

NOTES

Tradition – קבלה: The term tradition, or the texts of tradition, refers to the Prophets and Writings sections of the Bible, as opposed to the Torah. Some explain that the term tradition is used to refer to matters whose status and sanctity are derived from oral tradition and not from the written Torah. Others explain that the statements of the Prophets are called tradition, *kabbala*, from the word *kevila*, meaning rebuke.

שָׁבְטוֹ שֶׁל בְּנֵי־מִן וַיַּרְדֵּ לְסֵם תְּחִילָה, שָׁגָנָרָר:
 "שֵׁם בְּנֵי־מִן צָעִיר רֹדֶם". אֲלֹא תַּקְרִין "רֹדֶם"
 אֲלֹא "רֹד יִם". וְהִיא שְׂרֵי יְהוָה וּגְמִימִים אֶתְּמָם,
 שָׁגָנָרָר: "שְׁרֵי יְהוָה וּגְמִימִים".

לְפִיכְךָ זֶכָּה בְּנֵי־מִן הַצְּדִיק וַיְנַעֲשֵׂה אָוְשָׁפִיצָן
 לְגָבוּרָה, שָׁגָנָרָר: "וּבַיִן בְּתַפְיוֹ שָׁכָן".

אָמָר לוּ רֹبֵי יְהוָה: לֹא בֶּן הִיא מִשְׁחָה, אַלְאֵל
 הַזֶּה אָמָר "אֲנֵי יַרְדֵּת תְּחִילָה לִם" וְזה אָמָר
 "אֵין אֲנֵי יַרְדֵּת תְּחִילָה לִם". קָפָץ נַחֲשׁוֹן בְּנֵי
 עַמִּינָּרֶב וַיַּרְדֵּת תְּחִילָה, שָׁגָנָרָר: "סְבִבִּי
 בְּכָחֵש אֶפְרַיִם וּבְמִרְמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וִיהוָה
 עַד רֹד עַם אַלְאֵל".

וְעַלְיוֹ מִפְרַשׁ בַּקְבָּלָה: "הַשְׁעִינֵי אֶלְחִים כִּי
 בָּאוּ מִים עַד נֶפֶשׁ, טְבֻעֵת בֵּין מַצְוָה וְאַנְן
 מַעֲמָד וְגוּ אֶל תְּשִׁטְפֵנִי שְׁבָלָת מִים וְאֶל
 תְּבֻלָּעַנִי מַצְוָה" וְגוּ.

בָּאוֹתָה שְׁעָה הִיא מֹשֶׁה מָארֵךְ בְּתִפְלָה. אָמָר
 לוּ הַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא: יְהִי רְצָאתְךָ בְּבָם,
 וְאַתָּה מָארֵךְ בְּתִפְלָה לְפִנֵּי? אָמָר לְנָנוּ: רְבוּנוּ
 שֶׁל עַלְמָם, וְמָה בַּידִי לְעַשׂות? אָמָר לוּ: "דָבָר
 אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁעָו, וְאַתָּה הָרָם אֶת מִשְׁעָן
 וְתַּהֲרֵת אֶת יִצְחָק" וְגוּ.

לְפִיכְךָ זֶכָּה יְהוָה לְעַשׂות מִשְׁלָה בִּשְׂרָאֵל,
 שָׁגָנָרָר: "הִיאִתָּה יְהוָה לְקָרְבָּן שִׁרְאָל
 מִמְּשִׁלְוחָתָיו". מָה טָעַם "הִיאִתָּה יְהוָה לְקָרְבָּן"
 וְ"יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשִׁלְוחָתָיו"? מִשּׁוּם דַּהֲיָם רָא
 וַיַּנְסַן.

the tribe of Benjamin and descended into the sea first, as it is stated: “There is Benjamin, the youngest, ruling them [rodem]” (Psalms 68:28). **Do not read it as: “Ruling them [rodem]”;** rather, read it as: **Descending [red] into the sea [yam].** And the princes of the tribe of Judah were stoning them [rogmim otam] for plunging in first and not in the proper order, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: “The princes of Judah, their council [rigmatam]” (Psalms 68:28).

Therefore, Benjamin the righteous was privileged to serve as host to the Divine Presence of the Almighty, as the Temple was built in the territory of Benjamin, as it is stated in Moses’ blessing for the tribe of Benjamin: “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; He covers him all the day, and He rests between his shoulders” (Deuteronomy 33:12).

