



# Likkutei Sichos

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## Forever Home

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## 1.

### HOUSES

On the verse,<sup>1</sup> “Because the midwives feared Hashem, He made houses for them,” the Gemara in *Sotah* comments:<sup>2</sup>

Rav and Shmuel<sup>3</sup> — One said, “houses of *kehunah*<sup>4</sup> and *leviyah*,”<sup>5</sup> and the other said, “houses of monarchy.” The one who said, “houses of *kehunah* and *leviyah*” — {this refers to} Aharon and Moshe; and the one who said, “houses of monarchy” — {King} David also descended from Miriam.

In the *Sifri*,<sup>6</sup> it says:

I do not know to what these houses refer. When it says,<sup>7</sup> “At the end of the twenty years during which Shlomo built the two houses, the House of Hashem...,” this refers to *kehunah*; and when it says, “...and the House of the King,” this refers to monarchy. Yocheved<sup>8</sup> merited *kehunah*; and Miriam,<sup>9</sup> monarchy.

On this basis, we need to clarify Rashi’s remarks in our *parshah* where he quotes the words,<sup>10</sup> “He made houses for them,” and explains:

The houses of *kehunah* and *leviyah* and monarchy, which are called *houses*: “He built the House of Hashem and the House of the King.” *Kehunah* and *leviyah* descended from Yocheved and monarchy from Miriam, as stated in tractate *Sotah*.

On the one hand, Rashi mentions (a) both *kehunah* and monarchy, as does the *Sifri*, whereas in the Gemara, there are differing opinions; (b) the verse, “the House of Hashem and the House of the King,” cited in the *Sifri* but not in the Gemara; and (c) Rashi says, “*kehunah* (and *leviyah*) descended from Yocheved; and monarchy, from Miriam,” as does the *Sifri*, whereas the Gemara doesn’t specify the origins of *kehunah* and *leviyah*. Instead, the Gemara specifies the

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<sup>1</sup> *Shemos* 1:21.

<sup>2</sup> *Sotah* 11b; similarly in *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 17.

<sup>3</sup> In *Shemos Rabbah* and one version of *Sotah* 11b, these two opinions are attributed to Rav and Levi.

<sup>4</sup> {This refers to the lineage of *kohanim*.}

<sup>5</sup> {This refers to the lineage of *leviim*.}

<sup>6</sup> *Sifri* on *Bamidbar* 10:29.

<sup>7</sup> *Melachim I* 9:10.

<sup>8</sup> {Mother of both Moshe and Aharon.}

<sup>9</sup> {Ancestress of King David.}

<sup>10</sup> Rashi on *Shemos* 1:21.

names of the people who are included in “*kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy”: “*houses of kehunah and leviyah* — **Aharon and Moshe**; and according to the one who says *houses of monarchy* — **David** also descended from Miriam.”

Nonetheless, Rashi concludes his remarks by saying, “as stated in tractate *Sotah*,” and not, “as stated in the *Sifri*”!

## 2.

### MIDWIVES

The first issue can be resolved straightforwardly based on the commentators’ remarks<sup>11</sup> concerning the dispute between Rav and Shmuel in the Gemara. The commentators explain that this dispute was based on an earlier dispute between Rav and Shmuel, cited in the same place in the Gemara<sup>12</sup> regarding the identity of the midwives:

One said that it was a woman and her daughter, and the other said that it was a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. The one who said it was a woman and her daughter — Yocheved and Miriam; and the one who said it was a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law — Yocheved and Elisheva.

According to the opinion that it was “a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law,” the *houses of kehunah* descended from Elisheva, Aharon’s wife, and the houses of *leviyah* descended from Yocheved, and according to the opinion that it was “a woman and her daughter,” the “houses” also included the houses of monarchy — the houses of *kehunah* and *leviyah* descended from Yocheved, and the houses of monarchy descended from Miriam.

Since Rashi maintains (as he explained earlier)<sup>13</sup> that the midwives (Shifrah and Puah) were Yocheved and Miriam, it emerges that the “houses” are the houses of *kehunah* and *leviyah*, and the houses of monarchy.

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<sup>11</sup> See Maharsha, “*Chiddushei Aggados*” on *Sotah* 11b; the *Rif* on *Ein Yaakov* on *Sotah* 11b; and see (the complete) *Yefas Toar* on *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 17.

