**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**MIDRASH ON THE PARASHA**

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***Parashat Behar*:**

**“If Your Brother Become Poor”**

**Introduction**

As opposed to *Bereishit Rabba*, which explains the Torah's verses in order – word by word, verse by verse, passage by passage – *Vayikra Rabba* adopts a different manner of expounding *Tanakh*. The academic study of Midrash distinguishes between "explanatory" Midrash, such as *Bereishit Rabba*, and "expository" Midrash," which is not bound to a text, but to defined issues.[[1]](#footnote-1)Among the classical aggadic Midrashim, *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* and *Vayikra Rabba* are expository Midrashim; the one deals with the appointed times of the year, while the other addresses select issues in each *parasha*.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In general, *Vayikra Rabba* deals with most of the issues mentioned in the *parasha.[[3]](#footnote-3)* In contrast, the *derashot* on *Parashat Behar* deal with two issues related to the realm of interpersonal relations – the prohibition of fraud and the concern that must be shown to a Jew who has become impoverished. Other *mitzvot* that are treated extensively in the *parasha*, e.g., the *mitzvot* of the Sabbatical year, the jubilee year, and the houses of a walled city, are totally ignored. In light of this, one may ask why is it that *Vayikra Rabba* on *Parashat Behar* deals exclusively with the matters that it discusses.

In answer to this question, I would like to suggest two reasons that are connected to the living conditions of the residents of Eretz Israel during the Amoraic period. First, poverty was a general and typical phenomenon, and so it would be expected that the *derashot* focus on social issues. This reason applies not only to the command to support one who has reached the point of economic collapse, but also to the prohibition of fraud in commerce, because in a situation of scarcity people are not easygoing with each other. Another explanation for this is the fact that since the time of the destruction of the Temple, the *mitzva* of the jubilee year was not in full force, and even the *mitzva* of the sabbatical year involved great difficulties.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In the framework of this study, we will focus on the second issue appearing in the Midrash – the concern that must be shown to one who has become impoverished.

The phrase: "If your brother become poor," appears three times over the course of the *parasha*:

If your brother become poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next to him come, and shall redeem that which his brother has sold. (*Vayikra* 25:25)

And if your brother become poor, and his means fail with you; then you shall uphold him: as a stranger and a settler shall he live with you. (*Vayikra* 25:35)

And if your brother become poor with you, and sell himself to you, you shall not make him to serve as a bondservant. (*Vayikra* 25: 39)

The first verse relates to the obligation to redeem your brother's inheritance, the second contains an imperative to extend to him an interest-free loan, while the third deals with the situation in which he was sold to you as a slave. This phrase appears one more time, in a slightly different style, in relation to the situation in which a person was sold to a *ger toshav*, a resident alien: "And if a stranger who is a settler with you become rich, **and your brother become poor beside him,** and sell himself to the stranger who is a settler with you" (*Vayikra* 25:47). The *derasha* does not distinguish between the verses, nor does it relate directly to their content, but rather it expounds them for the matter of giving to others:

I.

"The poor man and the oppressor (*ish tekhakhim*) *meet* together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" (*Mishlei* 29:13).

"The rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all" (*Mishlei* 22:2).

II.

"The poor" – this refers to one who is poor in Torah (knowledge).

"The oppressor" – this refers to one who teaches one *seder* or two *sedarim* (orders of Mishna).

If the poor man said to the oppressor: Teach me one chapter, and he taught him –

"The Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" – the two of them acquired life in the World to Come.

"The rich and the pauper meet together" – the rich, he who is rich in Torah [knowledge]; and the poor, he who is poor in Torah [knowledge].

The poor man said to the rich man: Teach me one chapter, but he did not teach him.

He said to him: Why do I have to sit and teach you [the chapter of Mishna beginning] “*Mashkin”* or [the chapter of Mishna beginning] “*Mei-eimatai korin”*? Go learn with someone like you.

"The Lord is the maker of them all."

He who made this one wise can make him a fool, and He who made this one a fool can make him wise.

