

MAN SOARS THROUGH INITIATIVE



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Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Classification of Pariahs

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Betraying Both Through Impure Forces

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An Extract That Brought Greater Ruination

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The Mishkan As Identified With Moshe

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When The Terrestrial Supersedes the Celestial

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1. G-d's intent in creation was to dwell on the terrestrial with Man – not only on the celestial.
2. He commanded Man to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge.
3. Adam failed – causing G-d to remove Himself from the terrestrial; He ascended to the 7th Heaven.
4. Avraham's good deeds caused G-d to descend from the 7th to the 6th Heaven.
5. Yitzchok, offering himself as a sacrifice, caused the Divine Presence to descend to the 5th.
6. Why was Moshe able to reinstate G-d's Presence onto the terrestrial?
7. Moshe was the only one qualified to receive the Torah.
8. The objective of creation was that there should be a Jewish people and the Torah.
9. Moshe brought creation to fruition as the location for the Torah to be fulfilled.
10. Moshe was therefore able to bring G-d's Presence to the terrestrial.

Encrypting the Blessing for All Contingencies

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1. The Kohen blesses the congregation with 3 blessings.
2. First blessing: G-d should bless you & watch over you.
3. Rashi: G-d should bless you with material wealth and your possessions should not be plundered.
4. G-d provides divine protection to retain the blessing.
5. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: G-d should protect you from any negative influence due to the material.
6. Seforno: The objective of the material is to provide all that is necessary for the spiritual.
7. "If there is no flour, there is no Torah."
8. Second blessing: G-d should bring illumination upon you.
9. After your needs are satisfied, G-d should illuminate your eyes to see G-d's wonders from His Torah and actions.
10. You will see His wonders and divine providence.

Ensnaring the Suspected Adulteress

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1. The suspected adulteress claiming innocence is brought to the Kohen for the ritual of the Sotah.
2. Sotah is juxtaposed to the portion of the tithes given to the Kohen.
3. If one withholds the tithes from the Kohen he will be forced to come with his wife as a suspected adulteress to the Kohen.
4. Because Aaron participated in gathering the gold for the golden calf it was decreed his 4 sons should die.
5. Moshe's supplication annulled 50% of the decree.
6. Why were Aaron's adult sons liable for their father's sin?
7. Midrash: They died because they officiated after they drank wine, or acted on their own without consulting with Moshe.
8. Due to Aaron's piety they should have merited clarity not to err as they had.
9. Because Aaron deserved suffering for his role in the golden calf his two sons were not given clarity.
10. Their failing was their own.
11. Had the husband not withheld the tithes from the Kohen, his merit would have protected his wife from not having an interest in another man.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Nasso

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YORAM RAANAN

What is Truly a Blessing?

There is a Positive Commandment for the *Kohanim* (Priests) to bless the Jewish people. The priestly blessings are comprised of three berachos (blessings). The first is, “May *Hashem* bless you and watch over you.”

Rashi: “May *Hashem* bless you” means that one’s possessions should be blessed and that “(*Hashem*) should watch over you” so that thieves should not steal that which was given. When a master gives a gift to his servant, he cannot guarantee that it will not be stolen. However, *Hashem* endows the Jewish people (His servants) with blessing and assures them that it will remain with them.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: There are several other interpretations regarding the first blessing of the *Kohanim*. One is that *Hashem* should give such abundant blessing to the Jew that he would need protection so it should not be taken from him. A poor person for

example does not require protection from thieves because he has nothing to steal. Another interpretation is, “*Hashem* should bless you with material wealth and this abundance should not have a negative effect on you.” When one has wealth, he is more susceptible to succumbing to the evil inclination. Thus, the blessing is that *Hashem* should protect the Jewish people from these pitfalls.