Rabbi Yehuda said to Rabbi Meir: That is not how the incident took place. Rather, this tribe said: I am not going into the sea first, and that tribe said: I am not going into the sea first. Then, in jumped the prince of Judah, Nahshon ben Amminadab, and descended into the sea first, accompanied by his entire tribe, as it is stated: “Ephraim surrounds Me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit, and Judah is yet wayward toward God [rad im El]” (Hosea 12:1), which is interpreted homiletically as: And Judah descended [rad] with God [im El].

And in this regard, the tradition,^N i.e., the Writings, explicates Nahshon’s prayer at that moment: “Save me, God; for the waters are come in even unto the soul. I am sunk in deep mire, where there is no standing...let not the water flood overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up” (Psalms 69:2–3, 16).

At that time, Moses was prolonging his prayer. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: My beloved ones are drowning in the sea and you prolong your prayer to me? Moses said before Him: Master of the Universe, but what can I do? God said to him: “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward. And you, lift up your rod and stretch out your hand” (Exodus 14:15–16).

For this reason, because Nahshon and the tribe of Judah went into the sea first, the tribe of Judah merited to govern Israel, as it is stated: “Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion. The sea saw it and fled” (Psalms 114:2–3). The *baraita* interprets the verses in this manner: What is the reason that Judah became His sanctuary and Israel came under His dominion? It is because “the sea saw it and fled.”

תניא, רבי אליעזר בן יוסק אומר: אי אפשר לומר לוי למטה, שכבר נאמר "למעלה", וא"י אפשר לומר למטה, שכבר נאמר "למטה".

S The Gemara returns to discussing the blessing and curses. It is taught in a *baraita* (*Tosefta* 8:9) that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: It is impossible to say that the tribe of Levi stood below,^N between the two mountains, as it is already stated that they were above, in the verse: "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon and Levi and Judah" (Deuteronomy 27:12). And it is impossible to say that they stood above on the mountain because it is already stated: "And all of Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the Ark and on that side before the priests the Levites" (Joshua 8:33). This shows that the Levites stood below, between the mountains, with the Ark.

הִא בַּיְצָד? וְקַנֵּי כְּהוֹנָה וְלוֹיה לְמַטָּה,
וְהַשָּׂאָר לְמַעַלָּה; רַבִּי יָשִׁי אָמַר: כִּל
הַרְאֵי לְשָׁרֶת - לְמַטָּה, וְהַשָּׂאָר לְמַעַלָּה.

רַבִּי אָמַר: אַלְוִי וְאַלְוִי לְמַטָּה הָן עוֹמְדים.
הַפְּכוּ פִנְיָהֶם בְּלֵפִי הַר גָּרוּיִים - וּפְתַחֲוּ
בְּבָרְכָה, בְּלֵפִי הַר עַיבָּל - וּפְתַחֲוּ בְּקָלָלה.
מַאי "עַל"? "עַל" - בָּסְמוֹן,

בְּדָרְתְּנִיא: "וַיְנַתֵּת עַל הַמְּעֵדָת לְבֻנָה
זְבֹחַ" - רַבִּי אָמַר: "עַל" - בָּסְמוֹן. אַתָּה
אָמַר: "עַל" בָּסְמוֹן, אָוֹ אִינּוּ אַלְוִי "עַל"
מִפְשֵׁש? בְּשָׂהוֹא אָמַר: "וַיְסַכֵּת עַל הָאָרוֹן",
הַוִּי אָמַר: "עַל" - בָּסְמוֹן.

הַפְּכוּ פִנְיָהֶם בְּלֵפִי הַר גָּרוּיִים וּפְתַחֲוּ
בְּבָרְכָה" כו'. תנו רבנן: בָּרוּךְ בְּכָל בָּרוּךְ
בְּפָרָט, אָרוֹן בְּכָל אָרוֹן בְּפָרָט. לְמַדוֹת
וְלִלְפָדֵד לְשֻׁמָּר וְלִעְשֹׂות - הַר

How is this possible? Only the Elders of the priesthood and the Levites stood below, and the rest of the Levites stood above on the mountain. Rabbi Yoshiya says: Any Levite who was fit to serve in the Temple stood below, between the mountains, and the rest of the tribe, who were too young or too old to serve in the Temple, stood above on the mountain.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Both the Levites and the Israelites were standing below. They turned to face Mount Gerizim and opened with a blessing, and then they turned toward Mount Ebal and opened with a curse. Therefore, what is the meaning of the verse: "These shall stand on [al] Mount Gerizim to bless the people" (Deuteronomy 27:12)? "Al" means adjacent to the mountain but not actually on the mountain itself.