III.

Another explanation:

"The poor man and the oppressor meet together."

"The poor man" – this refers to one who is poor in assets.

"The oppressor" – this refers to one who takes action.

If the poor man said to the oppressor: Give me a mitzva (= charity), and he gave him –

"The Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" – this one acquired temporal life, while the other one acquired life in the World to Come.

"The rich and the pauper meet together."

"The rich" – this refers to one who is rich in assets; and "the poor" – this refers to one who is poor in assets.

If the poor man said to the rich man: Give me a mitzva (= charity), but he did not give him –

"The Lord is the maker of them all." He who made this one rich can make him poor, and He who made this one poor can make him rich.

The rich man said to the poor man: You do not toil and eat; see thighs, see legs, see flesh!

The Holy One, blessed be He, said (to the rich man): Is it not enough that you gave him nothing of your own, but even on that which I gave him, you put an evil eye?

Therefore: "And if has begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand" (*Kohelet* 5:13).

From all that he had.

Therefore Moshe warns Israel, saying to them: "If your brother become poor."

(*Vayikra Rabba* 34, 4)

The unit before us is comprised of two parallel *derashot* with no stated author. These *derashot* are based on a crossing of two similar verses in the Book of *Mishlei*: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together (*nifgashu*); the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" (29:13) and "The rich and the pauper meet together (*nifgashu*); the Lord is the maker of them all" (22:2). They are contrasted as referring to diametrically opposed situations. (The two verses are brought at the beginning of the *derasha*, and are designated above as Part I). The verb *pei-gimmel-shin*, "meet," and the very presentation of a meeting between a poor man and another man which appears in two different verses in the same book of *Tanakh* creates a natural connection between them and constitutes the foundation for the Rabbis' *derasha.*

This root appears in *Tanakh* in the context of meetings that have an element of tension or threat, e.g. in *Shemot*: "And the Lord said to Aharon: Go into the wilderness to meet Moshe. And he went, and met him (*vayifgesheihu*)in the mountain of God, and kissed him" (*Shemot* 4:27). It is not clear there what Aharon's reaction will be to Moshe's appointment as leader.

Similarly, we find in *Yirmeyahu* (41:6):

And Yishmael the son of Netanya went forth from Ha-Mitzpa to meet them, weeping all along as he went; and it came to pass, as he met (*ki-fgosh*)them, he said to them: Come to Gedalyahu the son of Achikam.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The meeting creates hopes, and for this reason it is a loaded "area." The *derashot* to be discussed below gives this ample expression.

**The First *Derasha***

The first *derasha* deals with sharing or not sharing on the part of one who has been privileged to study Torah with one who has not. The first verse, "The poor man and the oppressor (*ish tekhakhim*) meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" (*Mishlei* 29:13), refers to a situation in which the one who has studied is willing to respond to the request of the one who has not studied, to teach him what he has learned. The word *tekhakhim* generally means fight, quarrel, oppression, as in: "Wickedness is in the midst thereof; oppression (*tokh*) and guile depart not from her broad place" (*Tehillim* 55:12); and: "He will redeem their soul from oppression (*mi-tokh*) and violence, and precious will their blood be in his sight" (*Tehillim* 72:14), but the positive conclusion of the verse, "the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" makes such an understanding of the term *tekhakhim* difficult.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The Ralbag, in his commentary to this verse, goes even further and explains this *ish tekhakhim* as one who is occupied with ideas and entangled in his logical thinking:

The poor man is one who is poor in study, lacking thought by way of which to enter that discipline, and he is perplexed by it. He and the *ish tekhakhim,* who has many parallel thoughts, meet in the matter of perplexity and lack of study… And God enlightens the eyes of the two of them, by way of that which He showers on the human mind.