The ultimate example of blessing that was given to the Jewish people was the Manna (wafer-like food that sustained the Jewish people throughout the forty years in the desert). The Manna assumed the taste, texture and nutritional value of any food that one wanted, thus causing the Jewish people to be nourished and sated. They always had sufficient Manna regardless of the volume that they had collected. The Manna caused blessing “in their innards.” Another miracle of the Manna was that since it was absorbed in the inner organs, there was no need for bodily functions. However, the

all-encompassing blessing was that the Jewish people did not need to be preoccupied with providing and preparing nourishment for themselves. Thus, they could be singularly focused on their spirituality.

Torah: Hashem blessed the *lechem ha'panim* (showbread that was contained on the holy table of the Sanctuary). The *Kohanim* would divide the showbread every *Shabbos* amongst themselves during the daytime. When the *Kohen* would receive a portion that was as miniscule as a pea, he would be sated.

Mishna: After the passing of *Shimon HaTzaddik* (who officiated as the High Priest during the Second Temple for a period of forty years), a curse went into the *lechem ha'panim* and it was no longer able to satiate the *Kohanim* to a greater degree than ordinary food. Thus, the effect of *beracha* (blessing) is that the intrinsic qualitative value has the effect of more, although it is less.

Every day we pray to *Hashem* in the closing of the morning blessings, "Accustom us to Your *Torah* and attach us to Your *mitzvos* and do not allow us to be disgraced or be subjected to tests." Seemingly, we are making several requests– to be accustomed to *Torah* and not to be disgraced or tested. Another way to understand this is as one request: "Accustom us to Your *Torah* and attach us to Your *mitzvos* so that we should have an appreciation for spirituality to understand what is correct and thus not be disgraced and not tempted."

If one is accustomed to *Torah* and attached to *mitzvos*, he will not be tested – just as one who sees and understands the destructive effect of fire will not be tempted to engage with it. One only transgresses when he believes and feels that what he is doing is not necessarily to his detriment. Therefore, we ask *Hashem* to "accustom us to His *Torah* and attach us to His *mitzvos*" to such a degree that there will not be a basis to be tested or disgraced.

Rabbeinu Peretz: The *Sandek* (the one who holds the newborn child on his lap) at the time of the *Bris* (Circumcision) merits wealth just as it was merited by the *Kohen* who participated in the incense offering.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah:* The *Kohanim* would draw lots in order to determine which one would participate in the incense offering. Once a *Kohen* had participated, he was no longer allowed to be involved in its process until all of the other *Kohanim* had taken their turn. The reason each one must be given a chance to participate

is that whoever did so became wealthy. Therefore, a *Kohen* who had already participated in the offering must give another *Kohen* the opportunity to become wealthy.

Rav Yechezkel Landau zt'l in his responsa *Nodah B'Yehudah:* There is difficulty with the position of *Rabbeinu Peretz* for two reasons. Firstly, we see that the *Rav* of a community officiates as the *Sandek* at all of the *brissim* (circumcisions) of the same family without offering the opportunity to others. Secondly, we have not seen these community rabbis becoming wealthy. Thus, *Rav Landau* concludes that there is no correlation between officiating as *Sandek* and participating in the incense offering.

Chasam Sofer zt'l in his responsa: He responds to the difficulties posed by *Rav Yechezkel Landau zt'l*. The fact that the *Rav* of the community repeatedly officiates as *Sandek* does not refute the position of *Rabbeinu Peretz*– because the *Rav* of the community is the equivalent of the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*). Just as the *Kohen Gadol* was able to repeatedly take any service for himself without entering into the lottery system (even regarding the incense), so too can the *Rav* of a community because of his special status.

Secondly, regarding the difficulty that we do not see the people who officiate as *Sandek* becoming wealthy is not a basis for refutation. If one merits great wealth and at the same time has a spiritual debt from a previous transgression, he deserves to have the wealth that he received to be taken from him in order to atone for his failing. What would one prefer – to be given the wealth, experience the benefit of the gift and subsequently have it taken from him (causing him anguish), or not to receive the wealth at all and have his spiritual debt be satisfied (without experiencing loss/anguish)?

