

Parashot Bemidbar and Naso

בְּנֵי נַפְתָּלִי תוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם....

The sons of Naftali, their offspring, according to their families, according to their fathers' houses....¹

Parashat Bemidbar opens with G-d's command to Moses and Aaron to take the census of the Jewish people. The results of the census are given for each tribe in the form:² "For the sons of X, their offspring, according to their families, according to their fathers' houses, the number of names from twenty years old up, all those subject to conscription, those counted of the tribe of X: Y," where X is the name of the tribe and Y the number of persons counted.

<p>לקוטי תורה, פרשת במדבר קשה, למה בכל השבטים נאמר לבני, ובשבט נפתלי האחרון, אמר בני נפתלי, ולא לבני.</p>	<p>שער הפסוקים, פרשת במדבר ראוי לדקדק כי בכל השבטים נאמר בהם, לבני שמעון, לבני גד, בלמ"ד. ובשבט נפתלי לבדו, נאמר בלא למ"ד, בני נפתלי.</p>
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Sha'ar HaPesukim and Likutei Torah, parashat Bemidbar

It is appropriate to note that with regard to all the tribes, the expression "for the sons of..." is used, while in the case of the last tribe, Naftali, it says only "the sons of..." and not "for."

<p>והענין פשוט דע כשרצו למנות את ישראל היו הולכין וסובבים את כל מחנה ישראל ועומדין בכל פתח ופתח וכותבין אותו בפנקס סדר השמות פב"פ משמע פלוני ופב"פ משבט פלוני וכן כיוצא בזה עד שנגמרו למנות כל הבתים של ישראל</p>	<p>והענין הוא, כי בהיותם חפצים לדעת מספר בני ישראל, היו הנשיאים עם הסופר שלהם, סובבים במחנה ישראל מאהל לאהל, ושואלים כמה נפשות באהל הזה, וכותבים, פלוני בן פלוני משבט פלוני, פלוני בן פלוני משבט פלוני,</p>
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The reason for this is as follows: When they wanted to count the Jews, the heads of the tribes and their scribes circulated throughout the whole camp of Israel, standing at the entry of every tent, writing in their tablet the names of those who lived in each tent, in the form: "So-and-so the son of So-and-so of the tribe of so-and-so," and so forth. They did this until they finished counting all the households of Israel.

<p>ואח"כ לקחו פנקס הזה מעורב עם רבוא אנשים וצריך לעשות חילוק אחר להוציא מספר כל שבט ושבט בגליון לבד</p>	<p>וכשנגמר כתיבתם, לקחו הפנקס ההוא המעורבב, מסי רבוא בני אדם, והיו מבררים תחלה מביניהם כל האנשים, שיש משבט ראובן הבכור, וכותבים אותם בפנקס אחד שני.</p>
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Then, they took this tablet, in which the names of thousands of individuals we randomly written, and had to divide it up into lists of the members of each tribe on a separate sheet.

1. Numbers 1:42.
2. Numbers 1:20 ff.

ואז היו מתחילין בפנקס הראשון ואמרו פב"פ תכתבו
 אותו לשבט פלוני והיו כותבין אותו שם בפ"ע עד
 שהיו משלימין כל האנשים של אותו השבט שהם
 כתובין בפנקס הראשון

In order to do this, they began with the first, random list, removing first all the names belonging to the tribe of Reuben, the firstborn, by reading off these names, saying, "Record So-and-so the son of So-and-so on the list of the tribe of such-and-such." The scribes would then write these names individually on the first of the separate lists.

ואח"כ מבררים שמות בני שמעון, המפוזרים בפנקס
 הא', ומעתיקים אותם בפנקס הב', אחר ראובן.
 ואח"כ חוזרין ומבקשים כל הכתוב בפנקס ההוא שהוא
 משבט השני ואומרים זה לבני שמעון

They then returned to the beginning of the random list and proceeded to remove all the names belonging to the tribe of Simeon from it, writing them in the second of the separate lists, saying, "this is for the sons of Simeon."

וכעד"ו, עד תשלום כל אחד עשר שבטים. | וכן כל כיוצא בזה עד י"א שבטים

They did this for each of the first eleven tribes.

It seems as though they either erased or checked off the names from the first list as they read them off.

ואחר כך כל הנשאר בתוכם בפנקס הא', לא היו
 צריכים להעתיקם בפנקס הב', כי נשארו שם מבוררים
 לבדם, ונודעים שהם מבני נפתלי האחרון שבכולם.
 וכשנשלמו כל הי"א ולא נשאר רק שבט א' שהוא שבט
 נפתלי באחרונה לא היו צריכין לחזור ולהוציא בכתב
 אחר כי כבר אין שם מעורב עמו עוד שבט אחר רק
 הוא לבדו

When they finished the first eleven tribes, only one tribe was left, i.e., Naftali. In his case, they did not need to return to the beginning of the random list and remove the names belonging to this tribe in order to write them on another list, for by this time there were no longer any names belonging to other tribes mixed in with this tribe; only it was left.

ולכן היו מונין אותו במקומו והיו אומרים בני נפתלי
 אלו נשארו וכך וכך מספרם

They therefore counted the tribe of Naftali from the existing list, and they said simply, "such-and-such is the number of the sons of Naftali that are left on this list.

ולכן בכל האחד עשר שבטים, נאמר בהם לבני, שהיה
 הקורא בפנקס הא', אומר לסופר, פלוני בן פלוני
 תחברנו לחלק בני ראובן, הנכתבים בפנקס הב'.
 וכיוצא בזה בשבט שמעון, וכיוצא. אבל הנשארים
 באחרונה, היה אומר לסופר, אלו הנשארים כלם הם
 בני נפתלי.

אך האחרים שהיו צריכין להוציא חשבונם בכתב אחר
 נאמר בו לבני פ"י עוד האיש הכתוב כאן צריך לחבר
 לבני שמעון או לבני ראובן וכו':

Whereas in the case of the other tribes, that had to be tallied on separate lists, it is written “for the tribe of So-and-so,” meaning, “This person written here on the random list must be joined with the tribe of Simeon, or Levi, etc.”

