's eyes to the mention of Judah in Deuteronomy, related to a battle against the Philistines. Abraham's merit is brought up in opposition to Abimelech's support of the Philistines. The text discusses the Devil assisting the Philistines and ministering angels helping the Israelites. Psalm 121:1 is recited by David fearing the Philistines on a mountain. Through Moses, God freed the Israelites from Egypt, as indicated in Deuteronomy 33:7.   
Midrash|Aggadat Bereshit 68:1: The text speaks about the prophecies in Haggai and Isaiah related to preparing the way for the Lord, connecting to the story of Levan and Eliezer from Genesis. The mention of Manasseh is related to idol worship and destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Isaiah and Zechariah verses are also discussed.   
Midrash|Bamidbar Rabbah 10:17: The text discusses the laws of the Nazirite, mentioning Samson's unique Naziriteship. Avshalom's eternal Naziriteship is compared to other Nazirites. Details about the period of time for shaving hair are provided.   
Midrash|Bamidbar Rabbah 19:33: Moses raises questions about why Israel sinned with the golden calf despite Egypt's idolatry, the fate of the righteous descendants of wicked fathers, and provoking war with Sichon against Moses' instruction. God intervenes, causing the mountain to crush those hiding in caves and reveals the good done for Israel through natural events.   
Midrash|Bamidbar Rabbah 20:24: The Israelite who sinned with the Midianite woman is discussed, with details about how he was swayed by the woman and Moses's response. The Israelites' helplessness and weeping are highlighted, emphasizing the influence of women.   
Midrash|Bereshit Rabbah 8:13: The text explores acts of kindness throughout the Torah, linking various scenarios, such as God's adorning of Adam and Eve, visiting Abraham, consoling Isaac, burying Moses, and consoling Jacob upon the death of Abraham.   
Midrash|Devarim Rabbah 11:7: The midrash delves into the actions and fate of Moses, including the mystery of his burial location and God's intervention to tend to Moses in his death.   
Midrash|Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Sotah 1:32: This commentary discusses the acts of kindness and attends to biblical figures such as Joseph, Jacob, and Moses in their deaths.   
Midrash|Kohelet Rabbah 12:10: The midrash addresses Rabbi Shaul of Naveh's teachings on Kohelet's wisdom and truth-seeking. It connects Kohelet's quest for knowledge to rewards for mitzvot and understanding the end of days.   
Midrash|Kohelet Rabbah 7:2: The text reflects on the acts of kindness in the Torah, citing examples of God adorning, blessing, visiting, burying, and comforting individuals. There is a focus on God's role in adorning brides and comforting mourners.

Jewish Thought

- The Sifri explains that no one knew the location of Moses' grave because delegations sent to find it failed, seeing it in different places from different vantage points.  
- Moses died and was buried despite being a perfect human being, leading to questions of why he was not like Elijah or Enoch who ascended to Heaven without dying.  
- The Midrash about Moses' death shows his superiority and how others struggled to accept his mortality.  
- The city of Shechem where Dinah was raped is likely different from the Shechem mentioned in the prophets, with the narrative providing insights into the brothers' actions and dynamics within Jacob's family.  
- In the text, it is noted that G-d's personal intervention in history is often for the sake of the Jewish people or individual deserving Jews.  
- God speaks to Jeremiah about His grief, likening it to a father losing his son during a wedding, and instructs Jeremiah to seek the prayers of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.  
- Moses' burial place was in a valley, signifying his punishment and unfulfilled longing, as he was unable to enter the Promised Land.

Commentary

Moses's burial place remains unknown, with varying explanations regarding who buried him - either God or himself. The three words "את" in the verse are understood as reflexive actions, with interpretations suggesting that no human buried Moses. The exact location of Moses's grave remains a mystery, with detailed descriptions of the area provided but no specific burial spot named. Moses's grave was positioned near Bet-Peor to counter negative forces, with various interpretations suggesting that Moses continued to protect his people after his death. Despite the detailed location descriptions, the precise location of Moses's grave remains undiscovered to this day.

Quoting Commentary

• The Torah states that no one knows the burial place of Moses to prevent it from becoming a place of pilgrimage. Moses serves as a role model for humanity, inspiring without being worshipped.   
• The Torah ends with God personally burying Moses, showing an act of kindness.   
• The sandwiching of Torah wisdom between historical events is more meaningful than seeking the exact locations of historical events like the Sea of Reeds, Mount Sinai, or Moses' grave.   
• A Mishnah reflects on the grave of Moses being unknown and considers it more fitting to honor items or acts associated with greatness rather than the gravesite of a great figure.

Talmud

Joseph had the merit to bury his father Jacob, Moses had the merit to take Joseph's bones to the Promised Land, and God buried Moses in an unknown location. The Talmud discusses the precision of the description of Moses' burial location, how people perceived its location differently, and how one should follow God's attributes such as clothing the naked, visiting the sick, consoling mourners, and burying the dead. The Torah is said to begin and end with acts of kindness. Moses' involvement in Joseph's burial and his own burial by God are highlighted as examples of the divine role in burial.