The obvious choice would be the latter, to protect the person from experiencing the pain of loss. Even during the time of the Temple when the incense offering gave the *Kohen* the opportunity to become wealthy, if that *Kohen* was deserving of punishment (that would cause him to lose his wealth), *Hashem* would simply have one offset the other. The reason the Rabbis do not become wealthy despite their participation as *Sandek* is because there are mitigating factors, which do not allow the wealth to be experienced.

We pray to *Hashem* to give us blessing and simultaneously we ask Him not to test us. If receiving

material blessing is the cause of temptation then our requests are contradictory. Perhaps it is in one's best interest not to receive wealth. Therefore, the blessing of the *Kohanim* is vital to the success and the advancement of the Jewish people. Their blessing is that *Hashem* should favor us with material wealth and watch over us so that it does not become a cause of temptation. When we pray to *Hashem* to grant us specific things, we should also ask Him not to respond to our request if it is not in our best interest.

Mishna in Tractate *Berachos*: "If a person prays to *Hashem* that He should have mercy on him as He has mercy on the nest of the mother bird (one is only permitted to take the eggs or the chicks after the mother bird is sent away), he should be silenced."

Vilna Gaon zt'l: The reason one is silenced is because such a request is actually a curse. The mother bird after being sent away (knowing that her offspring are being taken) finds the nearest body of water to take her own life in order to relieve her intense pain. Thus, when one prays to *Hashem*, he should only pray for something that is in his best interest.

Taking the Abstract and Turning it into Reality

Torah: If a woman had been forewarned by her husband not to sequester herself with another man and she subsequently defies his warning, the woman assumes the status of a *sotah* (a suspected adulteress) until proven otherwise. A woman who commits adultery is forbidden to her husband. Since it is unknown what had transpired during the time of seclusion, the only verification that can determine if she is truly an adulteress or not is through administering the *mai sotah* (water given to the *sotah* to drink).

When the suspected adulteress claims her innocence, and the husband is interested in continuing his relationship with her, he must verify her innocence. He must take his wife to the *Kohen* at the Temple Mount to drink the *mai sotah* (the water into which the writ of the *Sotah* was obliterated). If in fact the woman had committed adultery, the water (upon entering into her body) would cause her belly to swell and bloat to a point when every vein in her body burst and her lower extremities became dismembered. However if the woman is found to be innocent, she will conceive if she was barren; previously if she had

ugly children, she would bear beautiful children from this point on.

The *Torah* juxtaposes the portion of the *nazir* to the portion of the *sotah*. A *nazir* is one who has vowed to be a nazerite and is not permitted to partake of wine, cut his hair, or contaminate himself with the dead.

Gemara in Tractate *Nazir*: "What is the significance of the juxtaposition of these two portions?" The *Gemara* answers, "To teach us that if a person had witnessed the demise of the adulteress as a result of drinking the *mai sotah* one should accept upon himself nazeritehood." It is important to note that the relationship, which precipitated the tragic end of the *sotah*, began with only socializing over a glass of wine. Thus, understanding the far-reaching negative consequences of wine, one should enter into a state of nazeritehood, which does not allow him to drink wine or even eat of the grape or any of its derivatives.

One would think that witnessing such obvious Divine retribution, as the gruesome demise of the *sotah*, would be sufficient to cause a person to be vigilant and act responsibly regarding his own behavior. Nevertheless, the *Torah* suggests that although one had witnessed the tragic end of the *sotah*, one should accept upon himself nazeritehood to fully appreciate the negative consequences of drinking wine. Why is witnessing the demise of the *sotah* in itself not sufficient to cause the person to assume the necessary precautions to prevent such an occurrence from repeating itself?

Ramban: Even at the time of the Second *Bais HaMikdash* (the Second Temple) when there were no longer revealed miracles, the miracle of the *sotah* was still in effect for the purpose of guaranteeing and maintaining the purity of the Jewish People.