<sup>12</sup> And in *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 13. However, there it says: “Rav said..., Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman....”

<sup>13</sup> Rashi on *Shemos* 1:15; similarly in *Sifri* on *Bamidbar* 10:29, where there are no dissenting opinions.

Still, the other issues raised above are still perplexing, especially Rashi's **emphasis** that his explanation is "as stated in tractate *Sotah*." This assertion seems to be contradicted by Rashi adding proof from the verse cited in the *Sifri* and saying, as it says in *Sifri*, that *kehunah* descended from Yocheved. If Rashi's explanation is "as stated in tractate *Sotah*," seemingly, Rashi should have instead stated, "as the Gemara says: '*Houses of kehunah and leviyah* — {this refers to} **Aharon and Moshe**.'"

### 3.

#### RASHI'S PROOFTEXT

We also need to clarify the proof that Rashi offers from the verse, "The House of Hashem and the House of the King":

- a) Rashi explains that "houses" in the verse, "He made houses for them" doesn't refer to a building in the conventional sense. Rather, it refers to "houses of ***kehunah*...**" — the word "house" denoting "a family" — families of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy. Yet the verse that Rashi cites proves the **opposite**; it seemingly **contradicts** this interpretation because "the **House** of Hashem... the **House of the King**" refers to houses **in the conventional sense**.<sup>14</sup>
- b) Moreover, there are other verses in which the word "house" denotes the "house" of *kehunah* and *leviyah*, such as,<sup>15</sup> "House of Aharon, bless Hashem! House of Levi, bless Hashem!" In these verses, the word "house" doesn't refer to a physical house; rather, it has the sense of family — the family of *kehunah* and the family of *leviyah*.

There are similar expressions that refer to houses of monarchy, such as: "Hashem shall make for my lord an enduring **house**";<sup>16</sup> ("Royal **house**, give

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<sup>14</sup> *Yefei Toar* on *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 13 raises this difficulty.

<sup>15</sup> *Tehillim* 135:19-20.

<sup>16</sup> *Shmuel I* 25:28; *Targum* and Rashi, loc. cit.

ear”);<sup>17</sup> “Hear now, house of David”;<sup>18</sup> and “The house of David will be like divine beings.”<sup>19</sup> In all of these passages, “house” doesn’t mean a physical house; it refers to the household of the king’s **family**. As such, why doesn’t Rashi cite these verses in which the word “house” is not taken in its conventional sense, but instead, it denotes the families of *kehunah* or the families of monarchy?

- c) In our versions of Rashi, it says, “**He built** the House of Hashem and the House of the King,” whereas the wording of the verse is different: It says, as mentioned above, “during which Shlomo built the two houses, the House of Hashem and the House of the King.”

#### 4.

##### WHAT DOES “HOUSE” MEAN?

The explanation of the preceding: Rashi does not cite the verse, “the House of Hashem and the House of the King” to prove that “house” denotes houses of *kehunah* and *leviyah* in the sense of *families of kehunah and leviyah*, or the like (which is how this term is used in the verses, “House of Aharon... House of Levi, bless Hashem!”). Defining “house” this way would not in any way be novel, as Rashi explained **earlier**<sup>20</sup> that a “house” also includes a person’s “servants and the members of his household.” (It does not refer only to an “actual house.”) Indeed, in the Torah,<sup>21</sup> we find **several instances** where “house” is understood in this broader sense.

Rather, Rashi cites this verse to prove that when the word “houses” appears **unqualified** in a passage that does not indicate the specific houses under discussion,<sup>22</sup> it possibly refers to the houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy. As Rashi goes on to say, “which are called **houses**” (in the **verse** that

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<sup>17</sup> *Hoshea* 5:1.

<sup>18</sup> *Yeshayahu* 7:13.

<sup>19</sup> *Zechariah* 12:8.

<sup>20</sup> Rashi on *Bereishis* 45:2.

<sup>21</sup> *Shemos* 1:1; also earlier in *Bereishis* 12:17 and Rashi, loc. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Note the wording at the beginning of *Sifri*, ibid.: “I do not know to what these houses refer. When it says....”