Chasidut

- Sudden burst of enthusiasm during prayers can be a result of God opening the light of the Infinite to a person, causing intense devotion and self-nullification  
- Moshe counters idol worship and Divine anger, as symbolized by his burial opposite Bet Pe’or  
- Moshe ascended into Ein Sof, the Will of Wills, corresponding to the will of Ein Sof clothed in the aspect of Malkhut

Mishnah

• Good deeds are rewarded measure for measure, as seen with the examples of Miriam waiting for Moses, the Jewish people waiting for Miriam, Joseph burying his father, Moses transporting Joseph's bones, and God burying Moses [Mishnah Sotah 1:9].  
• The Sages believe that God takes part in the burial of all righteous individuals, not just Moses [Mishnah Sotah 1:9].

Second Temple

- No man knows the grave of virtuous and holy men because their end is not death but a translation and migration to another place of abode (Second Temple|On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by him and by his Brother Cain 3:3)  
- Abel and the great prophet have unknown graves, suggesting a miraculous translation from a visible place to an incorporeal idea, while Elijah ascended from earth into heaven (Second Temple|The Midrash of Philo 5:24:2)

Targum

• Onkelos' commentary on Deuteronomy 34:6 states that Moses was buried in the valley in the land of Moav facing Beis Peor, and his burial place remains unknown to this day.   
• Targum Jerusalem's commentary on the same verse reiterates that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moav facing the idol Peor, and nobody knows where his tomb is.  
• Targum Jonathan provides a detailed interpretation of the burial of Moses, emphasizing the teachings of the Lord in various aspects of life, the angels involved in Moses' burial, and the significance of his burial place in relation to Israel's sin at Peor.

Kabbalah

The text discusses the concept of humility and surrender. It mentions examples of humility in the Torah, such as Hashem's actions in beautifying brides, visiting the sick, burying the dead, and comforting mourners. The text also highlights the humility of Dovid haMelech (alav haShalom) and emphasizes the connection between humility and closeness to the Creator. Additionally, it references verses from Tehillim and Midrash Tanchuma to support these points [Kabbalah|Reshit Chokhmah, Gate of Humility 1:2].

Musar

• Mitzvah to bury the dead, eulogize them, and weep for the passing, especially a Torah scholar, following the example of Abraham mourning Sarah.  
• Commandment to emulate God's ways includes burying the dead, as God did for Moses.  
• Walking in God's ways involves providing for the needy, visiting the sick, comforting mourners, and burying the dead.  
• Dealing with the dead is a secret of the Sefirot, involving washing, clothing, rising up, connecting, carrying, and raising the Sefirot.   
• Intention for burying the dead should focus on the verse about God burying Moses, symbolizing mercy, rising to the highest wisdom.

Tosefta

- Moses found out where Joseph was buried through Serakh, daughter of Asher  
- Moses went to the Nile and called for Joseph's coffin to surface, which it did  
- The text compares this event to Elisha making iron float  
- Some traditions say Joseph was buried in the crypt of kings  
- Moses took Joseph's coffin from there, alongside the Holy Ark  
- Moses's bones were carried by the Shekhinah to the valley between Reuben and Gad  
- The angels eulogized Moses, praising his justice and law-keeping  
- The text draws parallels between transgressors in different biblical stories and their punishments  
- Initiators of transgressions suffered consequences first, followed by others in similar events

Deuteronomy 34:7

Jewish Thought

- Rabbi Alexander compares losing a first wife to losing eyesight  
- Rabbi Abahu says a person losing a first wife loses ability to make sound judgments  
- Rabbis refer to those who have abused their G-d given endowments  
- Parshah may contain allegorical comments about first zivvug  
- Moses argued from becoming a leader to his death  
- Moses died full of life and hungry to continue leading

Commentary

• Moses exuded light until his death similar to his time when he returned from Mount Sinai [Chizkuni]  
• Old age overtakes people with dryness, yet Moses had a moistness that did not abate [Ibn Ezra on 34:7:1]  
• Moisture is diffused in young skin yet removed from old skin; Moses' moisture did not abate [Ibn Ezra on 34:7:2]  
• Moses' eyesight and vigor remained strong until his precise moment of death, completing 120 years [Or HaChaim]  
• Moses' forehead emitted rays of light, similar to crystal sparkle, showing no signs of weakened vigor [Rabbeinu Bahya on 34:7:1]  
• The Torah testifies that Moses' body showed no signs of aging or drying out until he died [Rabbeinu Bahya on 34:7:2]  
• His eye was not dim even after death, showing no signs of decay or changes in appearance [Rashi on 34:7:1 and 34:7:2]  
• Scriptures do not say "at death in the plains of Moav" to show Moses' appearance did not alter even in death [Siftei Chakhamim on 34:7:1]  
• Moses died at 120 years old, with no deterioration in health or appearance [Steinsaltz]

Quoting Commentary

• Rashi explained that Yitzchok waited for Rivkah to come of age before marrying her, aged 14.  
• Rabbis and commentators agree that Moses remained vigorous and energized to the end of his life at 120.  
• Moses' undimmed eyes symbolize his unwavering idealism and passion for justice.  
• Rivkah was likely older than 3 years old when Eliezer met her, evidenced by societal views on marriage age and propriety.  
• Moses' pronouncement that he could no longer go out or come in was not due to physical weakness, but rather an indication that leadership was being passed to Joshua.  
• The number 120 is symbolic of a full human lifespan, particularly associated with Moses who aged with undiminished energy.