Midrash: The maidservant who witnessed the splitting of the Sea experienced a level of revelation that even the Prophet *Yechezkel* did not experience. Nevertheless, after the miraculous event of the Sea, the maidservant remained a maidservant. She was not in anyway transformed or impacted by her experience, whereas *Yechezkel* internalized his prophetic experiences in a manner that caused him to be the great prophet *Yechezkel*.

The *Torah* and *Chazal* are teaching us that even if one witnesses divine retribution in the most obvious way, such as the demise of the *sotah*, it is not sufficient to

leave an indelible impression upon him to be vigilant in this area. One must actualize and concretize that feeling of inspiration, which one gains from that event. If one does not actualize his inspiration, it will quickly dissipate and fade into the recesses of one's memory.

Torah: In order for this experience to have an everlasting effect on an individual, he must accept upon himself the state of nazeritehood. For example, when people visit *Eretz Yisroel* and experience spiritual stirrings such as when visiting the *Kosel* (Western Wall) and other holy sites, if one does not actualize those feelings by committing oneself to some aspect of *Torah* Judaism they will fade into oblivion as if they were never experienced.

The Jewish people received the *Torah* at Sinai and heard the Voice of G-d. They had experienced the miracles of Egypt and witnessed the Splitting of the Sea. They had accepted the *Torah* unequivocally with the declaration of "*Naaseh V'nishmah* – we will do and we will listen." This declaration caused a Heavenly Voice to say, "who revealed this secret to My children?"

However, after *Moshe* ascended to heaven and did not return at the time that they expected, they engaged in the Sin of the Golden Calf. How is it possible to engage in idolatry after having reached the 49th level of spiritual purity? Since the Jewish people did not actualize what they had experienced, they were susceptible to failure. They did not yet have the *Torah* or the *mitzvos*. If a Jew does not have *mitzvos*, which enable him to actualize his feelings of spirituality, then it is only a question of time before he will go astray.

Every day we pray to *Hashem* that He should "Give us the ability to study, disseminate, retain, and to do His *Torah*." One would think that if one studies, disseminates, and retains *Torah* that he would observe it as well. Evidently, it is not as simple as it seems. One needs to pray to *Hashem* to do His Will because until one actualizes his beliefs/studies by the performance of *mitzvos*, they will not yet have left an indelible impression upon him. It is interesting to note that there is no aspect of our lives that is not governed by *mitzvos*.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: One is not permitted to benefit from this world without first reciting a blessing. For example, one recites a blessing before eating or drinking, which acknowledges *Hashem* for creating that particular food or drink. However, that acknowledgement does not affect the person until he

partakes of the food item. When we are inspired to learn *Torah* we should not delay, but rather actualize that feeling immediately by doing. By immediately actualizing one's inspiration, it will become concretized and have an ever-lasting effect. However if one does not actualize his inspiration, it will eventually dissipate regardless of how strong it was initially.

How One Structures His Own Spirituality

Torah: Every day throughout a twelve-day period, the prince of each tribe (*Nassee*) brought gifts in honor of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*. The *Torah* delineates each of the gifts and offerings. Regarding the first *Nassee* (Prince) the *Torah* states, "The one who brought his offering on the first day was *Nachshon ben Amminadav*, of the tribe of *Yehudah*. His offering was..." Regarding the second *Nassee*, who was from the tribe of *Yissachar*, the *Torah* states, "On the second day, *Nethanel ben Zuar* offered, the prince (*nassee*) of *Yissachar*..."

There are a number of observations to address in these two verses. Firstly, the *Torah* predicates each name of each prince with the appellation of "*nassee* (prince)" except for *Nachshon ben Amminadav*, the prince of the tribe of *Yehudah*. In addition, regarding *Nachshon*, the *Torah* repeats the term "*korban* – his offering"; this repetition seems superfluous. Another observation pertains to the second prince, *Nethanel ben Zuar*, from the tribe of *Yissachar*. The *Torah* mentions the appellation "*nassee*" after his name rather than before it as with all the other princes. How do we understand this?