Rashi brings as proof) — “The **houses**... the House of Hashem and the House of the King.”

We can posit that the correct version of Rashi’s commentary should read this way<sup>23</sup> — “the houses” instead of “he built.” The word “וּבָנִהּ, he built,” which appears in our version of Rashi, is a copyist’s error.

The verse that immediately follows explains that the generic wording “(the two) houses” (which the verse adds there)<sup>24</sup> means “the House of Hashem and the House of the King.” Thus, it is clear that the meaning of the word “houses” appearing generically in a verse is (at times) *houses of kehunah, leviyah, and monarchy*.

[Therefore, the fact that the verse refers to actual houses (the House of Hashem and the House of the King) doesn’t contradict Rashi’s interpretation of our verse because Rashi’s intent is only to emphasize that the meaning of “houses” when written generically, is *houses of kehunah, leviyah, and monarchy*, and it could be understood to refer to actual houses or houses in the sense of families.]

## 5.

### THE PLAIN MEANING

However, we need to clarify why it is **necessary** to explain, according to *pshat*,<sup>25</sup> that “houses” refers specifically to these three types of houses — houses of *kehunah, leviyah, and monarchy*. Seemingly, it would be reasonable to understand this word as referring to houses in general — it refers to actual houses and families universally (and some Torah commentators understand it {here} to refer to houses in general):

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<sup>23</sup> This resolves the difficulty raised above {in Sec. 3, subsection c} that “he built” is not in the verse.

<sup>24</sup> Seemingly, this phrase is extraneous.

<sup>25</sup> {The plain meaning of Scripture. Rashi says in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Scripture.” Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation of the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

- a) Hashem made houses to protect and save them from Pharaoh.<sup>26</sup>
- b) The word “houses,” used here, means children or families.<sup>27</sup> This identifies the midwives’ reward for keeping the children alive.<sup>28</sup> For assisting in the delivery of Jewish children and for helping to raise Jewish families, the midwives were rewarded “measure for measure.” They, too, bore children and raised their own families.<sup>29</sup>

These two explanations seem to correspond better to *pshat* because:

- a) The word “houses” is understood according to its **simple** meaning (either physical houses or families, as in many places in the Torah). In contrast, the interpretation that “houses” refers to “houses of ***kehunah***, ***leviyah***, and **monarchy**” is based on an allusion<sup>30</sup> that must be derived from the book of *Melachim*.
- b) Seemingly, these explanations correspond better to the wording of the verse, “He made houses for them” in the past tense — already then, he made these houses for them.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, according to Rashi’s explanation, these houses — of *kehunah* and *leviyah* — were established later, and the monarchy of David was established many generations later.

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<sup>26</sup> See *Ibn Ezra*’s short commentary on *Shemos* 1:21; and see *Midrash HaGadol*, loc. cit.; Radak’s *Sefer HaShorashim*, “*shoresh bayis*.”

<sup>27</sup> See *Ibn Ezra* on *Shemos* 1:20; *Ibn Ezra*’s short commentary, loc. cit.; Radak, loc. cit.; Chizkuni, loc. cit., first explanation; *Tur HaAruch*, loc. cit., first explanation; *Abarbanel*, loc. cit., first explanation. (According to his explanation, however, this reward does not refer to the Hebrew midwives.)

<sup>28</sup> {*Shemos* 1:18.}

<sup>29</sup> *Ibn Ezra*’s short commentary, *ibid.*; *Ralbag* on *Shemos* 1:21.

<sup>30</sup> {“*Remez*” in the original.}

<sup>31</sup> Meaning at that time, before they left Egypt; but this does not mean that he made these houses before Moshe was born because “Miriam was only five years old” (*Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, beg. of sec. 13; see commentaries thereon).

## 6.

“HASHEM DID GOOD”

The explanation of the preceding: Rashi rejects these interpretations by structuring his commentary on our verse immediately following, and as a thematic continuation, of the previous verse, and his commentary thereon:<sup>32</sup> “*Hashem did good to the midwives* — What was the goodness? *He made houses for them.*” (In this caption, Rashi also quotes the words “he made... for them” {and not just the word “houses”}.) By structuring his commentary this way, not only does Rashi explain what “did good” means (since this is stated in the **next** verse and not **adjacent** to the words “did good”), Rashi also (explains and) demonstrates the necessity for his interpretation of the phrase, “He made houses for them.”