Talmud

- Residents of Pappunya asked Rav Mattana about sending away the mother bird from a nest on a person's head, which he ruled was obligated in the mitzva  
- Rav Mattana also explained how the existence of Moses is alluded to before his birth through a verse with the numerical value of "beshaggam" equaling that of "Moshe"  
- The Gemara questions the meaning of Moses not being able to "go out and come in," contrasting it with the verse stating he was at full physical strength before his death

Midrash

• Rabbi Yoḥanan lists ten instances where Moses was told he will die  
• Moses prayed over 500 times for mercy  
• The High Court sealed Moses' fate of not entering Israel  
• Moses fasted and prayed for his fate to change, performing miracles to persuade God  
• Angels like Akazriel and Samael were involved in the events surrounding Moses' death  
• Moses fought Samael to prevent him from taking his soul   
• The soul of Moses was asked by God to depart  
• Moses was exalted above many biblical figures like Adam, Noah, and others  
• Various Midrashim state Moses' age at death, along with details surrounding his death and burial  
• Moses, Aaron, and Miriam all died in the same year, with the gifts they provided disappearing with them  
• The Mannah ceased after Moses' death and people had to rely on the produce of the land

Chasidut

- Explanation of Deuteronomy 34:5-7 regarding the burial of Moshe  
- Moshe ascended into Ein Sof, into Will of Wills, corresponding to the will of Ein Sof clothed in the forms of letters, representing Malkhut  
- The aspect of Malkhut is where the greatness and will of Ein Sof can be found

Second Temple

• Moses also departs at a specific number of years, despite his righteousness.  
• Just because people have the same number of years does not mean they are alike in nature or power.  
• The good and the bad can exist together in terms of time and number, but be vastly different in abilities and characteristics.

Targum

Moshe was 120 years old when he died, but he still appeared youthful with no faded radiance in his facial appearance, his eyes were not dimmed, and he had all his teeth intact.

Musar

- Moses did not want to publicize his escape from Pharaoh to avoid being informed against again  
- Moses' body and soul were well matched, proven by his physical vitality  
- The location of Moses' grave could not be found because his body did not decay  
- Moses' decline in intellectual powers led him to consult other Torah scholars  
- Moses admitted he could no longer master Torah studies during his lifetime  
- Moses had to draw on Joshua's memory or resourcefulness on occasion  
- The rejection of Moses' prayers led to a decline in his intellectual powers and the need to consult other scholars  
- Moses' prophecy development, rise, and decline can be seen in Deuteronomy 18:18, suggesting a progression from silence to direct prophetic utterances to public communication with God.

Deuteronomy 34:8

Jewish Thought

• Peace is more than just restoring harmony, it is joining people together into a unified whole.   
• Aaron worked on weaving the fabric of peace between people, while Moses focused on the intellectual approach with Torah.   
• Moses struggled with making small talk and sympathy for petty concerns, unlike Aaron who was beloved by the people.

Talmud

- Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days because he always judged fairly and never said anyone disgraced themselves (Talmud Avot DeRabbi Natan 12:4)  
- Mourning for a father is organized for seven days by referencing the mourning period for Joseph (Jerusalem Talmud Moed Katan 3:5:14)  
- Study sessions should reconvene after thirty days of mourning, following the example of the mourning period for Moses (Talmud Ketubot 103b:3)  
- Moses died and was born on the seventh of Adar, with mourning for him lasting thirty days (Talmud Kiddushin 38a:5)  
- Mourning for Moses lasted for at least two days, as indicated by the term "days" in the text (Talmud Moed Katan 21a:11)  
- Various teachings emphasize the importance of pursuing peace, loving peace, and the significance of mourning for sages such as Samuel (Talmud Tractate Kallah Rabbati 3:4, 6:8)

Midrash

• Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 100:4 discusses the mourning period after Jacob's death, comparing it to Moses' mourning period with others weeping  
• Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 100:7 explains that mourning is for seven days and the relationship between mourning and quarantine  
• Midrash Ein Yaakov tells the story of Rabbi's death and his instructions to his sons, emphasizing the importance of honoring one's parents  
• Midrash Midrash Tanchuma Buber discusses the passing of Aaron and the mourning of the people  
• Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer praises Aaron's pursuit of peace and how even in death, he was honored  
• Sifrei Devarim explains the significance of the eleventh month in Moses' final days and teachings before his death