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: There are two types of *korban*– the physical offering that is brought by the individual and the *korban haNe'elam* (concealed *korban*). The concealed *korban* reflects the merits and good deeds of the person who is bringing the offering. When one brings his offering, he is not only presenting the physical offering but also presenting his own spiritual uniqueness, which is based on his actions. The offering is considered something very special because it is enhanced by the individual's spirituality.

The tribe of *Yehudah* was the most prestigious of all the tribes. They represent *malchus* (royalty), leadership and *Torah*. *Nachshon* was the most unique among all the princes because of his own spiritual accomplishments. In addition, he personified the characteristic of the tribe of *Yehudah*, which was *malchus*. The *Torah* identifies

the leader of each tribe as *nassee* (prince) in order for one to take note of that person. *Nachshon*, on the other hand, did not need any level of introduction because of his own special dimension of person.

When *Nachshon* brought his physical *korban* it was complemented by his spiritual accomplishments and merits (*korban haNe'elam*). This is why the *Torah* repeats the term “*korbanos* – his offering” in order to indicate *Nachshon's* special spirituality. The tribe of *Yissachar* represents *Torah* study and scholarship at the most advanced level and is thus considered one of the most prestigious tribes. Although *Nethanel ben Zuar* was not at the level of *Nachshon ben Amminadav*, the *Torah* chooses to introduce him first by name and only afterwards identifies his status as “*nassee*”. The reason for this is to indicate that *Nethanel* also possessed a spiritual uniqueness; however, he was not at the level of *Nachshon*. Therefore, the term “*nassee*” follows his name to indicate that his title is considered secondary to whom he was as a person.

Psalm of *Ashrei*: “*Hashem* is close to all who call upon Him– to all who call upon Him *b'emmes* (sincerely/truth).” Simply, one could understand this to mean that *Hashem* is close to those who call out to Him with sincerity. However, this verse can also be understood to mean, “*Hashem* is close to those who approach Him with *emmes* (truth).” Meaning, if a person possesses *emmes* then *Hashem* will respond to his request.

Hashem takes into account not only the sincerity of one's prayer but also the spiritual worthiness of the individual who is making the request. Although one must approach *Hashem* at the time of *tefillah* (prayer) like a needy person (as it is ruled in the *Shulchan Aruch* – Code of Jewish Law), that is not necessarily sufficient for one's prayers to be answered. One must possess the characteristic of *emmes* and also *Torah* (which is *emmes*– as King Solomon states in *Mishlei*, “acquire truth and do not sell it.”) to be worthy of *Hashem's* response. When one approaches *Hashem* with *tefillah* or a *korban*, *Hashem* takes into account the *korban haNe'elam* (concealed *korban*) which is the individual's spiritual standing. Only G-d knows the level of one's *korban haNe'elam*.

Ramban: Although the gifts given by the *Neseim* were identical, the *Torah* continuously repeats them for each of the twelve princes. The reason for this is that each of the gifts was infused with the unique intent of the

prince who presented them. Each had its own spiritual make-up, reflecting that characteristic of the individual tribe. Therefore, although in the physical sense the gifts were identical, they were worlds apart because of their individualized spiritual dimension.

If two Jews perform the identical *mitzvah*, is the spiritual structure of the *mitzvah* identical? Alternatively, does each person infuse his *mitzvah* with his own uniqueness thus causing it to take on a different spiritual structure? We are able to extrapolate from the gifts that were given by the *Neseim*. Although they were identical in the material sense, each of their gifts is identified as unique and individualized because of the intent with which they were infused. Even regarding the same individual, if one performs a *mitzvah* with a greater level of intensity and subsequently regresses and performs it at a lesser level, the two *mitzvos* that were performed take on their own, unique, spiritual structure.

What are the Necessary Amenities of Life?