If the Torah intended to teach us that Hashem made buildings to protect and save the midwives: a) the Torah should have worded it, “He **built** houses for them,” or the like; and b) it would not have been germane for the Torah to say that Hashem “**did good**” because *doing good* doesn’t only mean preventing harm or negative outcomes; rather, it means increased **goodness**.

Similarly, if the Torah intended to teach us that the midwives had children and raised families, how would this be considered a bestowal of exceptional **goodness** toward them? After all, all Jews had children and raised families — even before “they kept the children alive,” the Torah says:<sup>33</sup> “The Children of Israel were fruitful... very, very much so”!

Consequently, Rashi explains that the word “houses” refers to exceptional goodness — “houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.” They didn’t raise regular families like the other Jews; rather, they were the progenitors of houses that were “foremost in rank and foremost in power”<sup>34</sup> — houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> {Rashi on *Shemos* 1:20.}

<sup>33</sup> *Shemos* 1:7.

<sup>34</sup> {*Bereishis* 49:3.}

<sup>35</sup> See **Rashi** on *Bereishis* 49:3.



## 7.

### THE REWARD

To emphasize the merit and superiority of this explanation, Rashi adds, “as stated in tractate *Sotah*.” Rashi’s intention was not only to cite the source of this teaching but also to resolve a difficulty:

Seemingly, according to the other commentators cited above, their reward — “He made houses for them” — was directly related to what they did to earn the reward, both according to the first explanation — {Hashem made them houses} to save them from Pharaoh — and certainly according to the second explanation, that “houses” refer to their children and families — measure for measure, as discussed above.

However, according to Rashi’s explanation, viz., their reward was “houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy,” the reward of the midwives was unrelated to what they did — “they kept the children alive.”

## 8.

### MEASURE FOR MEASURE

To forestall this difficulty, Rashi says, “as stated in tractate *Sotah*.” There, this idea is recorded following the mishnah<sup>36</sup> and the passage in the Gemara: “By the same measure that a person measures, the person himself is measured.” The examples given by the mishnah and the Gemara illustrate that the principle of “measure for measure” also includes the idea that divine reward and punishment are dispensed corresponding to the “measure” of every **detail** of a person’s action.

This clarifies why the interpretation that the midwives were rewarded with “houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy” is superior {to other explanations}:

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<sup>36</sup> *Sotah* 8b ff.; the mishnah on *Sotah* 9b says, “And similarly when it comes to good; Miriam waited....”

This interpretation not only emphasizes the greatness of the midwives' reward; it primarily emphasizes that their reward was “measure for measure” in all of its details — corresponding to the particular actions of the midwives:

In having “kept the children alive,” they not only helped the Jews raise Jewish families, their actions were instrumental in raising up the majority, if not the entire, generation of those who left Egypt, from which the entire Jewish people was descended until the end of time.

Therefore, they were rewarded “measure for measure” with great precision: Not only did **they** have children and families, and not only did **they** have children who were *kohanim*, *leviim*, and monarchs, but rather, from their stock, “**houses** of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy” were established — special “houses” — “foremost in rank and foremost in power” among the Jewish people, until the end of time.

This contrasts with the *Sifri*: True, the *Sifri* also says that “Yocheved merited *kehunah* and Miriam merited monarchy...” Nevertheless, this appears in the *Sifri* (a) to prove that “anyone who draws himself close {to Hashem} is drawn close by Heaven.” It is not brought as an illustration of the principle of “measure for measure” being applied with **exactitude**. Rather, it is recorded in the *Sifri* to illustrate the general conduct of Hashem in drawing a person close in response to all good deeds of a person. To that end, *Sifri* cites several places where this idea is demonstrated (“because she brought herself close, Hashem brought her close”). (b) It does not refer to the “house of Israel” — the entire Jewish people.

Therefore, in the *Sifri*, it doesn't say “**houses** of *kehunah* and monarchy” because it is not talking about the **houses of** {the Children of} **Israel** that were given to them as a reward for establishing the entire **house** of Israel.