Commentary

- When Aaron died, all of Israel mourned out of respect for Moses. When Moses died, there was no one left of such importance to cause widespread mourning. [Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 34:8:1]  
- Or HaChaim agrees with Chizkuni, stating that Aaron was mourned even more than Moses because of his love for peace. [Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:8:1]  
- Or HaChaim proposes that the immediate effects of Aaron's death, including the disappearance of protective clouds, caused a more intense reaction compared to Moses' death. [Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:8:4]  
- The settling of the Shechinah on Joshua after Moses' death provided comfort to the people, possibly leading to a more subdued reaction. [Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:8:5]  
- Rashi interprets that the men wept for Moses, while the men and women wept for Aaron because of his peacemaking qualities. [Rashi on Deuteronomy 34:8:1]  
- Sforno highlights that during the mourning of Moses, there was a lack of wisdom and counsel, being replenished with Joshua afterwards. [Sforno on Deuteronomy 34:8:1]  
- Even after the 30 days of mourning for Moses, the people did not react as profoundly as they did for Aaron, possibly due to early expectations of Moses' death. [Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:8:3]

Quoting Commentary

- The commentary states that 70 days were devoted to mourning, with 40 days spent embalming, and 30 days for official mourning.   
- Moses, Aaron, and Yaakov were all mourned for 30 days.  
- The mourning for Moses and Aaron was more widespread compared to others, as they were known as men of truth and peace, respectively.  
- The commentary provides differing interpretations regarding the mourning practices for Moses and Aaron, highlighting the focus on carrying out mourning rituals while maintaining normal activities.  
- The discussion also addresses the mourning practices related to a young woman who prioritized sexual satisfaction over impending death, as well as the possible hyperbole in the mourning period for Moses.  
- The mourning periods for significant leaders such as Moses and Aaron are noted, with a tradition suggesting that excessive mourning for leaders could be disrespectful.  
- The commentary discusses the anger of God at the entire community following a sin committed by the Priests or an individual, emphasizing the specific responsibilities of the Priests and the importance of mourning for individuals such as Nadav and Avihu.  
- Commentary states that Yaakov was mourned for 30 days, with Egyptians also participating in the mourning out of respect for Joseph's actions during the famine.

Guides

- The children of Israel mourned Moses for thirty days in the plains of Moab, as mentioned in Deuteronomy 34:8.

Halakhah

- One should not cry over the deceased for more than three days and eulogize for more than seven, except for Torah scholars where the timeline depends on their wisdom.  
- For Torah scholars, mourning should not exceed 30 days and eulogies should not exceed 12 months.  
- If a report of a wise man's death reaches after twelve months, no eulogy should be done.

Tanakh

- The community mourned the death of Aaron for thirty days after his passing [Numbers 20:29].

Targum

- Bnei Yisroel mourned Moshe for thirty days on the plains of Moav, ending his mourning period.  
- The children of Israel wept for Mosheh for thirty days in the plains of Moab, completing the days of mourning for him.  
- They stopped mourning on the eighth of the month of Nisan and crossed the Jordan on the tenth of Nisan.  
- The manna ceased for them on the sixteenth of Nisan, but they found manna to eat for thirty-seven days after Mosheh's death due to his righteousness.

Musar

The Torah is described as both G-d's and Moses', with Moses receiving general rules and oral Torah from G-d at Mount Sinai. Moses' relationship with the oral Torah is compared to a spiritual bride, leading him to give up his physical marriage. Moses is referred to as איש אלוקים, symbolizing his connection to the divine emanation מלכות, unique from other biblical figures with the same title. The mourning period for Moses is linked to the concept of his "wife," Matronita, with numerical values in Hebrew text adding up to the name of G-d.

Tosefta

- Moses was born on the 7th of Adar  
- Moses died on the 7th of Adar  
- The verse mentioning "120 years old today" indicates completion of years  
- The date of Moses' death is calculated based on biblical references and counting back from the 10th of Nissan

Deuteronomy 34:9

Jewish Thought

- Freewill offerings are more pleasing than regular offerings, as seen with Noach's thanksgiving offering  
- Noach's offering ensured that a flood would never recur, offering key to atonement for future generations  
- Israelites commanded to offer daily offerings to achieve closeness with God, beyond mere atonement  
- The order of sacrifices in the Torah: olah, peace offerings, sin offerings  
- Semichah, placing of hands on animal, transfers attributes of man to the animal  
- He-goat serves as scapegoat, carrying the guilts of the Jewish people, symbolically transferring guilt  
  
- Offerings of the princes represent the twelve horoscopes, ensuring continuity of Divine Presence on earth  
- The silver bowl symbolizes man's constant striving and average lifespan  
- Various offerings symbolize different aspects of man, intellect, discernment, life force, and sin  
- Moses appeals to God for a leader who not only commands authority, but also acts as a true shepherd  
- Moses is instructed to make arrangements for his successor before ascending Mount Avarim  
- Communal offerings symbolize the ultimate purpose of Israel's residence in the holy land and serving God at His table.

