

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 שֵׁל בְּנֵימִן וְיָרַד לֵים תְּחִילָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "שָׁם בְּנֵימִן צָעִיר רָדִם." אֵל תִּקְרִי "רָדִם" אֲלָא "רָד יָם". וְהֵיוּ שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה רוֹגְמִים אוֹתָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה רוֹגְמִתָּם."

לְפִיכָךְ זָכָה בְּנֵימִן הַצַּדִּיק וְנִעְשָׂה אוֹשְׁפִיזוֹן לְגִבוּרָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וּבֵין כְּתָפָיו שָׁכֵן."

אָמַר לוֹ רַבֵּי יְהוּדָה: לֹא כֵךְ הָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה, אֲלָא זֶה אוֹמֵר "אֵין אָנִי וְיָרַד תְּחִילָה לֵים" וְזֶה אוֹמֵר "אֵין אָנִי וְיָרַד תְּחִילָה לֵים". קִפֵּץ נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן עֲמִינַדָב וְיָרַד לֵים תְּחִילָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "סָבְבֵנִי בְּכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וּבְמִרְמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה עַד רֹד עִם אֱלֹהִים."

וְעָלוּ מִפָּרֶשׁ בְּקַבְלָה: "הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי בָאוּ מֵיִם עַד נַפְשִׁי, טִבַּעְתִּי בֵּין מְצוּלָה וְאֵין מַעֲמָד וְגו' אֵל תִּשְׁטַפְנֵי שְׂבַלְתִּי מֵיִם וְאֵל תִּבְלַעֲנִי מְצוּלָה" וְגו'.

בְּאוֹתָהּ טַעָה הָיָה מֹשֶׁה מֵאֲרִיךְ בַּתְּפִלָּה. אָמַר לוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: יְדִידֵי טוֹבְעִים בַּיָּם, וְאַתָּה מֵאֲרִיךְ בַּתְּפִלָּה לִפְנֵי? אָמַר לִפְנֵי: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, וּמָה בְּיָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת? אָמַר לוֹ: "דַּבֵּר אֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיַסְעוּ, וְאַתָּה הָרֵם אֶת מִטְּעַן וְנִטָּה אֶת יָדְךָ" וְגו'.

לְפִיכָךְ זָכָה יְהוּדָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְמִשְׁלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "הָיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו". מָה טַעַם "הָיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁ" וְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו? מִשׁוּם ד' הֵינִים רָאָה וְיָנַם."

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."

§ 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.

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.

§ 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 – לשמור ולעשות: 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 *Iyyun 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.

אַרְבַּע. אַרְבַּע וְאַרְבַּע הָרִי שְׁמוֹנָה. שְׁמוֹנָה
וּשְׁמוֹנָה הָרִי שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה. וְכֵן בְּסִינִי, וְכֵן בְּעַרְבוֹת
מוֹאָב, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "אֵלֶּה דְבָרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה" וְגו', וְכַתִּיב: "וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרֵי
הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת" וְגו'. נִמְצָא אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנָה
בְּרִיתוֹת עַל כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה.

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן מוֹצִיא הַר גְּרִיזִים וְהַר עֵיבָל, וּמְכַסֵּי
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד שְׁבַמְדֵּבַר.

וּבְפִלּוּגֵי תַנְיָא; דְּתַנְיָא, רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל
אוֹמֵר: כְּלָלוֹת נֶאֱמְרוּ בְּסִינֵי וּפְרָטוֹת בְּאֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד; רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: כְּלָלוֹת וּפְרָטוֹת
נֶאֱמְרוּ בְּסִינֵי, וְנִשְׁנוּ בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, וְנִשְׁתַּלְּשׁוּ
בְּעַרְבוֹת מוֹאָב.

וְאֵין לָךְ כָּל דְּבַר מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שְׁכַתוּבָה בַּתּוֹרָה,
שְׁלֵא נִכְרְתוּ עָלֶיהָ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה בְּרִיתוֹת.

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה אִישׁ כְּפַר עֵבוֹ אָמַר מִשּׁוּם
רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן: אֵין לָךְ מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שְׁכַתוּבָה
בַּתּוֹרָה, שְׁלֵא נִכְרְתוּ עָלֶיהָ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה
בְּרִיתוֹת שֶׁל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי וּשְׁלֹשֹׁת אֲלָפִים
וְחֶמֶשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֶמְשִׁים.

אָמַר רַבִּי: לְדַבְּרֵי רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יְהוּדָה אִישׁ
כְּפַר עֵבוֹ, שֶׁאָמַר מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן: אֵין לָךְ
כָּל מִצְוָה וּמִצְוָה שְׁכַתוּבָה, שְׁלֵא נִכְרְתוּ עָלֶיהָ
אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה בְּרִיתוֹת שֶׁל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי
וּשְׁלֹשֹׁת אֲלָפִים וְחֶמֶשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֶמְשִׁים. נִמְצָא
לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי
וּשְׁלֹשֹׁת אֲלָפִים וְחֶמֶשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֶמְשִׁים.

every mitzva contains four aspects. Four general aspects and four specific aspects add up to eight. Eight blessings and eight^N 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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 – שְׁמוֹנָה וּשְׁמוֹנָה: 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 *Iyyun Ya'akov*).