## 9.

### THE REWARD FOR FEARING HASHEM

We can posit that by saying, “as stated in tractate *Sotah*,” Rashi forestalls another difficulty that might have been raised about his remarks:

Since the verse begins, “It was because the midwives feared Hashem,” we would have thought that the reward {described at the end of this verse}, “He made houses for them,” was given to the midwives because they “feared Hashem.”

However, the midrash describes a completely different reward for their fear of Hashem:<sup>37</sup>

*Hashem did good...* — As it says... what is the reward for **fear**? — **Torah**. Because Yocheved feared Hashem, Moshe descended from her. Concerning Moshe, it says,<sup>38</sup> “he was good”; and the Torah, which is called<sup>39</sup> “a good teaching,” was given through him; and the Torah is ascribed to Moshe, as it says,<sup>40</sup> “Remember the Torah of Moshe My servant”; and from Miriam, Betzalel — who was full of wisdom — descended,<sup>41</sup> as it says,<sup>42</sup> “I have filled him with a G-dly spirit”; and he fashioned the Ark<sup>43</sup> for the Torah....<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, according to *pshat*, this reward is more appropriate to {their reverence for Hashem} — “It was because the midwives **feared Hashem**” — because the purpose of the Torah is:<sup>45</sup> “Hashem commanded us to perform all these decrees **to fear** Hashem, our L-rd.”

[That Hashem gave the Torah to {the Children of} Israel through Moshe, Yocheved’s son, was a marvelous reward.]

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<sup>37</sup> *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 16, and the sources listed there.

<sup>38</sup> {*Shemos* 2:2.}

<sup>39</sup> {*Mishlei* 4:2.}

<sup>40</sup> {*Malachi* 3:22.}

<sup>41</sup> As explicit in Scripture (*Shemos* 31:2; *Vayikra* 35:30), “Betzalel son of Uri, son of Chur,” and in Rashi’s Torah commentary (*Shemos* 17:10; 24:14; *Vayikra* 35:30), it says, “Chur was the son of Miriam.”

<sup>42</sup> *Shemos* 31:3.

<sup>43</sup> See Rashi on *Shemos* 37:1.

<sup>44</sup> Note *Shemos* 24:14, which conveys that Chur (Miriam’s son) had a special connection to Torah.

<sup>45</sup> *Devarim* 6:24.

According to this view, there is no need to explain that the statement “Hashem did good to the midwives” refers to the “good” mentioned at the **end** of the **next** verse,<sup>46</sup> as Rashi explains. Instead {based on this understanding}, the reward {mentioned at the end of the next verse} was given because of what it says at the beginning of **that** verse: “Because the midwives feared Hashem.”

This difficulty is resolved by the conclusion of Rashi’s remarks, “as stated in tractate *Sotah*.”

## 10.

### THE REWARD FOR PRACTICAL ACTIONS

In the mishnah and the passage in tractate *Sotah*, the principle of “measure for measure” based on a person’s practical actions<sup>47</sup> is discussed — not based on the person’s intentions and feelings. This principle is emphasized by *pshat*, as Rashi notes earlier<sup>48</sup> that the idea of “measure for measure” applies to practical actions. Rashi comments: “They {the Generation of the Flood} sinned {as Scripture described earlier} ‘the wickedness of man was *great*,’<sup>49</sup> and {therefore, measure for measure} the people were stricken by<sup>50</sup> ‘the *great* deep.’”

Therefore, it is clear that according to *pshat*, the good that Hashem performed and the reward that He gave, as mentioned in our verse, was not (so much) in response to the midwives’ noble intentions and thoughts — “the midwives feared Hashem.” Rather, the divine goodness and reward were conferred to the midwives (primarily) for their practical actions as midwives (“Shifrah,” because she *meshaperes*, beautifies the child {at birth}, and “Puah,” because she *po’ah*, cries, and speaks and coos to the child),<sup>51</sup> and for keeping the children alive — the midwives helped establish Jewish homes to the extent that they established “the entire house of Israel.” The reward for these selfless deeds

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<sup>46</sup> *Rabboseinu Baalei HaTosafos* (on Shemos 1:20) find Rashi’s interpretation to be difficult because of this issue.

<sup>47</sup> See *Maharsha’s “Chiddushei Aggados”* on *Sanhedrin* 90a (s.v., “*minayin*”).