The remaining, unerased (or checked-off) names on the first list were by default of the tribe of Naftali.

We see from this excerpt that the Arizal did not only focus on the esoteric dimension of the Torah; he also explained the basic, contextual meaning (*peshat*) of Scripture.

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נִשְׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי קְהַת מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי לֵוִי לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם.

“Count the sons of Kehat from amongst the sons of Levi, according to their families and their fathers’ houses.”³

In the beginning of *parashat Bemidbar*, G-d commands Moses to take a census of the Jewish people. For all the tribes other than the tribe of Levi, he was instructed to count all every male “twenty years old or more.”⁴ Following this, the tribes are assigned their positions in the desert encampment and traveling formation.

The Levites were then counted separately, “every male, one-month old or more,”⁵ according to the three Levite clans descended from the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kehat, and Merari. They were then assigned their respective positions in the encampment and traveling formation.

Finally, at the end of the *parashah*,⁶ begins the detailed instructions for each Levite clan in the process of dismantling and carrying the Tabernacle whenever the Jewish people were commanded to continue their trek in the desert. The instructions for the sons of Kehat close the portion, and the instructions for the sons of Gershon and Merari continue at the beginning of the following portion of the Torah, *Naso*.⁷ Together with these instructions is the command to count the members of each clan eligible for service, that is, “from thirty years old until fifty years old.”⁸

The Torah calls counting each tribe or Levite clan “lifting up its head.” Thus we read:

Lift up the head and “*Lift up the head*” However, with regard to the clan of Merari, the Torah simply says: The expression “lift up the head of...” is not used.

Also, we note that in the cases of the Kehat and Merari clans, the order of the census is “according to their families and their fathers’ houses,” while in the case of the clan of Gershon, this is reversed: “according to their fathers’ houses and their families.”

The Arizal explains these differences according to Kabbalah.

3. Numbers 4:2.

4. Ibid. 1:3, 47-49.

5. Ibid. 3:15.

6. Ibid. 4:10-20.

7. Ibid. 4:21-28 and 29-34, respectively.

8. Ibid. 4:3, 23, 30.

לקוטי תורה, פרשת נשא
הנה שבט לוי, שהם שורש ההיג דעטרא דגבורה
דנוקבא.

שער הפסוקים, פרשת נשא
דע, כי כללות שבט לוי, הם בחי' הי גבורות, הנקרא
עיטרא דגבורה, חלק הנוקי,

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The overall tribe of Levi is the source of the five states of *gevurah*, known as the “crown of *gevurah*,” the feminine portion.

It is explained in Kabbalah and *Chassidut* that love and fear of G-d are the two “wings” with which a person’s service of G-d takes flight. That is, a person can perfunctorily perform all the Torah’s commandments, but unless he does so out of love and fear of G-d, his service will not connect him consciously to G-d. He will be doing G-d’s will, and will both affect the world and receive his due reward for this, but he is doing so only partially, for G-d desires that we serve Him enthusiastically as well.

Thus, love and fear should characterize the service of G-d. The *sefirot* that correspond to love and fear are *chesed* and *gevurah*. In the microcosm of Divine service, the holy Temple, the *kohanim* (priests) personified the *sefirah* of *chesed* and the Levites the *sefirah* of *gevurah*. The priests performed their duties quietly and calmly, evoking the image of still water, while the Levites were the choir and orchestra, arousing the emotions of the Jewish people looking on, and evoking the image of passion and fire.

Contrary to Victorian stereotypes, in Kabbalah, *chesed* and love are considered the male side of reality, while *gevurah* and fear/awe are considered the female side. (There are of course many cross-manifestations of this dualism, but these are the exceptions or sub-categories rather than the rule.) In a general way, this accords with what we have said previously about male-female approaches to life the world, i.e., that the male is the more abstract emphasis, while the female is the more concrete. In order to concretize the reality of Divinity in this world, the female must evince great strength and power (so as not to be overcome by the distracting forces of evil). She derives this power, of course, from the inspiration she takes from the male, so in that context the male is the giver and she is the recipient. What the Arizal will be describing in the coming paragraphs is a bit of how the main female *partzuf*, the *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, is constructed out of the *gevurah*-aspects of the preceding *sefirot*.

In any case, we see from this that the priest-Levite combination is the source and archetype for the duality of male-female.

וזהו טעם מ״ש בפרשת במדבר, ואת ראשם לא תשא בתוך בני ישראל, כי אלו בחי' הגבורות, שהם לצורך הנקבה. אבל צריך שתדע, כי הם בבחינתם תוך זעיר, קודם שינתנו בנוקבא. ולכן הם זכרים, כי אחר שינתנו בנוקבא, אז הם גבורות נקבות, נשים ולא אנשים, וכמבואר אצלינו באורך בפרשת בראשית, בפסוק והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו ותהר ותלד את קין:

This is why it is written in *parashat Bemidbar*: “Do not count them together with the Israelites.”⁹ They are the states of *gevurah* set aside for the female. Still, the Levites manifest these states of *gevurah* as they exist inside *Z’eir Anpin*, before they are given to *Nukva*. They themselves are therefore male. After these states of *gevurah* are given to *Nukva* they become female states of *gevurah*, i.e., women

9. Ibid. 1:49.

and not men.

As we said, the female receives her power from the inspiration she derives from the male. Thus, her states of *gevurah* are derived from the *gevurah* in the male.

והנה לכמה בחי' מתחלקות גבורות אלו ואלו, הם ב' בחינות, וכל אחת נחלקת לגי' בחי',

Now, these states of *gevurah* are divided into several categories. There are two general categories, each of which subdivides into three sub-categories.