Midrash

• When the elders were appointed, it was compared to the day of giving the Torah  
• Moses was told others would take wages from what was given to him  
• Joshua and Othniel possessed wisdom from God through blessings  
• Midrash highlights different personalities who benefited or suffered from their wisdom and valor  
• Wealth kept for its owner might harm them if misused  
• Betzalel's wisdom benefited from Miriam's merit  
• Wisdom and Torah knowledge from God ensured success and miracles for Joshua and others  
• Talmudic commentary sates Moses joyfully commanded Joshua, passing on wisdom and strength to him

Talmud

- Rava asks Rabba bar Mari about the saying that gratitude for wine poured goes to the pourer  
- Rabba bar Mari cites the case of Moses transferring authority to Joshua as the source of this idea  
- Even though Moses was only a conduit for the spirit given to Joshua, he still received credit for it

Quoting Commentary

• The Israelites were obedient to Moses and later to Joshua, as seen in Deuteronomy 34:9 and Joshua 24:31.  
• Wisdom and understanding, such as that of Joshua in Deuteronomy 34:9, are attributed to the spirit of the Lord.  
• The transmission of wisdom from Moses to Joshua and then to the elders is compared to a parable of a watchman and a garden.  
• God instructed Moses to share his prophecy with Joshua in Numbers 27:18 and Deuteronomy 34:9, showing that Moses' prophecy was not diminished by sharing it.

Commentary

Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 34:9:1 states that Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, proven by Moses laying his hands on him. Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 34:9:2 adds that Joshua did as the Lord commanded Moses. Sforno on Deuteronomy 34:9:1 mentions that Joshua needed G'd's confirmation for political decisions, obtained through the urim vetumim. Steinsaltz on Deuteronomy 34:9 also agrees that Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom.

Halakhah

- On Simchat Torah, more than a quorum reads the Torah in order to increase joy  
- Everyone in the congregation reads, including those not accustomed to reading on other days  
- Only one individual reads from "And Moshe ascended" to "And Yehoshua son of Nun" in Parashat Zot HaBerakhah  
- These verses should not be divided into two parts  
- The entire order of Torah readings for Simchat Torah is detailed in the commentary

Chasidut

- Ability to produce worthy students and instill wisdom comes from God's House, as seen with Moshe and Yehoshua (Deut 34:9, Prov 24:3)  
- The aspect of conferring authority on a rabbi and writing are connected, both related to wisdom (Deut 34:9, Psalms 33:6, 104:24)  
- The word Chanukah is hinted at in Deut 34:9, spelling out Chanukah through last letters, connecting to concepts of wisdom and filling the earth.

Targum

Yehoshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moshe had rested his hands on him; Bnei Yisroel listened to him and acted as Adonoy had commanded Moshe, as stated in Targum Onkelos on Deuteronomy 34:9. Targum Jerusalem also mentions how Moshe had laid his hands upon Yehoshua bar Nun, filling him with the Spirit of Wisdom, who in turn, the children of Israel hearkened to and followed as the Word of the Lord had commanded. Targum Jonathan repeats how Yehoshua bar Nun was filled with the Spirit of wisdom after Moshe laid his hands on him, through whom the children of Israel received instruction and followed as the Lord had commanded through Moshe.

Tosefta

- Rabbi Yosei believes Torah would have been given through Ezra if not for Moses' precedence  
- Moses and Ezra both had "aliyah"   
- Moses taught Torah (Deut. 4:14) and Ezra taught Torah (Ezra 7:10)  
- Ezra implemented script and language of Scripture (Ezra 4:7)  
- Rebbi says Torah was originally given in Assyrian script   
- Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says the Torah was given in script resembling columns (Ex. 38:17)  
- Kings are instructed to have two Torahs, one for themselves and one in the Temple (Deut. 17:18-19)  
- Other men should also keep Torah close (Deut. 34:9, Ex. 33:11, Josh. 1:8)

Deuteronomy 34:10

Jewish Thought

- Major physical phenomena can be reversible but God's ability to destroy the Earth demonstrates that it had not always existed, showing His power to create.  
- Natural phenomena reversals are a product of God's free will, as opposed to happening automatically.  
- Jeremiah 31,10 indicates that reversals require supernatural means, not automatic occurrences.  
- Various biblical stories show the power of God to reverse the laws of nature He created.  
- No future prophet will reach the level of Moses's prophecy, indicating its miraculous nature.  
- Prophets receive influence directly from God and experience physical changes when receiving prophecy.  
- Moses's prophecy was unique compared to all other prophets in its nature and quality.

Chasidut

- Arizal taught that Adam’s sin caused divine sparks to be among impure shells, which must be sifted out through Torah study and mitzvos  
- Each Jew must extract and rectify the sparks of their own soul, except for those in Egypt, where no sparks are left  
- Moses and Balaam were both in the mystery of da’at, one on the side of holiness and the other on the side of impurity  
- Moses had attained exceptional spiritual heights, making him closer to God than any subsequent prophet  
- Balak feared the Israelites, which may have been due to the possibility of the Moabites willingly allowing themselves to be conquered  
- Moses always used his gift of prophecy beneficially, while Balaam used it destructively  
- Balaam corresponded to the daat of the evil forces, contrasting with Moses' daat  
- The Arizal understood many themes beyond what Moses did in terms of pnimiyut, sefirot, and levels of holiness.