As it is taught in a *baraita* that discusses the shewbread: "And you shall put pure frankincense on [al] each row" (Leviticus 24:7). Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: "Al" in this instance means adjacent to. Do you say that "al" means adjacent to, or perhaps it carries only its literal meaning of "on"? When it says in the verse: "And you shall screen the Ark [al haAron] with the curtain" (Exodus 40:3), the word "al" cannot mean on, as the curtain that separated the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies was not placed on top of the Ark, but near it. Therefore, you must say that "al" means adjacent to.

S It is stated in the mishna: They turned to face Mount Gerizim and opened with a blessing: Blessed be the man who does not make a graven or molten image (see Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people, i.e., the two groups standing on either mountain, answered: Amen. Then they turned to face Mount Ebal and opened with the curse: "Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image" (Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people answered: Amen. The Sages taught (*Tosefta* 8:10): The blessings and curses include a general blessing for one who fulfills the entire Torah, and a particular blessing for each individual statement mentioned in the blessings and curses. Likewise, there is a general curse for one who does not fulfill the entire Torah and a particular curse for each individual statement. And for each of the blessings and curses there is a mitzva to learn and to teach, and to keep and to perform.^N Consequently,

NOTES

Levi stood below – לוי למטה – *Tosafot* quote an opinion found in the Jerusalem Talmud that like all the other tribes, the entire tribe of Levi stood at the top of the mountain. When the book of Joshua states that "the priests, the Levites" were standing near the Ark, it refers specifically to the priests, who are referred to in many places as the Levites.

To keep and to perform – לְשֻׁמָּר וְלִעְשֹׂות: Usually the term to keep means to be careful not to violate prohibitions, and to perform means to fulfill positive mitzvot. The Maharsha explains, based on the calculations stated in the continuation of the Gemara, that that cannot be the meaning here. He therefore explains the term

to keep as referring to studying Mishna, in accordance with the Sages' interpretation of the term. In other words, one must strive not only to study the Torah, but also to remember it, or to keep it, through the study of Mishna. In *Iyun Ya'akov* this expression is interpreted according to the Gemara in tractate *Eiruvin* (96a), which states concerning a similar phrase that when it is stated with regard to a positive mitzva, it is itself considered a positive mitzva, and when it is stated with regard to a prohibition, it is likewise considered a prohibition. Accordingly, to keep the mitzvot means to be extra careful and exacting in fulfilling the mitzvot, whether negative or positive.

אַרְבָּעָה, אַרְבָּעָה וְאַרְבָּעָה הָרִי שְׁמֹונָה. שְׁמֹונָה וְשְׁמֹונָה הָרִי שְׁשָׁה שְׁשָׁה. בְּסֵין, וּבְעֶרֶבּוֹת מוֹאָב, שְׁנָאָמָר: "אֶלָּה דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה" וּגו', וּכְתוּב: "שְׁמָרָתָם אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת" וּגו'. נִמְצָא אַרְבָּעָים וְשְׁמֹונָה בְּרִיתוֹת עַל כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה.

every mitzva contains four aspects. Four general aspects and four specific aspects add up to eight. Eight blessings and eight curses add up to sixteen. And so too at Mount Sinai, and so too at the plains of Moab, as it is stated: “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that He made with them in Horeb” (Deuteronomy 28:69). And it is written: “Observe therefore the words of this covenant” (Deuteronomy 29:8). It follows that between the three events where sixteen covenants were made, God established forty-eight covenants for each and every mitzva.

רַבִּי שְׁמֻעוֹן מוֹצִיאָה הַר גָּרִיזִים וְהַר עֵיבָל, וּמְכִינָה
אַחֲלָל מוֹעֵד שְׁבָמָדָר.

Rabbi Shimon excludes Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal from this list because only some of the mitzvot were mentioned there, and he includes instead the covenant at the Tent of Meeting in the desert.

וּבְפִלְגָּתָא דְּהַנִּי תְּנָאִי, דְּתְּנָאִ, רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעָאֵל אָוּמָר: בְּלָלוֹת נָאָכוּ בְּסֵין וּפְרָטוֹת בְּאַחֲלָל מוֹעֵד; רַבִּי עֲקִיבָּא אָוּמָר: בְּלָלוֹת וּפְרָטוֹת נָאָמְרוּ בְּסֵין, וּנְשָׁנוּ בְּאַחֲלָל מוֹעֵד, וּנְשָׁתְּלַשׁוּ בְּעֶרֶבּוֹת מוֹאָב.