<p>אמנם כבר ידעת כמה בחי' יש בהן כי יש בחינת הי"ג בשרשם שהוא בדעת של הנוקי גם יש בחינת התפשטות בה"ק גם הי"ג דמ"ע ביסוד הנוקבא,</p>	<p>הבחי' האי' יש בה גי' מציאות, האי' היא עיטרא דגבורה, הכוללת הי' גבורות, ועומדת בבחי' מוח הדעת שבנקבה. הבי' היא בחי' הי' גבורות, המתפשטות עוד בגוף שלה, מחסד שבה עד הוד שבה. הגי' בחי' כללות המתקבץ מהם, והם הנקראים חמש גבורות של מ"ן, אשר ביסוד שבה:</p>
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The first category has three sub-categories: (1) The crown of *gevurah*, which comprises the five states of *gevurah*, and is situated at the level of the brain of *da'at* of *Nukva*. This is the source of the five states of *gevurah* that will be described as the next sub-category. (2) The five states of *gevurah* as they spread further through her body, i.e., from her *chesed* to her *hod*. (3) The aggregate composed of the preceding states. These are called the five states of *gevurah* of "the feminine waters," in her *yesod*.

In this first category, then, we have the five states of *gevurah* at the levels of (1) *da'at*, (2) *chesed* to *hod*, and (3) *yesod*.

Just, as we said above, the main aspect of any world is its emotions (*midot*, *Z'eir Anpin*), so too, the main aspect of any *partzuf* is its *midot*. Here, then, the chief manifestation of the five states of *gevurah* is in the second sub-category, that is, the "body" of the *partzuf* of *Nukva*. The first sub-category is the intellectual origin of these states, while the third sub-category is their drive for expression.

Da'at is distinguished from *chochmah* and *binah* by its subjective character. Whereas the focus in *chochmah* and *binah* is on the idea *per se*—its force and power or development and ramifications—in *da'at* the idea is analyzed *vis-à-vis* its implications for the person. This is the origin within the intellect of emotional response. Since *chesed* and *gevurah* are the primary emotions, this means that there is a proto-*chesed* and a proto-*gevurah* within *da'at*.

Yesod, we said, is where all the previous emotions coalesce; it is therefore not an emotion of content but of drive. The five emotions of content are *chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*. Since these are five in number, there are in *da'at* five aspects or states of proto-*chesed* and five of proto-*gevurah*. The five states of *gevurah* within *da'at* act thus as a sort of *keter* to the subsequent, *bona fide* states, so they are collectively called the "crown of *gevurah*."

When the higher *sefirot* pour into *yesod*, their respective aspects of *gevurah* coalesce as well into an aggregate *gevurah*. This *gevurah* powers the "feminine waters" of *yesod*, which is a term for the power of the female *yesod* to arouse the male *yesod* and inspire him to couple with her. Thus, even though *yesod* is in essence oriented "down," i.e., toward the lower level, *malchut*, acting as the drive for expression which is the quintessence of the female, this aggregate *gevurah* in *yesod* is oriented upward, back toward *Z'eir Anpin*, to arouse it to re-charge, re-inspire, and re-inseminate its *Nukva* in order that she be able to continue her task of spreading Divinity in the world with the requisite

inspiration.

גם יש בחינות אחרות א' הוא בחינת הגבורות שניתנו לה בראשונה ביציאתה לצורך בנין גופא ועצמותה, גם יש לה ה"ג שנותנין לה בביאה ראשונה להעשות כלי וגם יש ה"ג שנותנין לה בכל ביאה וביאה הרי כי הגבורות נחלקו לג' בחינות שהם או ג"ר או בחי' ג"א או בחי' ג"ת כנ"ל.

והבחי' הב', יש בה ג' בחי' אחרות, האחת היא, בחי' ה' גבורות הניתנים לה בעת תיקון פרצופה ויצירתה, והם ניתנים בה לצורך בנין גופה ועצמותה ממש. הב', היא ה' גבורות הראשונות, הנתנות לה אחר שכבר נתקן גופה לגמרי, ואז נותנם ז"א ביסוד שבה, ע"י זווג שמזדווג בה בביאה ראשונה לעשותה כלי. הג', היא בחי' ה' גבורות חדשות, שנותנם ביסוד שבה, ע"י זווג שמזדווג בה אח"כ, בכל עת שמזדווג, נותן בה ה' גבורות חדשות, מהודשות בכל זווג וזווג, כמבואר אצלינו באורך בפרשת וירא, בדרוש יצחק וחבקוק ובנימין, וע"ש.

The second category has three sub-categories of its own: (1) The five states of *gevurah* given to her when her *partzuf* is first formed and completed. These are given to her for the construction of her body and skeleton. (2) Her first set of five states of *gevurah* given to her after her body has been completed. *Z'eir Anpin* transfers these states of *gevurah* to her via her *yesod* in their first sexual intercourse, which is what turns her into a vessel. (3) An additional, new set of five states of *gevurah* that he transfers to her via her *yesod* in their subsequent intercourse. Whenever they couple after the first time, he gives her a new set of five states of *gevurah*.

This second category of *gevurah*-states relates to the intrinsic construction of the *partzuf* itself and its insemination by *Z'eir Anpin*. The first category could be seen as being aspects of all three sub-categories of the second category. That is, when *Nukva* is first constructed, she is given *gevurah*-aspects in her *da'at*, her *midot*, and her *yesod*, and the same is true whenever she couples with *Z'eir Anpin*.

אמנם אלו הם ג' בני לוי שהם גרשון קהת ומררי ואיני יודע אם הם ג' בחינות הראשונים או האחרונים.

והנה ג' משפחות הלוי, שהם, גרשון, וקהת, ומררי, הם ג' בחי' הנו"ל, אבל איני זוכר, אם הם ג' בחי' שבבחי' הראשונה. או ג' בחי' שבבחי' הב'.

The three clans of the Levites—Gershon, Kehat, and Merari—manifest the three sub-categories, but I (Rabbi Chaim Vital) do not remember whether they manifest the sub-categories of the first category or the second.

אמנם נבאר עתה ענין בני גרשון

והנה גרשו"ן, בגימטריא קס"ת הסופר, והם בחי' ה' גבורות מנצפ"ך, העולים בגימטריא פ"ר. והנה הם אותיות כפולות, ולכן הם בגימטריא קס"ת, כמנין פ"ר פ"ר.