<sup>48</sup> Rashi on *Bereishis* 7:11; see Rashi on *Shemos* 18:11, and on *Bamidbar* 5:24, 14:37.

<sup>49</sup> {*Bereishis* 6:5.}

<sup>50</sup> {*Bereishis* 6:11.}

<sup>51</sup> {Rashi on *Shemos* 1:15.}

was not (so much) that Yocheved bore a son through whom the Torah was given (and similarly, that Betzalel, with his unique virtues, descended from Miriam). This is because rewards such as these cannot be described as a “house,” for these rewards did not extend to their children and children’s children. After all, Moshe {in transmitting the Torah,} “passed it on to Yehoshua.”<sup>52</sup>

Rather, the reward consisted of “**houses** of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.”

## 11.

### THE TORAH’S PRECISION

Here we see an example of the absolute precision of all aspects of the Torah. Despite this explanation of the reward received by Yocheved and Miriam being derived from *aggadah*<sup>53</sup> and *drush*,<sup>54</sup> still, we still see that the difference between the various explanations — that of Rashi (and the Gemara) as compared to the way it is conveyed in the midrash and the *Sifri* — corresponds to the rules of each part of Torah where a particular explanation appears.

In the Midrash — which contains *drush* and *aggadah*, regarding which it says, “draw a person’s heart like *Aggadah*,”<sup>55</sup> referring to the emotions of the heart, and which arouses fear of Heaven in a person<sup>56</sup> — the main emphasis is that “the midwives **feared** Hashem.” Therefore, a corresponding reward is emphasized in the midrash: “What is the reward for **fear**? — **Torah**....”

In contrast, in *Sifri* — this part of the Torah contains primarily **halachos**, which relate to deeds — the reward relates to deeds: *kehunah* and monarchy, which correspond to the deeds of the midwives. However, this reward does not

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<sup>52</sup> {*Avos* 1:1.}

<sup>53</sup> {*Aggadah*, otherwise known as *midrash* or *drush*, is the method that uses homiletics to explain the Torah.}

<sup>54</sup> {*Drush* is an interpretive method of commentary in which the words of a verse are used as a platform to express an ostensibly extrinsic idea.}

<sup>55</sup> *Shabbos* 87a; similarly, *Chagigah* 14a; *Yoma* 75a.

<sup>56</sup> See Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 2, sec. 2, and the sources listed there.

relate to a particular detail of a specific act but rather to that which is common to all acts through which a person comes close to Hashem and obeys Him.

Rashi's commentary, however, that relates to *pshat* and practical action (and similarly, the Gemara's explanations of these verses, many of which are based on *pshat*, as we have explained several times)<sup>57</sup> — emphasizes that “it is not the expounding that is primary, but the deed.”<sup>58</sup> These explanations emphasize the primacy of practical deeds and ascribe importance to each act based on not (only) the commonality of all good deeds but also on the specific character of each deed in particular, consonant with what a person accomplishes through this deed.

Therefore, in this case, it is most relevant {for Rashi and the Gemara} to refer to the reward of “**houses** of *kehunah* and *leviyah* and monarchy” and also to connect this reward to the verse, “the House of Hashem and the House of the King,” which refers to actual, physical houses. This is because the primary virtue and accomplishment of the midwives was establishing and giving life to Jewish houses, as discussed above at length.

## 12.

### A JEWISH MOTHER'S *NACHAS*

We learn a wondrous lesson from Rashi's explanation here:

Seemingly, although the privilege of Moshe being the one through whom the Torah was given was not a “measure for measure” reward for Yocheved [and Miriam], nonetheless, this privilege was the greatest reward that could have been given.

Yet here, Rashi's explanation emphasizes an even greater reward and *nachas* to a Jewish mother — **houses** of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.

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<sup>57</sup> See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 20, end of p. 72.

<sup>58</sup> *Avos* 1:17.

Her *nachas* does not derive mainly from her son being an astute scholar who is proficient, sharp, and the like. Instead, it derives from her ability to establish **houses** among the Jewish people — houses of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, monarchy; **Jewish** children and grandchildren, students,<sup>59</sup> and the students' students. She can lend a hand in building Jewish houses and families by influencing every Jewish child to conduct himself in a manner of *kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.