That is to say, the term *ish tekhakhim* expresses the fact that he has loaded on his shoulders the toil of intellectual speculation and study, in contrast to the poor man who lacks the tools and knowledge that are necessary for learning. While the Ralbag takes the verses to philosophical realms, the *derasha* relates to the plane of Torah study. Nevertheless, his explanation illuminates this *derasha* of the Sages.[[7]](#footnote-7)

 The person who studies here is not described as a Torah sage, but as one "who teaches one *seder* or two *sedarim*," that is to say, an ordinary person who can recite *mishnayot*. If so, the meeting between them is not a meeting of two people belonging to different social classes, but rather a simple meeting between a person who has learned a little and one who has not studied at all. In contrast, the second verse describes a more distinct gap, between a poor man and one who is "rich in Torah." This difference seems to reflect what actually happens in life, that when a person refuses to teach his fellow Torah, it is usually not an ordinary person, but rather a Torah scholar, whose extensive knowledge has made him arrogant.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In both verses, the first part describes a meeting between a poor man and another person, and the second part relates to a Divine action in connection with the two of them, that takes place in the present ("the Lord gives light to the eyes of both of them," "the Lord is the maker of them all") . According to the plain sense of the verse, the words, "the Lord gives light to the eyes of both of them," in the first verse relate to the very experience of the meeting between them, that the two of them leave the meeting happy.

The *derasha* shifts the meaning to the religious plane in the future, that the two of them will merit life in the World to Come – the one because of the Torah that he taught, and the other because of the Torah that he learned. As for the second verse, the *derasha* uses the present tense to contrast the gifts given to the person in the past, when he entered the world (intellect, wealth) to God's ability to take them away from him if he does not share them with others. Thus, the reward of one who teaches his fellow is given in the World to Come, whereas the punishment of one who refuses to teach his fellow is in this world.

**The Second *Derasha***

The second *derasha* relates to the realm of giving charity. *Ish tekhakhim* in this context is identified with "one who takes action." It seems that this should be understood as a characterization similar to what we would call "a businessman," or "a man of the world," one who is familiar with the ways of the world and knows how to land on his feet. As for the second verse, the *derasha* goes beyond the request of the poor man, the rich man's refusal, and the punishment that he receives for so doing. It also reveals the inner position of the rich man regarding the phenomenon of poverty, which stems, in his opinion, from a lack of willingness on the part of poor people to exert themselves and work for a living. God's furious response to the rich man's stinginess, which finds expression in the *derasha* in the fact that his descendants will be poor, leaves no doubt regarding the message being conveyed, that within the Torah-faith system, there is no room whatsoever for such a position.

Further probing into the spiritual meaning of the man rich in spirit and the man rich in material things, as they are presented in the *derasha*, indicates that there is a parallel between them. The unwillingness of the person who is rich in Torah knowledge to teach "easy" *mishnayot* testify to scorn on his part not only toward the person who is ignorant, but also toward the Torah itself and the value of disseminating it to the community at large. The criticism heard in the words of the person who is rich in assets teaches about a lack of understanding and a lack of sensitivity regarding the complexity of people and their difficulties. This man has never truly met the person standing before him and is not interested in doing so. A person who enjoys abundance and "lives in a bubble" must sometimes experience deprivation in order to refine his character and his opinions.

 The wording of the *derasha*, "The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Is it not enough that you gave him nothing of your own, but on that which I gave him, you put an evil eye?" points to the injurious effect of the rich man's attitude toward the poor man who asks him for help. Not only does he not give him anything, but he causes him damage.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The absolute parallel between teaching Torah to others and providing another person with the physical means of existence that is found in the *derasha –* in content and in form – while setting Torah before charity, shows the value of teaching Torah and disseminating it to all sectors of the people in the eyes of the Sages. Connecting the people of Israel to the Torah is an act of lovingkindness; Torah is the nation's spiritual food, which corresponds to the material food that is given to each and every individual.