The numerical value of *Gershon* (559) is the same with the *kollel* as that of the word for "flask" (*keset*) in the phrase "the flask of the scribe."¹⁰ His clan manifests the five states of *gevurah* indicated by the five final letters: *mem*, *nun*, *tzadik*, *pei*, *chaf*, whose combined numerical value is 280. Since these letters have two forms, their numerical value may be doubled, giving 560, which again, is the numerical

10. Ezekiel 9:2-3, 11.

value of the word for “flask.”

A main manifestation of the five states of *gevurah* is the five organs of speech in the mouth: the throat, the palate, the teeth, the lips, and the tongue. These are seen as five “dams” that stop or give form to the amorphous breath rising from the lungs. Since they limit, restrain, form, and give definition to the breath, they are seen as five states or aspects of *gevurah*. In the alphabet, this phenomenon is reflected in the five letters that have final forms, i.e., special forms when these letters appear at the end of a word. They are thus, allegorically, like the flask that holds and contains the ink.

ונאמר כי הלא ההיג הם כפולות אמנם דע כי לפי שבני לוי הם בחינת גבורי כחות הנוקבא לכן לא תשא את ראשם בתוך בני ישראל רק הן לעצמן כי אלו הם לצורך הנוקבא. אמנם אלו הם בהיות עדיין אלו ההיג תוך הזי"א קודם שנתנו בנוקבא וכבר ידעת איך ההיג יורדים במרוצה ביסוד דנוקבא ומשם עולים למעלה ומאירים ממטה למעלה בכל פרצופי

והרי, כי גרשון הוא בחי אחת מהשלשה הנז"ל, והוא כולל ה' גבורות המתפשטות בגופא דנוקבא. ונודע, כי ה' גבורות יורדות במרוצה אל היסוד דנוקבא, ומשם חוזרים לעלות בסוד אור חוזר מלמטה למעלה, עד כתר שבה, בכל פרצוף שלה ע"ד החסדים היורדים ביסוד דז"א, וחוזרים לעלות בו בסוד אור חוזר.

The clan of Gershon is, as we said, one of the three sub-categories. It comprises the five states of *gevurah* that spread through the body of *Nukva*. As is known, these five states of *gevurah* descend rapidly to the *yesod* of *Nukva* and rebound upward from that level as reflected light. In this process, this light reaches her *keter*, thus spreading through her entire *partzuf*. This is similar to how the states of *chesed* descend into the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* and rebound upward as reflected light.

Although above Rabbi Chaim Vital said he was not sure if the three clans of Levites correspond to the sub-categories of the first or second category, here he seems to take it for granted that they correspond to those of the first category.

The reflected light here is the “feminine waters” described above. In the process of being reflected, the light that ricochets off *yesod* gains the power of *yesod*; together with the residual power of its own descent, this enables it to re-ascend to a point higher than its point of origin. Reaching *keter* means that the overall will of her entire being is overtaken and permeated with the will to be united with *Z'eir Anpin*.

וכבר ידעת איך הנוקבא בה יש גלוי רק בבי הגבורות התחתונים לבד שהם נ"ה ואלו הם העולות למעלה

גם נתבאר אצלינו, כי ג' גבורות הראשונות שבנוקבא, הם מכוסים, ובי גבורות תחתונים לבד דנו"ה שבה, הם המגולות, ואלו לבדם הם העולות למעלה להיותם מגולות:

As we have also explained, the first three states of *gevurah* of *Nukva* are hidden; only the latter two states—her *netzach* and *hod*—are revealed. These latter states are the only ones that ascend in this process and thus become revealed.

It will be recalled that the five states of *gevurah* correspond to and are manifest in the five *sefirot* from *chesed* to *hod*. The Arizal explains elsewhere¹¹ that when the five states of *gevurah* become manifest in these *sefirot* of *Nukva*, they do not do so in a uniform manner. Rather the first three (*chesed*, *gevurah*, and *tiferet*) remained clothed within a sheath, which derives from the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. Only the latter two, *netzach* and *hod*, enter *yesod* “exposed.”

11. *Mevo She'arim* 6:1:5 (132b).

Psychologically, we could say that this means that the light at the level of the first three states of *gevurah*, i.e., those of the three primary emotions, retain a certain measure of the consciousness of their source in *Z'eir Anpin*. This precludes them from truly becoming vested in the *yesod* of *Nukva*, since a primary emotion is too much matter of feeling to be diverted to the path leading toward practical action. Only *netzach* and *hod*, which are already much more action-oriented than the first three states, can be said to truly enter and be actively present within *yesod*. The other three are there, but they are cloaked by their memory of their origin.

Thus, only *netzach* and *hod* are touched directly by the identity and power of *yesod*, the drive for fulfillment, and thus experience the rebounding energy sending them back up to the *keter* of *Nukva*, as above.

לכן מניין בני גרשון בשם נשיאת הראש וז"ש נשא את ראש בני גרשון לכן היה הצווי שלא למנותן אלא מבין לי ולמעלה כי הגי גבורות העליונים המכוסין שהם סוד לי שנה בסוד כ"א כלול מי הם הצריכות הארה ולא בי התחתונים לכן היה המניין מבין לי שנה.

וז"ס נשא את ראש בני גרשון, ונזכר בחי מניינם בשם נשיאות ראש, להורות, ענין נשיאותם ועלייתם למעלה, כדי להאיר כנזכר. גם לטעם זה לא נמנו, אלא אותם שהם מבין שלשים שנה ומעלה, שהם אותם שהם מבחי שלשה גבורות העליונות המכוסים, וכל אחד כלולה מעשר, הם שלשים שנה, ואלו לבדם הם הצריכות הארה להאיר בהם, ולכן אל תמנה, אלא מבין שלשים שנה ומעלה.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: "Lift up the head of the sons of Gershon." Counting them is referred to as "lifting up their head," alluding to their ascent in order shine, as we have explained. It is for this reason as well that only those that had attained the age of thirty were counted, for only such individuals derive from the upper three, covered states of *gevurah*, each of which comprises ten sub-states, giving thirty aspects, or years. These are the only ones that need light shone upon them, therefore only those Levites thirty years old and older are counted.