Midrash

- The text explores the qualities of Moses in comparison to other prophets and figures like Bilam.  
- It highlights the unique communication style of Moses with God, standing, speaking mouth to mouth, and face-to-face.  
- It discusses the symbolic significance of Eldad and Meidad, who prophesied about future events, including Gog's downfall and Moses' death.  
- The text also describes the circumstances surrounding Moses' death, including his conversation with the angel of death and his final moments before passing away.  
- Quotes from Psalms and Proverbs are used to illustrate the themes of righteousness, hope, and faith in the face of death.  
- Several Midrash commentaries from different sources discuss Moses’ unique prophetic abilities, his interactions with the angel of death, and his acceptance of his impending death despite his devotion and service to God.

Commentary

- The statement in Deuteronomy 34:10:1 emphasizes that no prophet in Israel matched the stature of Moses, with Moses having a familiarity with God that allowed him to speak to Him at any time he desired.  
- Moses' unique relationship with God is highlighted by the idea that he knew God face-to-face, with direct and open revelation.  
- The phrase "face-to-face" signifies a close and intimate relationship, indicating a level of mutual understanding between Moses and God.

Quoting Commentary

- Multiple commentaries discuss the unique prophetic abilities of Moses and how they set him apart from other prophets, stating that Moses' prophetic experiences were different due to their clarity, the absence of intermediaries, and being done publicly  
- Ramban elaborates on the distinction between the names used for G-d in relation to the level of prophecy achieved and promises made to the patriarchs  
- Ralbag reflects on the idea that Moses' prophecy was granted by God as a miraculous act, with the potential for a similar level of prophecy to arise, but not one as unique as Moses' experience  
- Rabbi Bahya explores the depth of meaning behind various verses and interpretations to emphasize the importance of prophecy and divine communication in biblical texts

Responsa

- The argument that verses in Scripture allude to Mohammed is considered feeble and ridiculous, aimed at winning favor with Gentiles by showing Mohammed is mentioned in the Torah.  
- The promise of Ishmael becoming a great nation does not connote possession of prophecy or law, but merely an increase in numbers.  
- The Divine covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob refers exclusively to those of their descendants.  
- The phrase "from the midst of thee" in the verse about a prophet indicates the prophet will arise from within the Israelites and will not introduce a new law or religion.  
- The distinction between Moses as a true prophet witnessed by ancestors and other miracle workers is fundamental in the Jewish faith.  
- The rule of not adding or diminishing from the Laws of Moses applies to both the written and oral law transmitted through sages of blessed memory.  
- It is warned to be cautious of heretics who may corrupt the faith of young people and it is permitted to slay them for going against the teachings of Moses.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 34:10, the Targums Onkelos, Jerusalem, and Jonathan emphasize the unique relationship between Moses and God, highlighting how Moses had a direct and unparalleled connection with the word and presence of the Lord, distinguishing him from all other prophets in Israel.

Talmud

- Kohelet, identified as King Solomon, sought the fiftieth gate like Moses but failed  
- A Divine Voice told Kohelet to focus on the Torah  
- The Torah states there has not arisen a prophet like Moses in Israel

Halakhah

- Negation of the positive involves negating the predicate from the subject, such as "X did not eat yesterday" or "Reuven is not Shimon's father"  
- Arabic uses "mah" or "lah" for negation, while Hebrew uses "lo" or words connected to ayin  
- Prohibition is a type of command using the exact verb of a command, always in the future tense  
- Negation can be a narrative sentence in the past, future, or present  
- Negative statements that are negations should not be considered negative commandments, as they are different from prohibitions.

Kabbalah

The Sixth Sefirah is known as The Written Torah, as Moshe alone was able to come close to the Great Name HaShem, making him unique among prophets with whom HaShem communicated directly, without riddles, due to his ability to connect with the inner aspect of the Divine through the middle line and polished lens.

Musar

- The sages compared Moses to Bileam but did not mean they were equal in holiness or character qualities.  
- Moses' intellectual capacity exceeded all others, as seen in his comprehension of the red heifer legislation.  
- Some accused Moses of adultery, but it was actually a denial of his special relationship with God, which Maimonides described in Moreh Nevuchim.  
- Korach was deceived by his descendants excelling in virtues opposite to his, practiced also by Samuel who combined the virtues of Moses and Aaron.  
- Moses' career foreshadowed his ultimate achievement, with sparks of godliness evident from his youth.  
- Moses reached spiritual heights through refining his physical aspects and separating from his wife to purify himself.  
- Moses' ability to enter and leave the hidden aspects of the Torah was natural, compared to Joshua and others entering the orchard.

Liturgy

- Both the Siddur Ashkenaz and Siddur Sefard include the line "There never arose in Israel another like Moses, a prophet who beheld God’s image."  
- This statement is part of the preparatory prayers in the Siddur Ashkenaz for weekday Shacharit, as well as in the prayers for Upon Arising and Upon Entering Synagogue in the Siddur Sefard.

Second Temple

- Moses is celebrated as a prophet in the text.  
- Moses had a unique relationship with the Lord, being known face to face.