The Gemara explains: And it is in the dispute between these *tanna'im* that they disagree, as it is taught in a *baraita* (*Tosefta* 8:11): Rabbi Yishmael says: General statements were said at Sinai, i.e., Moses received general mitzvot at Sinai, including the Ten Commandments. And the details of the mitzvot were explained to Moses at a later time in the Tent of Meeting. Rabbi Akiva says: Both general statements and the details of mitzvot were said at Sinai, and later repeated in the Tent of Meeting, and reiterated a third time by Moses to the Jewish people in the plains of Moab. Rabbi Shimon holds in accordance with his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, and counts Mount Sinai and the Tent of Meeting Tent as two distinct places where all of the mitzvot were given.

וְאֵין לְךָ בָּרוּךְ מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שְׁבָתוֹבָה בְּתוֹרָה,
שְׁלָא נִכְרְתָּו עַלְיהָ אַרְבָּעָים וְשְׁמֹנָה בְּרִיתוֹת.

The *baraita* concludes: And there is no mitzva written in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established.

רַבִּי שְׁמֻעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה אִישׁ בְּפִרְעָם עַכְשָׁוִים וְשָׁמֹעָן
רַבִּי שְׁנָעָוֹן: אֵין לְךָ מִצְוָה מִצְוָה שְׁבָתוֹבָה
בְּתוֹרָה, שְׁלָא נִכְרְתָּו עַלְיהָ אַרְבָּעָים וְשְׁמֹנָה
בְּרִיתוֹת שְׁלָשׁ מֵאוֹת אַלְפִים וְשְׁלָשׁ אַלְפִים
וְחַמֵּשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחַמֵּשׁ.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko said in the name of Rabbi Shimon: There is no mitzva written in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established 603,550 times, corresponding to the population of the Jewish people in the desert. This is because each member of the Jewish people received the covenant both for himself and as a guarantor for the rest of the Jewish people.

אָמָר וּבָי: לְדִבְרֵי רַבִּי שְׁמֻעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה אִישׁ
כְּפָר עַכְשָׁוִים, שָׁאָמָר מְשִׁים וּבָי שְׁמֻעוֹן: אֵין לְךָ
כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שְׁבָתוֹה, שְׁלָא נִכְרְתָּו עַלְיהָ
אַרְבָּעָים וְשְׁמֹנָה בְּרִיתוֹת שְׁלָשׁ מֵאוֹת אַלְפִים
וְשְׁלָשׁ אַלְפִים וְחַמֵּשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחַמֵּשׁ.
לְכָל אַחֲרָיו וְאַחֲרָיו מִישראל שְׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אַלְפִים
וְשְׁלָשׁ אַלְפִים וְחַמֵּשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחַמֵּשׁ.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: According to the statement of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko, who spoke in the name of Rabbi Shimon, there is no mitzva in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established 603,550 times; it follows that for every one of the Jewish people there were 603,550 covenants.

NOTES

Eight and eight – שְׁמֹונָה וְשְׁמֹונָה: Rashi explains that the first eight are the four aspects of the covenant, i.e., the general and particular blessings and curses, as they relate to learning and teaching the Torah; and the second eight are those four aspects as they relate to keeping and performing the Torah. The Maharsha questions why this would be a logical way to divide the total into two

groups of eight, as opposed to one group of sixteen. He therefore explains that the first eight are the general and particular blessings as they relate to learning, teaching, keeping, and performing the Torah; and the second eight are the general and particular curses as they relate to the lack of fulfillment of the same (see *lyyun Yaakov*).

מִתְרוֹגֶמְנִיה: During talmudic times, it was common for the Sage to present his teachings quietly, oftentimes in Hebrew. The disseminator would translate [tigrem] and explain the teachings in Aramaic in an audible voice, so that the students would be able to listen and understand.

NOTES

כל הפסח כולה וכו': The Maharsha asks: Is it necessary to reinterpret the entire passage of the blessings and curses just because it is difficult to explain a single verse? He suggests a different interpretation of the Gemara, according to which the word *passage* does not refer to all of the curses, but rather to that verse alone. Because it is separated from the other verses by a space in the Torah scroll, it is considered to be a distinct passage. However, the later commentaries point out that the Gemara's use of the expression: The entire passage, does not fit this interpretation well.