G-d commanded Moses to count all the Levites between the ages of thirty and fifty (for the purpose of service in the Temple). The wording of the command in the Hebrew, however, is split into two clauses. The first ("from age thirty and higher") implies only that those who had attained at least thirty year were counted. The fact that only those over-thirty-year-olds who were under fifty were in fact counted is not made clear until the second clause ("until age fifty") is stated. Thus, the verse seems to imply that the main factor is being over thirty; being under fifty is only an afterthought.

By counting the thirty-year old Levites, we are forcing them to participate in this rebounding ascent, as well. In this way, the *gevurah*-states of *chesed-gevurah-tiferet* can also experience the illumination naturally experienced by the *netzach-hod* states.

ואמנם לפי שכללות הגבורות הם הי לכן מנה אותן עד תמנה ג"כ אותם שהם עד בחי חמשים שנה, כי הם מצטרפות יחד:

ואמנם לפי שכללות הגבורות, הם הי גבורות, ולכן תמנה ג"כ אותם שהם עד בחי חמשים שנה, כי הם מצטרפות יחד:

However, since there are in total five states of *gevurah*, the Levites are counted up to age fifty, for they all form one unit.

ואמנם ענין למשפחותם לבית אבותם הם נגד הבי נוקבי הם, שנבנות מהי גבורות, והם, לאה, ורחל, כנודע, כי כל בנין הנקבה, נעשה מן הגבורות

ואמרו למשפחותם לבית אבותם הוא, כי הנה בי נקבות הם, שנבנות מהי גבורות, והם, לאה, ורחל, כנודע, כי כל בנין הנקבה, נעשה מן הגבורות

The meaning of the phrase "according to their families and their fathers' houses"

is as follows: There are two female *partzufim* constructed out of the five states of *gevurah*, i.e., Leah and Rachel. As is known, the female *partzufim* are constructed wholly out of states of *gevurah*.

As we said above, the female is the essence of expression, and the two principal forms of expression are thought and speech, which respectively are the two female *partzufim* of Leah and Rachel, the two wives of Jacob, who personifies *Z'eir Anpin*.

והתחיל בלאה, הנקראת בית אבותם, כי אין בית אלא
אשה, והיא בית עליונה, לאה, שלוקחת ההארות כמנין
אבתם חסר ו',

The first to be built is Leah, who is called “their fathers’ house.” This is because our sages call woman the “home.” Leah is the higher of the two houses since she absorbs 443 lights, this number being the numerical value of the word for “their fathers” when written without the *vav*.

The word for “fathers” (*avot*) is generally written *alef-beit-vav-tav*, but it may be written without the *vav* as well, since the *vav* in this case plays the role of a vowel (the *cholam*) that can be also written as a diacritical mark, like the other vowels. This is, in fact, how the word is written throughout the portion of the Torah we are discussing.

Since “fathers” come conceptually before “families,” “their fathers’ house” is the higher of the two levels. The number 443 here will be contrasted with a smaller number, 370, associated with Rachel.

והם ענין די אלפיין של די אהייה, שהם בגימטריא
מדית, כמנין אבתים חסר ו' עייה,

These lights are the same as those of the four *alefs* in the four Divine Names *Ekyeh* (*alef-hei-yud-hei*), whose numerical value is 444, the same as that of the word for “their fathers” with the *kolel*.

When the letter *alef* is spelled out (*alef-pei-lamed*), its value becomes $(1 + 80 + 30 =) 111$. $4 \times 111 = 444$. The Divine Name *Ekyeh* (“I shall be”) is associated in Kabbalah with the *sefirot* of *keter* and *binah*. Specifically, the *netzach-hod-yesod* of *Ima* (the *partzuf* of *binah*) are expressed by four iterations of the Name *Ekyeh*. The intellect of *Nukva* is derived from the *alefs* of these four Names.¹²

כמו שהודעתך בפסוק הודיעני ה' קצי, שהיא רחל.
ומדת ימי מה היא, שהיא לאה, וכמו שהודעתך בבירור
קיש דשחרית דחול ועיש.

As I have explained elsewhere, this is alluded to in the verse: “Make known to me, O G-d, my end, and what is the measure of my days.”¹³ The word for “my end” refers to the *partzuf* of Rachel, while the word for “the measure of” (*midat: mem-dalet-tav*, whose numerical value is 444) refers to Leah.

12. *Sha'ar HaPesukim* to Psalms 39:5; *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Keriat Shema* 6.

13. Psalms 39:5.

והנה למשפחותם הם רחל | וכנגד רחל, אמר למשפחותם. והענין הוא, כי תחלק שם זה לשנים, ויהיה למי"ש פחותים, והם בחי רחל, המקבלת אורות עליונים. והענין הוא, כי רחל יש בה י"ס, ובכל ספירה שבה, יש בה הויה אחת דבין דההי"ן,

The word for the phrase “according to their families” (*le-mishpachotam*) refers to Rachel. The reason for this is as follows: We may divide this word in two, *lamed-mem-shin* and *pei-chet-vav-tav-mem*. The *partzuf* of Rachel comprises ten *sub-sefirot*, and each *sefirah* possesses one Divine Name *Havayah*, spelled out in such a way that its numerical value is 52.

When the Divine Name *Havayah* is spelled out *yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei*, its numerical value is 52. This is one of the four basic ways the Name *Havayah* may be spelled out, as we have explained previously. Each of these four spellings of the Name *Havayah* is associated with one of the four basic *sefirah*-groups (72 with *chochmah*, 63 with *binah*, 45 with the *midot*, and 52 with *malchut*).

בסוד הלא אנכי טוב לך מעשרה בנים כנזכר שם. |

This is alluded to in the verse: “I am not better to you than ten sons?”¹⁴

The numerical value of the word for “son” (*ben, beit-nun*) is 52. The ten sons in this verse allude to the ten spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* in the ten *sub-sefirot* of the *partzuf* Rachel.