The spiritual idea behind these houses: Although generally, the role of both *kohanim* and *leviim* is<sup>60</sup> “to set himself aside and stand before Hashem to minister to Him and serve Him...,” “The descendants of Levi were all set aside for service in the Temple,”<sup>61</sup> nonetheless, the primary group that is set aside are the *kohanim*. They perform the sacrificial service and offer incense in the Temple. Consequently, a *kohen* is prohibited from contracting ritual impurity<sup>62</sup> and leaving the land of Israel<sup>63</sup> and the like — prohibitions that do not apply to a *levi*.

These distinctions are reflected in the *avodah*<sup>64</sup> of every single Jew.<sup>65</sup> *Kehunah* implies separation and detachment from all worldly matters — cleaving and attaching oneself to G-dliness.<sup>66</sup>

A *levi* is permitted to leave the land of Israel and even enter a cemetery. Meaning that his role is — in “all of your deeds and ways”<sup>67</sup> — to influence and to transform even a Jew who is outside of Yerushalayim and outside of the land of Israel — even a Jew who is {spiritually} on the level of a cemetery, which is the opposite of life, G-d forbend. The *levi* brings this Jew to life to the extent that

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<sup>59</sup> Who are referred to as their children (Rashi on *Devarim* 6:7), and certainly as part of their household.

<sup>60</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shemitah veYovel*,” ch. 13, par. 13.

<sup>61</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Klei HaMikdash*,” ch. 3, par. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Vayikra* 21:1 ff.

<sup>63</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Evel*,” ch. 3, par. 13; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” end of sec. 369.

<sup>64</sup> {Divine service.}

<sup>65</sup> See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, pp. 193-4; vol. 19, p. 319, and the sources cited there.

<sup>66</sup> This is emphasized concerning the *Kohen Gadol* (who embodies perfection of the level of *kehunah*): “His home should be in Yerushalayim and he should never depart from there.” (*Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Klei HaMikdash*,” ch. 5, par. 7); moreover, “He shall not go out of the Temple” (*Vayikra* 21:12; see *Mishneh Torah*, *ibid.*; “*Hilchos Bias HaMikdash*,” ch. 1, par. 10).

<sup>67</sup> {Paraphrased from *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Deos*,” ch. 3, par. 3.}

also, for him, “Hashem will be his portion and heritage forever and ever,”<sup>68</sup> exactly like *kohanim* and *leviim*.

However, the *leviim* are bound to the *kohanim* — “they shall be joined to you and minister to you”<sup>69</sup> — because they serve in the Temple and a holy precinct. Consequently, it is clear that the influence of the *leviim* on the world isn’t so great; they can only affect a place with a degree of connection with the Temple and holiness.

The ultimate purpose {of Creation} is to bring Hashem’s monarchy and rule to the entire world — houses of monarchy.

This is the true *nachas* of a Jewish mother — when she establishes houses and generations of Jewish children who conduct themselves in a manner of “*kehunah*, *leviyah*, and monarchy.”

Then, all of the “legions of Hashem” will leave this final exile, similar to what transpired in Egypt. “All the legions of Hashem” (raised by the Hebrew midwives) “left the land of Egypt,”<sup>70</sup> led by Moshe (“a king over Yeshurun”),<sup>71</sup> Aharon (the *kohen*), and their tribe (the tribe of *Levi*), and they will be “going out with a raised hand.”<sup>72</sup>

— From talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas Shemos* and Shabbos *parshas VaEra*, 5730 (1970)

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<sup>68</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shemitah veYovel*,” ch. 13, par. 13.

<sup>69</sup> *Bamidbar* 18:2.

<sup>70</sup> *Shemos* 12:41.

<sup>71</sup> *Devarim* 33:5 {*Yeshurun* is an alternate name for the Jewish people}. According to the interpretation of our Rabbis, as cited in *Ramban*, loc. cit., and similarly in *Ibn Ezra*, loc. cit., the king in this context refers to Moshe.

<sup>72</sup> *Shemos* 14:8 — “with an uncovered head” (*Targum Onkelos*) {signifying} lofty and openly displayed might (Rashi on *Shemos* 14:8).