Zera Shimshon

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Chapter LIV: Vezot haBracha (Deut. 33:1–34:12)

Essay 1. A blessing upon 12 tribes

"וַיֹּאמַר ה' מִסִּינַי בָּא" כָּתַב בַּעַל הַטּוּרִים שֶׁהַפָּסוּק הִתְחִיל בְּנָי"ו וּמְסַיֵּם בְּנָי"ו, לוֹמַר שֶׁבָּרַךְ י"ב שְׁבָטִים. מַקְשִׁים לָמָּה לֹא צִיֵּין זֶה עַל פָּסוּק "וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה" שֶׁגַּם הוּא מַתְחִיל וּמְסַיֵּם בְּנָי"ו, וְשָׁם מְבוֹאָר בּוֹ לְשׁוֹן בְּרָכָה, מַה שֶׁאֵין כֵּן בְּפָסוּק זֶה. אֶלָּא לְפִי שֶׁעִקַּר הַבְּרָכָה בָּאָה בִּזְכוּת הַתּוֹרָה, וּבְפָסוּק זֶה מְבוֹאָר נְתִינַת הַתּוֹרָה "מִסִּינַי בָּא" וְכוּ' "מִימִינוֹ אֵשׁ דָּת לָמוֹ", לָכֵן צִיֵּין דַּוְקָא בְּפָסוּק זֶה.

    "[Moses] said: 'The L-rd came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came from the myriads holy, at His right hand was a fiery law unto them" (Deut. 33:2)**. The ba'al haTurim**[1] **wrote that the verse begins with** the letter *vav* **and concludes with a *vav*, as if to say the [G-d] blessed 12 tribes.** That is, *vav* is the sixth letter of the alphabet and represents the number six, and adding together the two *vavs* would yield 12, which is the number of the tribes.

    [People] question why he didn't point this out on the first **verse** of the parasha, **"This is the** blessing **with which Moses, the man of G-d, bade the Israelites farewell before he died"** (Deut. 33:1)**, which also begins and concludes with a *vav*. There,** in Deut. 33:1, the verse **is explained in the language of blessing, something that is not so for this verse** under consideration, Deut. 33:2**. Rather, because the principal blessing comes in the merit of the Torah, and in this verse,** Deut. 33:2**, the giving of the Torah is explained: "coming from Sinai," etc., "at His right hand was a fiery law unto them," therefore, [the ba'al haTurim] specifically pointed out this verse.**

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[1] Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (c. 1269–c. 1343), author of the Arba'ah Turim ("the Tur").