והנה עשרה פעמים ב"ן, הם בגימטריא תקי"ך, ועם כללות העשרה הויו"ת, הרי תקי"ל, ואח"כ תכלול ההי, שהם ה' חסדים, עם ההי שהם גבורות, הרי תקל"ה. או אם תחבר תקי"ל הנזכר עם הנקבה עצמה, הנקרא ה' אחרונה של ההו"ה כנודע, יהיה תקל"ה,

The numerical value of all these Names together, $10 \times 52 = 520$. If we add the *kolel* of each of the ten Names *Havayah*, this gives an additional 10, giving us a total of 530. If we add to this the number 5, signifying the five states of *chesed* together with the five states of *gevurah*, this gives 535. Alternatively, we can add to 530 the female *partzuf*, represented by the final letter *hei* of the Name *Havayah* and whose numerical value is 5; this also gives us a total of 535.

כמנין פחותים ע"ה, והיא בחי רחל עצמה. |

This number is the numerical value of the second set of letters into which we divided the word for “according to their families,” *pei-chet-vav-tav-mem*, together with the *kolel*. Thus, this number represents the *partzuf* of Rachel.

אמנם מספר האורות שלוקחת, הם שי"ע נהורין, כמנין | והטעם כי הפנים העליונים הם סוד שי"ע נהורין למי"ש, וזהו למי"ש פחותים:

The number of lights that she absorbs is 370, which is the numerical value of the first set of letters into which we divided the word for “according to their families,” *lamed-mem-shin*.

14. 1 Samuel 1:8.

וענין ש"ע נהורין אלו הוא, כי נודע שבפנים עליונים
דז"א, יש בהן ש"ע נהורין, כמבואר בפרשת חיי שרה,
בפסוק ואלה ימי שני חיי אברהם וגו', ושם נתבאר
איך הם נמשכים דרך קו ישר למטה עד היסוד דז"א,
ואז נקרא שלום.

With regards to these 370 lights, it is known that there are 370 lights that shine from the upper face of *Z'eir Anpin*, as is explained elsewhere. It is explained there that they spread out in a straight, descending line until they reach the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*. This phenomenon is called "peace" (*shalom*).

The 370 lights originate in the *partzuf* of *Arich Anpin*.¹⁵ The number 370 is derived in various ways, the simplest being based on the general process of inter-inclusion of the *sefirot*. The three intellect-*sefirot* of *Arich Anpin* undergo a tenfold iteration twice, thus giving a total of one hundred for each *sefirah* and a total of 300 for the intellect as a whole. The seven emotion-*sefirot*, in contrast, undergo only one tenfold iteration; this gives 7×10 , or 70. The sum of the iteration of all ten *sefirot* is thus 370.

These 370 lights are said to shine out of the face of *Arich Anpin*, and in so doing manifest tremendous good will and mercy. Even in everyday parlance, when someone is in an especially happy mood we speak of his face "lighting up." *Arich Anpin* is the *partzuf* of the super-rational will, so when "light" or positive energy emanates from its "face," G-d's good will is manifest in creation.

When these 370 lights reach *Z'eir Anpin*, they shine in it as well, and thus the emotions are "lit up" by the will. As we have explained previously, *Z'eir Anpin* is the main *partzuf* of any particular world, which simply means that the measure of man is his emotions. This is why the emotions are called in Hebrew *midot* (literally, "measures"). Man's intellect is, of course, his distinguishing human factor, but abstract intellect that does not produce an emotional response is not worth much. Similarly, he may possess all kinds of good intentions and wills, but these become actualized only beginning with emotions (which in turn serve as the motivation for action).

The emotions (*chesed*, *gevurah*, *tiferet*, *netzach*, and *hod*) all coalesce in *yesod*, the *sefirah* of sexuality. Sexuality is the drive to connect with the world and affect it; to reproduce one's image and imprint on reality. The most profound and physical manifestation of this drive is, of course, the drive to have children and perpetuate oneself and his ideals for posterity. But in essence, any interaction between the person and the world outside him (including interactions with any other creature) are "sexual" in that in the interaction he seeks to leave his imprint on reality in some way.

If everything is working right, and the 370 lights of *Arich Anpin* are shining into *Z'eir Anpin*, and they affect all the emotions including *yesod*, it means that the person's sexuality is holy and in consonance with the positive energy and "good will" informing his whole being. This phenomenon is called "peace": the individual is not torn between what he knows his higher ideals should be and the negative egocentricity his unrectified sexuality pulls him toward, but his sexuality is a pure expression of the highest, positive, wholesome, creative energy possible.

וסודו, כי היסוד הוא ו' זעירא, וכשיורדין בו ש"ע
נהורין, נעשה שעי', כמנין שלו"ם, שלם ו'.

This is because the *sefirah* of *yesod* is represented by a small *vav* whose numerical value is 6, and when the 370 lights descend to it, they add up to 376, the numerical value of *shalom* (*shin-lamed-vav-mem*).

Yesod is represented by the *vav* since it is the final of the six emotions. Also, the straight-line form

15. *Eitz Chaim* 13:13-14; *Zohar* 1:4b.

of the *vav* evokes the image of the 370 lights shining in *Z'eir Anpin* descending along a straight path into *yesod*.

The concept of “peace” is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*—besides for the reasons cited above—because the word *shalom* is related to the word for “perfection” (*sheleimut*). A person whose sexuality is warped is considered “blemished,” while one whose sexuality it on track is considered complete. This idea is closely allied, obviously, with the relationship between *yesod* and “peace” mentioned previously.

| וכבר ידעת, שם כי כל בחי' נהורין הם חסדים, ולכן
הם יורדים ביסוד,

As you know, all these 370 lights are states of *chesed*, and that is why they descend to *yesod*.