Rambam in *Hilchos Deos* (The Laws of Pertaining to Character and Behavior): “One could say that since jealousy, desire, and honor are the things which take a person out of this world (destroy a person in the physical and spiritual sense), one should distance himself from them to an extreme level by denying himself meat and wine, by not living in a pleasant home, and by not wearing esthetically pleasing/comfortable clothing. Rather one should wear sackcloth or clothing made of hard wool (that lacerates the skin) similar to the garments worn by the priests of idolatry. However, to conduct oneself in this manner is not the proper path. It is forbidden to deny oneself to this degree.

Torah: Regarding the *nazir* (who denies himself wine and grape products), “He has sinned against himself (his essence).” The Rabbis say, “If the *nazir* who only denied himself wine requires atonement, how much more atonement would one require if he denied himself the necessities of life.” Therefore, the Rabbis tell us that one should only deny himself those things, which are not permitted by the *Torah*. One should not impose vows and oaths upon himself to deny those things, which are permitted to him. As the Rabbis say, “Is it not enough that the *Torah* prohibits certain things? Does one need to go beyond these prohibitions by denying himself those things which are permitted by the *Torah*?”

Those who are continuously in a state of fasting are not correct in their behavior. The Rabbis prohibited this. Regarding this type of behavior *Shlomo HaMelech* (King Salomon) said, “Do not make yourself too much of a *tzaddik* (righteous/devout person). Do not make yourself too wise because you will become desolate.” If a person lives his life in a manner that addresses all of his necessities so he can function and serve G-d, then satisfying all his human, material, needs is considered part of his service of *Hashem*.”

What is the meaning of *Shlomo HaMelech*’s statement, “Do not make yourself too much of a *tzaddik* (righteous/devout person). Do not make yourself too wise because you will become desolate.” If one is accustomed to eating a seven-course meal and limits himself to eating a two-course meal– is that considered becoming too devout?

Torah: There is a Positive Commandment, “You shall make yourself holy.”

Chazal: “One must sanctify himself with that which is permitted to him.” Seemingly this passage from *Chazal* is contradictory to the words of *Shlomo HaMelech*, “Do not make yourself too much of a *tzaddik* (righteous/devout person).” How do we understand this?

If a person requires six hours of sleep in order to function properly and he decides to sleep only two hours so that he should become more devout, he is acting foolishly. One should not deprive himself those amenities of life which are truly necessary for him to function properly and thus to serve *Hashem*.

This is what is being communicated by the words of *Rambam*. The Positive Commandment of, “You Shall sanctify yourself from what is permitted to you” is referring to contexts in which engaging in what is permitted is considered excess. Meaning, if something is truly not a necessity, although it may be available, one should refrain from partaking of it. This is the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* – “You shall sanctify yourself.”

How does one determine what is necessary or what is excessive? If one is at a point that he does not appreciate or understand the value of spirituality and thus denies himself something that he considers a necessity, that person is acting foolishly. In this case, refraining from it will cause him to feel deprived. However, if one has reached the point that he understands where he wants to be and sees the lack of value in so many things, which people pursue, refraining from those areas is

considered holiness (*Kedushah*). Distancing himself from those areas does not cause him to feel denied.

Gemara in Tractate *Kesubos*: Reb *Yehudah HaNassi* (Judah the Prince) known as *Rabbeinu HaKadosh* (our Holy Teacher), raised his ten fingers towards heaven before his passing and declared, “I have not benefited from this world as much as my small finger.”

Ramchal in *Mesillas Yesharim (Path of the Just)*: Although Reb *Yehudah HaNassi* did not benefit from this world as much as an iota, he did not feel denied or deprived because of his dimension of spirituality. Reb *Yehudah HaNassi* is the only person other than *Moshe Rabbeinu* who is referred to as “*Rabbeinu*” (our Teacher). He was the redactor of the Oral Law and through his effort, the perpetuation of the Oral Law was guaranteed. Although he was a prince and had every conceivable amenity of life available to him, his involvement in the material was purely for the sake of *Hashem*’s Glory. Thus, he did not personally benefit from this existence to any degree. The Prophet says, “I (*Hashem*) have created this world only for My Glory.”