**The Development of These *Derashot***

***Mekhilta***

 The source of this *derasha* is in the Tannaitic academies. It appears once in the *Mekhilta* and twice in a halakhic *midrash* on *Devarim.*

In the *Mekhilta* it appears in the context of a discussion concerning Yitro, whose seed (the Kenites) join the people of Israel when they enter the land. The Midrash maintains that they devoted themselves to studying Torah with Otniel ben Kenaz,[[10]](#footnote-10) the first of the Judges after the death of Yehoshua. This is based on two verses in *I Divrei Ha-yamim* which refer to Yabetz:

The families of the scribes, the inhabitants of Yabetz, were Tiratites, Shimatites and Sukhatites. These are the Kenites that came of Chamat, the father of the house of Rekhav. (2:55)

Yabetz was the most honored of his brothers, and his mother called him Yabetz saying: For I bore in *otzev* (pain). And Yabetz called on the God of Israel… (4:9-10)

 The Midrash connects the two verses, assuming that Yabetz is to be identified with Otniel ben Kenaz and associating “the father of the house of Rekhav” with Yonadav ben Rekhav, an associate of King Yehu in *II Melakhim* 10 whose ascetic descendants are mentioned in *Yirmeyahu* 35:

"And the children of the Kenite, Moshe's father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm-trees" (*Shofetim* 1:16)…

They went and settled themselves near the inhabitants of Yabetz. Were they the inhabitants of Yabetz? Rather, they were the students of Yabetz…

Rabbi Natan said: Greater was the covenant made with Yonadav the son of Rekhav than the covenant made with David, for the covenant made with David was made on condition… but the covenant made with Yonadav the son of Rekhav was not made on condition. As it is stated: "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: There shall not be cut off to Yonadav the son of Rekhav a man to stand before Me forever" (*Yirmeyahu* 35:19).

… And from where do we know that the descendants of Yonadav the son of Rekhav were descendants of Yitro? As it is stated: "These are the Kenites that came of Chamat, the father of the house of Rekhav" (I *Divrei Ha-yamim* 2:55).

Yabetz asked for wisdom. As it is stated: "And Yabetz called on the God of Israel, saying: Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would work deliverance from evil, that it may not pain me! And God granted him that which he requested" (I *Divrei Ha-yamim* 4:10).

"Oh that You would bless me" – in Torah study;

"And enlarge my border" – with disciples;

 "And Your hand might be with me" – that I not forget my learning;

 "And that You would work deliverance from evil" – that You make me colleagues like me;

"That it may not pain me" – that my evil inclination not prevent me from occupying myself in the Torah.

"And God granted him that which he requested" – this teaches that He gave him what he requested, and He gave them what they requested.

As it is stated: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both" (*Mishlei* 29:13). And it is stated: "The rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all" (*Mishlei* 22:2).

How so? If a disciple ministered to his master, and the master wants to teach him, the Lord gives light to the eyes of both of them. This one acquires eternal life and that one acquire eternal life. But if a disciple ministered to his master, and the master does not want to teach him, the Lord is the maker of them all. He who made this one wise will in the end make him a fool, and He who made this one a fool will in the end make him wise.

Similarly you find regarding those who give charity. How so? If a poor man sent out his hand to the householder, and the householder wants to give him, the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both. But if the poor man sent out his hand to the householder, and the householder does not want to give him, the Lord is the maker of them all. He whom He made poor in the end He will make rich, and he whom He made rich in the end He will make poor.

Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi said: It is stated: "And Yabetz called on the God of Israel, saying: Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my border,” etc."

"Oh that You would bless me indeed" – by multiplying and increasing;

"And enlarge my border" – with sons and daughters;

"And that Your hand might be with me" – in business dealings; "And that You would work deliverance from evil" – that the life that You gave me should be free of intestinal disease, and eye-ache, and headache;

"That it may not pain me" – but if you do not do this for me, I shall go with my grief to the grave;

"And God granted him that which he requested" – He gave him what he asked for.

(*Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Yitro, Amalek*, 2)

If so, the *derashot* under discussion as they appear before us in *Vayikra Rabba* are detached from their original Tannaitic context and embedded within a new Amoraic cycle of *derashot* on *Parashat Behar* that deals with the mitzva of charity.

