

ISSUE #95

ו' אלול תשפ"ה  
30/8/25



## A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

### פרשת שופטים

לא יהיה לכהנים הלויים כל שבט לוי חלק ונחלה עם ישראל אשי ה' ונחלתו יאכלון. ונחלה לא יהיה לו בקרב אחיו  
ה' הוא נחלתו כאשר דבר לו. (דברים יח, א-ב)

*There shall not be for the Kohanim, the Levites – the entire tribe of Levi – a portion and an inheritance with Yisroel; the fire-offerings of Hashem and His inheritance shall they eat. He shall not have an inheritance amongst his brothers; Hashem is his inheritance, as He spoke to him. (Devorim 18:1-2)*

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah teaches that the Kohanim and Levi'im were not to possess a portion in Eretz Yisroel. Since they dedicated themselves to Hashem and His service, they did not receive a physical inheritance; rather, Hashem is their heritage and inheritance. In return, they were sustained by the *korbanos* and various gifts from the nation.

Similarly, in Parshas Eikev, the *possuk* states: ה' הוא נחלתו עם אחיו, ה' הוא נחלתו. *Therefore Levi did not have a share and a heritage with his brethren; Hashem is his heritage.* Rashi explains that the tribe of Levi was separated from the rest of the people to serve in the Mikdash, which meant they did not have the necessary time to work the land.

However, the notion that the Kohanim and Levi'im lacked time to work the land needs further clarification. They were not constantly serving in the Mikdash throughout the year; rather, there was a rotation. In the time of Moshe, each Levi served one week out of every two months, and in the time of Dovid HaMelech, each served only two weeks out of the entire year. If so, why were they not given land? Was there not plenty of available time for them to cultivate and tend the land?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* elaborates on the concept of *avodah*, particularly in relation to the unique service required of those who served in the Mikdash. The Ramban (*Devorim* 6:13) interprets the phrase ואתו תעבדו, *Him shall you serve* (ibid. 13:5), as referring both to the *avodah* performed in the Mikdash and to the study and effort involved in acquiring Torah.

The Brisker Rav posed a question: Why is the *avodah* in the Mikdash specifically singled out? What makes this *mitzvah* so remarkable and distinct from the performance of other positive commandments? He explained that the term עבודה specifically refers to acts of subservience and servitude, akin to a servant who is fully submissive to their master. While not every *mitzvah* can be characterised in this way, both studying Torah and serving in the Mikdash can. These *mitzvos* necessitate total dedication and submissiveness, which is why they are particularly highlighted as forms of serving Hashem.

(It is noteworthy that the Brisker Rav was only troubled by the specification of service in the Mikdash being described as עבודה. The distinctive nature of Torah, which demands complete subservience, was obvious. This perspective resonates with the saying of R' Yechezkel Levenstein *zatzal*, who once explained that the impressive heights achieved in Torah by R' Chaim Brisker and the Brisker Rav were not solely the result of their exceptional intellectual abilities. Instead, their success stemmed from

their ability to learn “with their whole minds,” while most others only engage a portion of their intellect when studying Torah.)

Understanding this, we can appreciate why the Levi'im were not given a portion of the land, despite only serving in the Mikdash for a relatively short duration each year. Since *avodah* in the Mishkan requires complete subservience and total dedication, the tribe of Levi was mandated to detach themselves from materialistic endeavours, focusing solely on their spiritual duties. They needed to prepare and concentrate throughout the entire year to be ready and fit for their service in the Mikdash, barring them from being occupied in agricultural activity.

The Rambam (*Hil. Shemittah* 13:12-13) expounds upon the unique role of Shevet Levi as teachers of Torah to the nation, which further clarifies why they were not given a portion of land in Eretz Yisroel. He writes:

Why did Shevet Levi not receive a portion of land in Eretz Yisroel with his brothers? Since they are separated to serve Hashem and to teach His righteous ways to the public. They are separated from the ways of the world by not partaking in war and not inheriting a portion of the land. Instead, they are the army and portion of Hashem. This status is not only reserved for Shevet Levi, but anyone who elevates himself by detaching from worldly matters and wholly dedicates himself to serve Hashem becomes sanctified with an unparalleled *kedushah* and will be the “portion of Hashem” and His heritage forever.

The unique mission of Shevet Levi teaches us an essential lesson about achieving genuine growth in Torah. Both *avodah* in the Mikdash and learning Torah requires total subservience and submission, leaving no room for other commitments. Let us strive to deepen our dedication to studying Torah, since, as the Rambam teaches, this *madreigah* is not limited to the Levi'im; it can be attained by everyone.

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to [parshasheet@gyalumni.org](mailto:parshasheet@gyalumni.org).