Deuteronomy 34:11

Jewish Thought

Maimonides emphasizes that acquiring the qualifications for prophecy does not guarantee becoming a prophet; Hillel had qualified students but the time was not right. Moses prayed for the exclusive gift of prophecy for the Jewish people, as other nations lacked the necessary qualities. Bileam, seen as a prophet, had limited foresight and was not a true prophet like Moses; gentile "prophets" were more like seers or astrologers. Moses and Aaron's miracles were certain due to communication with God, while other prophets like Samuel relied on prayer and had doubts about success. Moses' miracles were preordained, while other prophets sought guidance through prayer.

Midrash

In Bereshit Rabbah 59:5, it is discussed how Abraham was fair among the heavenly and earthly beings, spiritually elevated, clean of hands, pure of heart, and received blessings from God. In Midrash Tanchuma, V'Zot HaBerachah 3:1, Moses confronts the Angel of Death before his passing, justified the judgment of death upon himself, and praised God before departing. Shemot Rabbah 46:3 discusses how Moses separated from his wife based on God's command, and how Moses justified breaking the tablets based on his reasoning aligning with God's will.

Targum

• Targum Onkelos: Mentions signs and wonders sent by Adonoy in Egypt to Pharaoh and his people  
• Targum Jerusalem: Refers to miracles, wonders, and signs performed by the Word of the Lord in Egypt on Pharaoh and his servants  
• Targum Jonathan: Describes signs, wonders, and manifestations sent by the Word of the Lord in Egypt on Pharaoh, his servants, and the people of his land

Commentary

- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:11:1 - Moses talked to G'd face to face to perform miracles.  
- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:11:2 - Prophets legitimizing themselves through miracles is not necessary, faith in predictions is enough.  
- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:11:3 - Israelites accepting whatever Moses said in G'd's name expressed acceptance of him as a prophet.  
- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:11:4 - Moses as a prophet uniquely trusted by the people, performed significant miracles.   
- Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 34:11:5 - All Israelites witnessed Moses' miracles, establishing his prophecies as true.  
- Rabbeinu Bahya on Devarim 34:11:1-2 - Moses performed public miracles that exceeded other prophets', known throughout history.  
- Ramban on Deuteronomy 34:11:1 - Moses' signs and wonders were done with G'd's true presence, throughout his life.  
- Sforno on Deuteronomy 34:11:1 - Moses' unique communication with G'd for miracles in Egypt set him apart from other prophets.   
- Steinsaltz on Deuteronomy 34:11 - Moses performed superior miracles unmatched by others.  
- Tur HaArokh on Deuteronomy 34:11:1 - Moses' miracles and prophecy set him apart, were publicly known, and continued for a long period.

Quoting Commentary

The people who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness not only questioned their leadership but also denied the miracles that God had performed through them, leading to their punishment of death by the common death of all men. Moses emphasized that if this punishment was not divinely sent, then he was not truly chosen by God to lead them out of Egypt. This highlights the importance of recognizing and respecting the authority and actions of a chosen leader like Moses, as shown through the many works and miracles he performed in front of all Israel.

Musar

- G-d teaches laws we can understand to prepare us for accepting laws beyond our understanding, leading to faith in the validity of all laws  
- Torah referred to in four expressions, representing two "Torahs"  
- Moses' miracles were under the Ineffable Name of G-d, only perceived by spiritual elite  
- Moses could not lead all people to the Holy Land due to lack of faith, reserved for spiritually higher groups  
- Jewish people are unique like angels, refined to bring the שכינה back to earth  
- Moses' physical blemish of stutter challenged his ability to be a prophet  
- G-d demonstrates His true essence through His actions, as shown in both Moses' miracles and creation ex nihilo.

Deuteronomy 34:12

Chasidut

- The Torah starting with the letter Beis symbolizes the existence of two Torahs - written and oral.   
- The Torah predates the creation of the world by two thousand years, leading to questions about how events such as death were written about in advance when they had not yet occurred.

Jewish Thought

1) Moses arriving at Mount Chorev appears to be coincidental, the mountain is called "the Mountain of G-d" for unclear reasons. 2) Repetitions in verse 7 are excessive. 3) Moses describing himself as insignificant and delaying the redemption by questioning his own suitability. 4) Signs of redemption should have occurred prior to Moses accepting his role. 5) Moses anticipating the reaction of the Jewish people before being instructed by G-d. 6) Sequence of instructions appears in reverse order. 7) Moses using subterfuge and lack of forthrightness in interactions with G-d and the Israelites. 8) G-d's anger towards Moses and the threat to kill him seem out of place. 9) Tzipporah's statement and Pharaoh's denial of G-d are confusing elements in the text. 10) Specific terms and lineages mentioned in the Torah are questioned.

Talmud

- Moses added an extra day of purity before receiving the Ten Commandments to ensure Israel received them in a state of purity  
- He broke the tablets to prevent Israel from deserving death by binding them in serious commandments  
- Moses did not break the tablets until commanded by God, with different views on when he received this command  
- The Tablets had two hand-breadths of space between them, with Moses holding two and God holding two  
- Moses made an argument de minore ad majus before throwing and breaking the tablets  
- The Yod in the word teshi must be smaller than any other Yod in the Scriptures  
- The Yod in the word yigdal must be bigger than any Yod in the Torah  
- Israel at the end of the Torah must be enlarged, with the Lamed in it being higher than any other Lamed.