In the process the 370 lights shining from the face of *Arich Anpin* into *Z'eir Anpin*, it is described that they shine from the two “cheeks” of the face, the shining skin where there is no beard-hair. One way the number 370 is derived is that the two beams of light from the cheeks are each a manifestation of the Divine Name *Kel* (*alef-lamed*), as this Name is “filled in”:

letter	filling	value
alef	alef	1
	lamed	30
	pei	80
lamed	lamed	30
	mem	40
	dalet	4
total		185

$185 \times 2 = 370$. The inner dimension of *chesed* is love, and the real manifestation of love, of course, is in the person’s sexuality, or *yesod*.

| ולכן ויהי יוסף יפה תואר ויפה מראה, מהארת ש"ע
נהורין אלו:

This is also why “Joseph was of beautiful form and beautiful appearance,”¹⁶ from the glow of these 370 lights.

Joseph personified the attribute and *sefirah* of *yesod*. He thus reflected the light that shines into this *sefirah* from the face of *Z'eir Anpin*.

| וז"ס מ"ש חז"ל, הדרת פנים זקן, כי מי שיש לו בחי'
יסוד הנקרא יוסף, יש לו זקן, ויש לו הדרת פנים
כנזכר, שהם ש"ע נהורין.

This is also the mystical reason why our sages say, “the glory of the face is the beard,”¹⁷ for someone who possesses the attribute of *yesod*, the attribute of Joseph, has a beard and the glory of the face, which is, as we said, these 370 lights.

16. Genesis 39:6.

17. *Shabbat* 152a.

On the verse, “And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him,”¹⁸ Rashi explains that this was because when they had seen each other last, the brothers already had beards, but Joseph had not grown his yet; but by this time he had grown his beard. Thus, the beard plays a key role in the drama surrounding Joseph.

אבל הסריס שחסר ממנו היסוד, אין לו הדרת פנים,
ואין לו זקן.

A eunuch, in contrast, who lacks the attribute of *yesod*, lacks the glory of the face, i.e., the beard.

The biological reason why a person without a procreative organ will be lacking a beard is, of course, because without sexual hormones his “secondary sexual characteristics” (e.g., a beard), will not appear. The mystical reason for this, however, is that without a vehicle for expressing his sexuality, which, as we said, is his drive to impress his unique expression of Divinity on creation, the person will lack the “glory of his face” – there will be no reason for the 370 lights to emanate from him.

ואמנם אחר שנמשכו ביוסף, שהוא היסוד, או עוברים
משם דרך אחוריו אל רחל אשר שם, ואז כתיב בה,
ורחל היתה יפת תואר ויפת מראה. משא”כ בלאה
העליונה, שלא נזכר בה יופי, ונקראת לבית אבותם,
וזו נקראת למשפחותם:

ואלו נמשכין אל נוקבא רחל בקו יושר וז”ש ורחל
היתה יפת תואר ויפת מראה משא”כ לאה ונמשך לה
זה היופי מהש”ע נהורין הנמשכין עד היסוד שהוא
יוסף הנקרא שלום שהוא ג”כ גימי ש”ע נהורין היורדין
אל היסוד הנקי וי הרי שע”ו גימי שלום לכן היה יוסף
יפה תואר ג”כ ותחילתן לוקחם יוסף ומהם הולכין אל
אחוריים שהוא רחל.

Once these 370 lights reach Joseph—i.e., *yesod* of *Z’eir Anpin*—they pass through his back to the *partzuf* Rachel, which is situated there. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “Rachel was of beautiful form and beautiful appearance,”¹⁹ i.e., she received the attributes of Joseph, whereas Leah, the higher *partzuf* is not referred to as being beautiful.

It is explained in *Chassidut* that Leah and Rachel signify the two principle vehicles of expression (i.e., of *malchut*): thought and speech, respectively. The difference between these is that thought is chiefly inwardly directed (i.e., it is a means of expressing one’s ideas to oneself) while speech is outwardly directed (one talks to others). This is the mystical reason why Jacob preferred Rachel to Leah: he sensed that she personified speech, which is a more effective way of making one’s imprint on reality than is thought, and therefore was driven to channel his sexual/creative energy specifically through her. This also why – despite the fact that thought (Leah) is a higher revelatory experience to the thinker than speech is to the speaker – only Rachel is described as being beautiful: the glow of beauty is the reflection of the glow of the 370 lights of good will, optimism, and purity, and these are fully manifest only when they flow into full expression.

ויתכן לדעתי כי ז”ס ואחר נגש יוסף ורחל וישתחו
(נ”ל כי וישתחו עם וי אותיות גימי ב”פ ש”ע) כי יוסף
הוא לפנים ורחל הוא באחוריים.

It appears to me that this is the mystical significance of the verse: “And then Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.”²⁰ Rachel was behind Joseph.

18. Genesis 42:8.

19. Ibid. 29:17.

20. Ibid. 33:7.

When Jacob introduced his family to his brother Esau, the Torah says that first the handmaids and their children approached Esau and bowed down to him, then Leah and her children, and finally Joseph and Rachel. Since in the case of the handmaids and Leah the mothers are mentioned first and then the children, this indicates that the mothers were in front of their children when they bowed down. In the case of Rachel and Joseph, however, Joseph moved in front of Rachel, in order to hide his mother's beauty from the wicked Esau.

Thus, we see that Rachel is positioned behind Joseph. This would explain why in this sense Rachel "receives" her beauty from Joseph, even though in the plain sense, obviously, the order was the other way around: Joseph inherited his beauty from his mother.