בָּאֲרוֹר שָׁגֵיל לְהַלְלָה: The Maharsha explains that the Gemara is not saying that because idol worship is punishable by death, it is insufficient to say that someone who worships idols is cursed, as there are other sins mentioned in the curses that are also punishable by death, e.g., adultery.

Rather, the Gemara is saying that idol worship is the most fundamental form of heresy, and it is therefore not sufficient for one who commits this sin to be cursed in this world; he is excluded from life in the World-to-Come too. This is not true in the case of adultery or any of the other sins mentioned in the curses. Although they are grave sins that render one liable to receive the death penalty, the sinner can still have a share in the World-to-Come. This seems to be Rashi's understanding as well.

HALAKHA

בְּמִדְיָנָה אָוֹר אֹתוֹת שְׁלֵיט בְּרוּכֹת: When the priest recites the Priestly Benediction outside of the Temple everyone present responds amen after each of the verses (Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim 14:3; Shulchan Arukh, Orah Hayim 128:13).

בְּמִלְקָדֵשׁ בָּרָכָה אָנוּת: When the Priestly Benediction is recited in the Temple, the people do not respond amen after each verse. Rather, all of the verses are recited as a single blessing, and all of the people respond afterward: Blessed be the Lord, God, the God of Israel from eternity to eternity (Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim 14:9).

מאי בינייה? אמר רב מישרшиיא: ערבה ערבא דערבא איכא בינייה.

The Gemara asks: What is the difference between the statements of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? What does the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi add? **Rav Mesharshiyya said:** The matter of a **guarantor and a guarantor for a guarantor** is the difference **between them**. According to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, every Jew is not only rendered a **guarantor for every other Jew**, but he is also rendered a **guarantor for every other Jew's responsibility as a guarantor**. Therefore, according to his calculation, the number of covenants is multiplied again by 603,550.

§ Rabbi Yehuda ben Nahmani, the disseminator^b of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, taught: The entire passageⁿ of the blessings and curses is stated only in reference to an adulterer and adulteress.

This is proved from the verse: **"Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image"** (Deuteronomy 27:15). Is a curse a sufficient consequence for the actions of an idol worshipper?ⁿ He has rebelled against the fundamental tenet of the Torah. Rather, this is referring to one who engaged in sexual intercourse with a forbidden relative and bore her a *mamzer son*. And the son, who is not allowed to marry a Jew of unflawed lineage, went to live among the other nations of the world and engaged in idol worship. His father and mother are cursed for causing him to worship idols. Likewise, the rest of the curses refer to sins that are the result of adultery.

The Sages taught: "And you shall give the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal" (Deuteronomy 11:29). Why must the verse state this? If it is to teach that the blessing must be given on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal, it is already stated: **"These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people"** (Deuteronomy 27:12), and it is written: **"And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse"** (Deuteronomy 27:13). Rather, the verse teaches that the proclamation of the blessing must precede the curse.

One might have thought that all of the blessings should precede the curses. Therefore, the verse states "blessing" and "curse" in the singular, to teach that one blessing precedes each curse, but all of the blessings do not precede the curses. The blessings and curses were recited alternately, first one blessing and then one curse.

And furthermore, the verse comes to juxtapose the blessing with the curse, to say to you that just as the curse is recited by the Levites, so too, the blessing is uttered by the Levites; and just as the curse is proclaimed loudly, so too, the blessing is proclaimed loudly; and just as the curse is proclaimed in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, so too, the blessing is proclaimed in the sacred tongue; and just as the curse is proclaimed both in general and in detail, so too, the blessing is proclaimed in general and in detail. And just as after the curse is uttered, both groups of people on each mountain respond and say amen, so too, after the blessing is uttered, both groups respond and say amen.

מתני' ברכת כהנים ביצדר? במדינה – אומר אותה שלוש ברכות, ובמקdash – ברכה אחת; במקדש אמר את השם

MISHNA How is the Priestly Benediction recited? In the country, i.e., outside the Temple, the priest recites the verses as three blessings,^h pausing between each verse while the people respond amen. And in the Temple, the priests recite all three verses as **one blessing**,^h after which the people respond: Blessed be the Lord, God, the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity, as is the customary response to blessings in the Temple. In the Temple, the priest utters the name of God