With respect to their content, the only difference between them relates to the partnership in the realm of Torah study. The *Mekhilta* relates to a discussion between a master and his disciple, rather than an ordinary person who learned a *seder* or two *sedarim* and is asked to teach them to his fellow. This difference is understandable in the framework of the subject of charity, which is entirely an expansion of a Jew's obligation to his fellow, even if there has been no prior relationship between them. Another difference is that the *Mekhilta* does not have the words of the rich man to the poor man that he should go out to work, and God's reaction to them, which appear in the last part of the *derasha* in *Vayikra Rabba*. From here we may conclude that these words are an Amoraic addition.

***Midrash Tannaim***

In *Midrash Tannaim* to *Devarim* 1:17, the second verse is expounded not in reference to punishment for failing to teach Torah or give charity, but as a statement that the differences between people are part of Divine providence, which finds expression in the manner in which the world is governed:[[11]](#footnote-11)

If a person merited wisdom, it is inappropriate for him to lord over an ordinary person, nor a mighty person over a weak one, nor a rich man over a poor one. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: I did this to teach this, as it is stated: "The rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all."

In *Midrash Tannaim* on *Devarim* 15:8, the two *derashot* are brought in a *derasha* on the verse: "But you shall surely open your hand to him," in reverse order, first the *derasha* about giving charity and then the *derasha* about teaching Torah:

Regarding those who give charity it is stated: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both." How so? If a poor man sent out his hand to the householder, and the householder gives him, the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both. But if he does not give him, about them the verse states: "The rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all." He who made this one rich can make him poor, and He who made this one poor can make him rich.

Similarly, if a disciple ministered to his master, and the master wants to teach him, the Lord gives light to the eyes of both of them. But if a disciple ministered to his master, and the master does not want to teach him, the Lord is the maker of them all. He who made this one wise will in the end make him a fool, and He who made this one a fool will in the end make him wise.

The change in order in this source is a clear example of the way the Sages worked their *derashot* and adapted them to a new form and a new context. In this way, part of the *Mekhilta's derasha* about Otniel ben Kenaz is used in the context of a verse dealing with the command regarding charity.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**The Babylonian Talmud**

Another parallel of this *derasha* is found in BT *Temura* 16a. Like the *Mekhilta,* so too the Babylonian Talmud deals with the figure of Otniel ben Kenaz, while preserving the master-disciple format found in the *Mekhilta*:

Similarly it is stated: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both."

When a disciple goes to his master and says to him: Teach me Torah – if he teaches him, "the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both." But if not, "the rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all." He who made this one wise will make him a fool; [He who made] this one a fool, will make him wise.

This is the *mishna* of Rabbi Natan.

Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi said:

"Oh that You would bless me indeed" – by multiplying and increasing;

"And enlarge my border" – with sons and daughters;

"And that Your hand might be with me" – in business dealings;

"And that You would work deliverance from evil" – that I have no headache, earache or eye-ache;

"That it may not pain me" – that the evil inclination may not have power over me so as to prevent me from studying; if you do so, it is well, but if not, I shall go with my grief to the grave.

"And God granted him that which he requested." – He gave him what he asked for.

Similarly, it is stated: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of them both." When a poor man goes to a householder and says: Support me, if he supports him, it is well, but if not – "the rich and the pauper meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all." He who made this one rich will make him poor; [He who made] this one poor, will make him rich.

According to the Babylonian Talmud, Rabbi Natan expounds the verses as relating to Torah study, whereas Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi expounds them in connection to giving charity. From the *Mekhilta* it is not clear that Rabbi Natan's statement that "Greater was the covenant made with Yonadav the son of Rekhav" includes the *derasha* concerning the verses from *Mishlei*, and one could have explained his words as referring only to Yitro and his descendants. In addition, in the *Mekhilta* the words of Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi appear after the *derasha* of the verses as referring to the two issues, and they relate only to the figure of Otniel ben Kenaz.[[13]](#footnote-13)

In two places in the later Midrash, in the context of the mitzvaof charity, we find only the second *derasha* relating to the giving of the charity.[[14]](#footnote-14)

**Conclusion**

 Rarely in our lives do we stand face to face before situations of acute distress and deprivation, though digital media seem to bring us together frequently and repeatedly with the disasters and the needs of many members of our people.