Thus, if one utilizes this existence for *Hashem*’s Glory and not for his own pleasure then it is considered that he did not personally benefit from this existence. One is only permitted to distance himself from the material if it does not distract or cause him to feel denied. Only then is it considered the *mitzvah* of sanctifying oneself by separating from what is permitted to him. As *Shlomo HaMelech* tells us in *Mishlei* (Proverbs), “Its ways (*Torah*) are pleasant and all its paths are peace.” This is only possible when the person is at a level that the material is not considered a necessity.

To Fully Appreciate the Ultimate Partnership (*Bamidbar*)

Torah: The Jewish people traveled in the desert as four camps each comprised of three tribes. The camps were positioned in different directions – east, west, north and south. The camp of *Yehudah* included the tribes of *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun* and was the first to travel when the Jews were given the order. When the *Torah* tells us the tribes that comprised the camp of *Yehudah*, it mentions *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun*. However rather than saying *Yissaschar* “and” *Zevulun*, (in Hebrew: *Yissaschar v’Zevulun*), it states “*Yissaschar Zevulun*.” This is not the case when the composition of the other camps are

mentioned which identifies the tribes with the *vav* (and) inserted between the names.

Baal HaTurim: The reason the *Torah* does not separate the tribes of *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun* with the letter *vav* (and) is because the tribe of *Zevulun* was responsible for the material support of the tribe of *Yissaschar*, who were fully dedicated to *Torah* study.

Midrash: The tribe of *Zevulun*, who engaged in commerce, “placed sustenance in the mouth of *Yissaschar*.” It should have said, “*Zevulun* supported *Yissaschar*.” Why does the *Midrash* depict the support as “putting the sustenance in the mouth of *Yissaschar*”?

The Prophet refers to the tribe of *Yissaschar* as “those who know time – *Yodei eetim*.” Meaning their clarity was so advanced that they were able to do mathematical calculations to determine the calendar.

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: When *Achashverosh* (the king of Persia) sought advice concerning the fate of his wife *Vashti* after she embarrassed him, he consulted with the members of the tribe of *Yissaschar* because they had such exceptional clarity.

Midrash Tanchuma in *Vayichi*: The reason for this was that they had no responsibility whatsoever for their material needs and thus were not distracted at all from their *Torah* study. *Zevulun* provided them with every conceivable tangible need. *Zevulun* not only provided for *Yissaschar*’s material needs but also they appreciated the value of *Yissaschar* being fully immersed in *Torah* without having a moment’s distraction.

Because *Zevulun* appreciated the value of *Torah* to such a degree, they went to every length to ensure that *Yissaschar* was provided for without distractions. This is the meaning of the *Midrash* cited by *Baal HaTurim*, which states, “*Zevulun* placed the food in the mouth of *Yissaschar*.” The *Torah* does not use the letter *vav* (and) to separate *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun* in order to indicate that they are the equivalent of one tribe with each individual being responsible for another’s existence, both material and spiritual. This was the ultimate partnership.

Torah: There is a Positive Commandment to “love your fellow Jew as you love yourself.” When one values and loves his fellow as himself, he sees his fellow’s need as his own. Thus, there is no separation from one Jew and his fellow just as *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun* were not separated. Although each of the twelve tribes had their own uniqueness and ability, they are viewed as one

people. Similarly, every Jew has his own ability and uniqueness. Despite this uniqueness, the Jewish people must be united as one. This can only be achieved when each values the other’s individuality and ability like the tribes of *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun*.

The Relevance of Torah to the Jewish people (*Bamidbar*)

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: After *Moshe* received the *Torah*, *satan* asked *Hashem*, “Master of the Universe, where is the *Torah*? It is no longer in heaven.” *Hashem* responded, “I gave it to the earthly existence.” When *Hashem* informed him that the *Torah* was in the earthly realm, *satan* continued his search by asking the angel of the earth and the angel of the sea, “Where is the *Torah*?” They both responded that they did not have the *Torah*. *Satan* returned to *Hashem* and asked, “I asked the earth and the sea and they responded that they did not have the *Torah*. Where is the *Torah*?”

