

Parashat Berakhah
Deuteronomy - Devarim (33.1-34.12)

Upon God's command, Moses has just finished teaching the Israelites a special song. This song tells how God gives the Israelites a gift by being their God and freeing them from slavery but that the children of Israel reject God by worshipping other gods. As a result many terrible things happen to the Israelites. So, the song urges the Israelites to always remember to worship the One True God in order to be a happy and prosperous people. After writing down this song, God tells Moses that it is time for him to die.

Before his death, Moses, the man of God, blessed the sons of Israel. Moses says, "God made the people aware of God. God's Teaching is what unites the children of Israel. Now listen each tribe," Moses says:

"May Reuben live and not die, though few be his numbers.

For Judah, With God's might Judah fights for the people. May God help them against enemies.

For Levi, you are the faithful who served God. You shall teach God's teaching and make offerings upon God's altar. May God be generous to them and protect them.

For Benjamin, Beloved of God, Benjamin rests securely with God. God protects him at all times.

For Joseph, Blessed be his land with the fruit of the heaven and earth and its abundance showered by the waters and the sun's rays. May the favor of God come to rest upon Joseph's head.

For Zebulun, Rejoice when you go out, and Issachar, rejoice in your tents and make offerings to God.

For Gad, Blessed be God Who granted space to Gad. Now Gad is ready to lead the people and fulfill the Lord's design and righteous laws of Israel.

For Dan, Dan is a young lion.

Naphtali's wishes are well-satisfied and full of God's blessings.

Regarding Asher: Most blessed of sons is Asher. He shall be the most favored of his brothers.

Then Moses said to the people, "There is None like Your God. God guides heavens to help you and displays majesty in the sky. The Eternal God is the Bearer of each passing moment of time. God gives eternal support for the fallen, rising all things up and driving away enemies. True progress is yours, O Israel. Who is like you, O people saved by God, the Shield of your help?"

Moses went up from the wastelands of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of the high place, which lies before Jericho and God showed him all the land. Then God said to Moses. "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To your descendants will I give it. I let you see it with your eyes but you will not go there. And Moses, the servant of God, died there in the land of Moab, according to

the utterance of God. God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor and no one has known his grave to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died but his eyes had not become dim and his freshness had not departed.

The sons of Israel wept for Moses in the wastelands of Moab for 30 days. When the days of weeping in mourning for Moses were at an end, Joshua, son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands upon him. Then the sons of Israel listened to Joshua as God had commanded Moses. And no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom God permitted to know God face to face. With all the signs and convincing deeds that God had sent Moses to perform in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, to all his land, with a mighty hand and awesome power did Moses display before all the eyes of Israel.

Questions: 1) What did it mean for Moses to be a servant of God? 2) Why do you think there has never been another prophet like Moses? Do you think that there will be? 3) Do we need a prophet like Moses today? Why or why not?

Illustration Ideas: Moses singing and blessing the sons of Israel....Moses dying... The Israelites weeping...Moses grave and marker...the promised land