Quoting Commentary

- The Bartenura commentary explains the Torah readings and Haftarah readings done during various Jewish holidays and special occasions, detailing a specific reading for each day, along with the corresponding Haftarah reading.  
- Rashi is noted for beginning his Torah commentary with an Alef on Genesis 1:1 and ending it with a Tav on Deuteronomy 34:12, symbolizing the fullness of Torah knowledge.  
- Chizkuni comments on the significance of the plagues in Deuteronomy 34:12 in relation to Pharaoh finally relenting.  
- The Covenant and Conversation commentary emphasizes the uniqueness and greatness of Moses, as shown in Deuteronomy 34:10-12.  
- Moses' courage in shattering the tablets is noted in the Bible, Deuteronomy 34:12, as a sign of leadership.  
- Joshua is chosen to lead the people after Moses, as Deuteronomy 34:10-12 highlights their differences yet the necessity for Joshua.  
- Various texts in Deuteronomy 34:10-12 recount the signs and wonders of Moses before the people of Israel.  
- Deuteronomy 34:12 describes the moment where Moses shatters the stone tablets before the Israelites.  
- Commentary in Deuteronomy 34:12 reveals that the entire Torah was written on the stone tablets and later copied for future texts.  
- Scriptures such as Exodus 33:12-34:26 and Ezekiel 37:1-14 are read during Passover and Sukkot, respectively, according to Rambam.  
- As Deuteronomy 34:12 closes the Torah, Moshe's voice is likened to God's, showing the authoritative status of these teachings.  
- Far-reaching parallel texts and the transformation of political models into religious texts are reflected in Deuteronomy 34:12, creating authoritative scripture.

Halakhah

- Ben Ish Hai declares steadfast faith before Hashem, asking for success and redemption in Psalms passages  
- Mishneh Torah allows reading the last eight verses of the Torah with fewer than ten people present   
- Mishneh Torah details specific rules for formatting Torah scrolls, including leaving four empty lines between each book and finishing the Torah in the middle of a line at the bottom of the column.

Commentary

- Moshe shattered the tablets before the eyes of Israel, even though it was a depressing act, it may symbolize a construction of a proper reality. (Birkat Asher on Torah)  
- The awe-inspiring manifestations before all Israel led them to believe in Moshe. (Chizkuni)  
- The mighty hand alludes to wonders at the sea, while the great terror refers to the time at Mount Sinai. (Ibn Ezra)  
- The strong hand and great awesomeness mentioned were intended to inspire awe and fear of God. (Rabbeinu Bahya)  
- The acts of the strong hand and great terror were not performed by Moshe but arranged by God. (Ramban)  
- Moshe's breaking of the tablet was an act he orchestrated and approved by God. (Rashi)  
- The strong hand refers to God's power in various events, while the great awe includes Mount Sinai's revelation. (Sforno)  
- All the phenomena Moshe performed were for the eyes of all Israel, inspiring awe and fear. (Steinsaltz)  
- The mighty hand and great awe reference the sea split and Sinai revelation, and Moses contributed by instilling understanding of Sabbath. (Tur HaArokh)

Midrash

In the Midrash Tehillim, it is explained how the Lord ensured the victory of Israel in battles throughout history, from Moses to David. In the Midrash Sefer HaYashar, the story recounts the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness, including their interactions with other nations, battles, and challenges. Finally, in Shemot Rabbah 46:3, Moses' reasoning behind separating from his wife is explored, showing his faithfulness and obedience to God's will.

Targum

In Deuteronomy 34:12, Targum Onkelos mentions the strong hand and great displays performed by Moses in front of all of Israel, Targum Jerusalem emphasizes the Mighty Hand and great manifestations by Moses before all Israel, and Targum Jonathan describes the strength of the Mighty Hand displayed through Moses' actions such as dividing the sea and carrying the two tablets of sapphire stone.

Kabbalah

- The 42 letters are mentioned at the end of the Torah in Deuteronomy 34:12  
- There are three hands in the verse representing different parts of the text  
- The points (vocalizations) in the 42-letter Name are compared to the points in the Name from "In the beginning"  
- Rabbi Shlomo Molcho found names in the book "HaKanah" that form the 42-letter Name, serving as a garment for it.

Musar

- The prophet refers to Moses as having an appearance unlike man and beyond human semblance, with his form marred and radiating light after receiving the Torah.  
- Moses is described as sharing the fate of the generation of the Exodus and being involved in the secret of possible existence of generations.  
- Isaiah 53 speaks of Moses receiving rewards from G-d and interceding for sinners in every generation until the Messiah.  
- Israel heard the Ten Commandments in one single phrase without punctuation, with G-d repeating the first two for comprehension.  
- Each Israelite heard a total of twelve commandments, corresponding to the twelve tribes and symbols related to Moses and the Torah.