Hashem responded, “I gave it to *ben Amram* (the son of *Amram* – *Moshe*).” Hearing this, *satan* approached *Moshe* and asked him if he had the *Torah*. *Moshe* responded, “Do you think that I am worthy to receive G-d’s *Torah*? Who am I?” *Hashem* said to *Moshe*, “You spoke untruthfully to *satan*. I gave you the *Torah*.” *Moshe* responded, “Master of the Universe, Your hidden treasure in which you have great pleasure when You engage in it every day, what relevance do I have to it? Who am I that I should have Your *Torah*?”

Hashem said to *Moshe*, “Because you belittled yourself (you have spoken with extreme humility), the *Torah* will be identified with you – as it stated in the verse, “The *Torah* of *Moshe* My servant.” How do we understand various dialogues that transpired?

Maharsha in his commentary: Since the verse states, “The *Torah* is broader than the earth and deeper than the ocean,” *satan* had difficulty understanding how it is possible that the *Torah* (which is unending in every sense of the word) could have relevance to the earthly realm, which is finite and limited. *Satan* approached the angel of the earth and the angel of the sea to try to understand how the *Torah* could have relevance to the earthly domain, which is a finite existence. When *satan* approached *Moshe*, he responded that he has no relevance to *Torah*. Since *Torah* is broader than existence and deeper than the sea, how could man who is limited have relevance to the *Torah*?

Chazal: Every day of the week has a “mate.” For example, the mate of the first day of the week is the second day of the week and mate of the third day is the fourth day, etc.

Midrash: “Who is the mate of the seventh day (*Shabbos*) [which is the odd number]?” *Hashem* said that the Jewish people are the “mate” of the day of *Shabbos* (the seventh day). How do we understand the commonality and relevance of the Jewish people to the *Shabbos*? The seventh day of the week is a 24-hour period, which is identical to all the other days of the week. However, the seventh day, which is *Shabbos*, has an innate spirituality, which is equated by the Talmud to the world to come, “A semblance of the world to come” that cannot be quantified.

Mishna in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of our Fathers): One of the miracles of the first Temple Period was that the Jewish people would stand pressed together in the Sanctuary. However when it came time for them to prostrate themselves there was sufficient room to accommodate them. Within the physical context, this is something which is an impossibility and something that the human mind cannot comprehend or process to any degree. It is important to note that the walls of the Sanctuary did not expand. How is it possible that the same location, which could barely contain them while standing, accommodated them while they were prostrated?

Although the *Bais HaMikdash* was a physical location, its value and significance was spiritual and thus had an unlimited capability. Although *Shabbos* is a period comprised of 24 hours, its inherent value and significance is spiritual. It is a semblance of the world to come, and thus its capacity is unlimited.

The Jewish people, although they are physical beings, have a spiritual essence. Therefore, their capacity is unlimited. The *Torah*, which is broader than the earth and deeper than the sea, cannot be contained within physical existence, which is finite. However, the *Torah* was not given to the world at large. It was given to the Jewish people whose essence is unlimited. Satan did not fully comprehend this reality.

Hashem told satan to go to “*ben Amram – Moshe*” because He had given the *Torah* to him. *Moshe Rabbeinu* was the spiritual equivalent of the entire Jewish people. Satan could not relate to the fact that one man could be the equivalent of the entire Jewish people.

Moshe’s dimension of spirituality was unlimited. When *Moshe* responded and said, “Who am I to merit G-d’s *Torah*” he was highlighting the fact that as a mere mortal/limited being he has no relevance to the unlimited *Torah*. By negating himself as a limited physical being, he assumed a spiritual status of infinite dimension, thus giving him the capacity to have relevance to the unlimited spirituality of the *Torah*.



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