In our generation, in which we have organizations like Paamonim, we are educated towards financial responsibility, proper management of our resources and needs, and "effective" charity – the highest of the Rambam's eight levels of charity-giving – which prevent a person from reaching a state of collapse.

The *derashot* with which we have dealt emphasize the need not to lose human sensitivity, and to be a tool of blessing in matter and spirit.

(Translated by David Strauss)

1. See Yona Frankel, *Midrash Ve-aggada* I (Tel Aviv: 5757), pp. 216-220. Regarding *Vayikra Rabba* in general, see there, III, pp. 790-795. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. An Amoraic expository Midrash as opposed to a late expository Midrash, such as *Bamidbar Rabba* – *Vayikra Rabba* deals with several matters in the *parasha,* whereas the later Midrashim, such as *Bamidbar Rabba*, deal with only one or two issues. The expository trend grows stronger in the later Midrash. The medieval biblical commentators go back to the explanatory mode, without the expository dimension. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Frankel points out that the expounded verses are section openers; see reference in note 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Talmudic Encyclopedia, vol. 22, s.v. *Yovel*, column 112:

The Rishonim write in the name of “all the Geonim” that they have a tradition that in the period between the destruction of the First Temple and the building of the Second Temple, and similarly in the years following the destruction of the Second Temple, they did not count jubilee years. Rather they only counted periods of seven years for the sabbatical cycle, with no jubilee years. The Rishonim disagree about how to understand the position of the Geonim...

See also there, column 120, note 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See also *Shemot* 4:24 and *Mishlei* 17:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. It should be noted that this chapter in the Book of *Mishlei* presents many pairs of people by way of contrast, but only in the verse under discussion do we find that they meet. Perhaps it is their very meeting that leads to the blessed result of God’s enlightening the eyes of the two of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It is possible that the *darshan* expounds the word *tekhakhim* in the sense of *tokh*, "in" – the person is "in" the know, and capable of teaching one or two sections. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This is evident from the answer given by the person who is rich in Torah:

Why do I have to sit and teach you *Mashkin* (the first chapter of *Mo'ed Katan*)or *Mei-eimatai korin* (the first chapter of *Berakhot*)? Go learn with someone like you.

These chapters are exceedingly easy and serve as educational material for beginners. See *Vayikra Rabba*, ed. Margaliot, II, p. 779, note 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Sages see the faculty of sight and the manner in which a person looks at things as a force having real impact on reality. The greater the person, the greater the impact of his sight. See, for example, BT *Shabbat* 34a, concerning Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai who "set his eyes upon him, and turned him into a pile of bones." [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See I *Divrei Ha-yamim* 4:10 (and the full text of the *Mekhilta* here):

And Yabetz called on the God of Israel, saying: Oh that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would work deliverance from evil, that it may not pain me (*otzbi*)! And God granted him that which he requested.

The verse is expounded as relating to Otniel the son of Kenaz who dedicated himself to the dissemination of Torah and the establishment of its study upon Israel's entry into the Promised Land, while forgoing material comfort. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Compare the words of the Ramchal in *Derekh Hashem*, II, chap. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Midrash* *Tannaim* on *Devarim* is generally regarded as a source that is later than the *Mekhilta.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. So too Rabbi Natan is not mentioned in the *Mekhilta*. In the reading of the *Mekhilta*, according to Horowitz's scientific edition which is brought here, Rabbi Yehuda Ha-nasi expounds the verses from *Divrei Ha-yamim* relating to the figure of Yabetz in reference to the matter of tranquility in human life in this world: sons, livelihood and health. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See *Tanchuma* (Buber), *Behar* 5; *Shemot Rabba* 31, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)