וז"ס הדרת פנים זקן שהא היסוד וסי' הוא מי שיש לו זקן שאינו סריס, והנה אלו ש"ע נהורין הוא סוד למ"ש מן למשפחותם נשארן אותן פחות"ם גימ' תקל"ה והם סוד י"ס המלכות שכ"א יש בה שם בין א' וז"ס הלא אנכי טו בלך מעשרה ב"נים, והנה י' בנים גימ' תק"ך ועם הכולל עשרה תק"ל וצריך לכולל ה' שהם סוד הגבורות (תוך החסדים) הרי תקל"ה: או אם נאמר כי המלכות נקרא ה' תתאה ועם תק"ל הרי תקל"ה נמצא כי תיבת למשפחותם פי' רחל הוא סוד תקל"ה שנמשכין אליה ש"ע נהורין, אך לאה נקראה לבית אבותם בית העליונה שיש בה אורות כמנין אבת"ם ע"ה שהם סוד ד' אלפין שלוקחת מדי' אה"י שהם גימ' מד"ת בסוד ומדת ימי מ"ה היא כמבואר,

אמנם בני מררי הם בסוד המ"ן שלה התחתונות לכן הם מר"י מקושי הדין והוא מררי ר"ל מרירות,

ובני מררי, גם הם בחי' ה' גבורות, אבל הם בחינות ה' גבורות דמ"ן שיש ביסוד הנקבה. ולכן נקראים מררי, לשון מרירות הדין שיש בהם, להיותם גבורות היותר תחתונות שבה.

The sons of Merari also manifest the five states of *gevurah*, but they manifest the five states of *gevurah* of the "feminine waters" that exist in the *yesod* of *Nukva*. This is why they are called *Merari*, meaning "bitter," referring to the states of severe judgement they comprise. For they are the lowest states of *gevurah* in *Nukva*.

אמנם הם סוד ה"פ מים גי' מררי" שהם הה"ג שכ"א נקרא מ"ן כנודע

ולכן מררי בגימטריא ת"ן, כמנין ה' פעמים מ"ם, שהם ה"ה גבורות, שכל אחת נקראת מים נקבות.

Thus, the numerical value of *Merari* (*mem-reish-reish-yud*) is 450, which is 5 x 90, the numerical value of the word for "water" (*mayim*, *mem-yud-mem*), referring to the five states of *gevurah*, each one of which is a type of "feminine water."

ולכן באלו אין יכולת לישא את ראשם למעלה כי אם יעלו שם יזיקו וימררו גם את שלמעלה לכן לא נזכר נשיאות ראש בבני מררי רק תפקוד אותם.

גם לטעם זה לא נאמר בהם לשון נשיאות ראש, אלא בני מררי תפקוד אותם, לפי שאלו הגבורות הקשים והמרים שהם ביסוד שלה, אינם עולות ממטה למעלה, כי ימררו לאותם שלמעלה.

It is for this reason that when G-d commands Moses to count them, He does not use the idiom "lifting up their head," but simply says: "The sons of Merari, number them...." They manifest the hardest and most bitter states of *gevurah* in the *yesod* of *Nukva* that do not ascend. For were they to ascend, they would make

the higher states of *gevurah* bitter.

As we said above, only the descending states of *gevurah* (corresponding to the clan of Gershon) rebound when they hit *yesod* of *Nukva*. The third, lowest set of states of *gevurah* do not rebound.

אבל בני גרשום, שהם התפשטות גופא, נזכר בהם
נשיאות ראש:

In reference to the sons of Gershon, however, who manifest the states of *gevurah*, which spread throughout her body, the idiom “lifting up their head” is used.

ובני קהת, שכחתי עניינם ואפשר שהם ה' גבורות
שבדעת הנקבה, ולכן קהת קודם במעלה לגרשון,
כנלע"ד חיים.

I do not recall the mystical significance of the sons of Kehat, but it seems to me, Chaim Vital, that they manifest the five states of *gevurah* in the *da'at* of *Nukva*. This would explain why the sons of Kehat are on a higher level than the sons of Gershon.

This is a logical assumption, for of the three sub-categories of the first category mentioned at the beginning of this passage, two have already been assigned, and only the highest sub-category remains for the clan of Kehat.

The job of the Kehat clan is explained first (at the end of *parashat Bemidbar*), before those of the clans of Gershon and Merari (at the beginning of *parashat Naso*). Furthermore, the Kehat clan's job is to pack and unpack the actual vessels of the Tabernacle (the ark, the menorah, the two altars, and the table), referred to as “the holiest of holy,” while the other clans are to pack and unpack the boards and curtains that comprise the Tabernacle structure and the curtains surrounding the Tabernacle compound.

אמנם אלו בני גרשון שהם הגבורות העולות עד
למעלה כנ"ל ונמצא כי הארה היוצאת מהן הוא אחר
שעלו, ונמצא כי תחלה יורד האור אל לאה העליונה
ואח"כ לרחל לכן בבני גרשון כתיב לבית אבותם
תחלה אך בקהת ומררי להיפך כתיב למשפחותם ואח"כ
לבית אבותם:

והנה שינוי שיש בגרשון לקהת ומררי, כי בו נאמר
לבית אבותם, ואח"כ למשפחותם. ובהם, נאמר להפך.
הטעם הוא, לפי שבני גרשון, הם הגבורות שיורדות
וחוזרות לעלות ממטה למעלה כנזכר, ואין הארתם
ניכרת, עד אחר שעלו למעלה, וההארה היוצאת מהם,
הוא אחר שעלו. וא"כ נמצא, כי תחלה ניתן האור
ללאה הנקראת בית אבותם, ואח"כ לרחל הנקראת
למשפחותם. משא"כ בקהת ומררי:

Now, in the directive to count the sons of Gershon, the expression “according to their fathers’ houses and their families” is used, while in the directive to count the sons of Kehat and Merari, this expression is reversed. This is because the sons of Gershon manifest the states of *gevurah* that descend and re-ascend, as we have explained. Their light is not noticeable until they have ascended; their light thus may be considered to shine only after they have ascended. Therefore, their light reaches first the *partzuf* Leah, who is called “their fathers’ house,” and only afterwards reaches the *partzuf* Rachel, who is called “their families.” This is not the case with the sons of Kehat and Merari, and therefore the order for them is reversed.

sons of Kehat	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> in <i>da'at</i> of <i>Nukva</i>	"according to their families and their fathers' houses"
sons of Gershon	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> that spread through the body of <i>Nukva</i>	"according to their fathers' houses and their families"
sons of Merari	the five states of <i>gevurah</i> in <i>yesod</i> of <i>Nukva</i> , the "feminine waters"	"according to their families and their fathers' houses"