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INTRODUCTION TO JACOB BEN ASHER'S COMMENTARY ON THE TORAH

Jeffrey Ralph Portman

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

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Referee, Prof. Samuel Greengus

To my parents and grandparents

## Digest

Jacob ben Asher's commentary to the Torah originally consisted of two parts. The first part, which apparently appeared at the beginning of each section, is a non-literal type of exegesis consisting of Masoretic notation, gematria, notarikon and other related types of exegetical methods. This first part was meant to be an introduction to "gladden the heart" and prepare the reader for his second more sober literal exegetical commentary. These two parts became separated in the course of time; the former non-literal section is very popular and was eventually included in the Mikraot Gedolot. Asher's non-literal commentary is the subject of this thesis.

The thesis begins with an introduction, giving a brief history of Jacob ben Asher showing the influences upon him of the Hasidei Askenaz. "The Devout of Germany," Nachmanides, and Meir of Rottenberg and noting that this period, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was one in which the mystical, non-literal interpretation of Bible became the prevalent type of exegesis.

The main body of this thesis is a detailed analysis of Asher's non-literal exegetical methods using the 1752 Furth edition with the super-commentary of Itur Bikurim (Baruch ben Elkanah). One hundred different methods have been identified and subsequently arranged in order following ascending exegetical units. Methods 1 to 56 use the letter as the basis for exegesis; methods 57 to 100 use the word as



the basis for exegesis..

In the following section called "Concluding Comments of Asher's Exegetical Methods" the methods are analyzed briefly; e.g. why some methods are are numerous than others, gematria as the textual link of certain midrashim, and other topics for further study suggested by this paper.

An index to additional passages in Asher's commentary illustrating the exegetical methods is found at the end of the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this thesis is to present a full analysis of Asher's manifold exegetical methods. His commentary has long been noted for the ingenious and intricate techniques he employs.

My interest in Asher's commentary was first stimulated by Dr. Samuel Greengus. In a class of his, portions of Asher's commentary were read and discussed. Dr. Greengus commented that a study of Asher's commentary would make a fine thesis, and since I am interested in biblical exegesis, I decided to do just such a study. I might add that Dr. Greengus's constant encouragement and support were of great help.

This study of the exegetical methods of Jacob ben Asher has spanned several years involving the reading, translating, and analysis of his entire commentary to the Torah. The main text used was the 1752 Fürth edition of Asher's Perush al ha-Torah published along with the supercommentary, Itur Bikurim (Baruch ben Elkana). It was only after I completed the translation that I discovered Jacob Reinetz's edition, Perush Baal ha-Turim al ha-Torah (Tel Aviv, 1971). This edition includes a collection of other manuscripts. Reinetz's discussion is in many respects superior to that of the standard Itur Bikurim super-commentary. I regret that the

pressures of time prohibited my making a complete study of Reineitz's own super-commentary as well as all of his textual variants.

Jacob ben Asher, the third son of the Talmudist, Asher ben Yehiel (the Rosh), was born in Germany about the year 1270. In 1303 the family emigrated to Toledo, Spain in the wake of a civil strife in Germany between Adolph of Nassau and Albrecht of Austria. Asher ben Yehiel's fame preceded him. The pulpit of Toledo was at that time vacant and he was installed as rabbi.

The first we hear of Jacob ben Asher is in 1317, when Jacob and his brother Judah were appointed treasurers of Tsedakah money by their father. It was their job to distribute the money as alms. Upon their father's death in 1327 Judah took his father's post as rabbi of Toledo, subsequently becoming the chief rabbi of all of Castile.

It seems that most of Jacob ben Asher's life was spent in poverty. For the most part he earned a precarious livelihood lending money; he wandered in many countries noting the varying religious customs, which he describes in his magnum opus the Arbah Turim. He died and was buried in Toledo, Spain the twelfth of Tammuz in 1340.

Jacob ben Asher's first halachic work was Sefer ha-Remazim. This is a summary of the halachic decisions found in his father's earlier work Ha-Asheri (Kitsur Piske ha-Rosh, Constantinople, 1575.) His own fame, however, rests on his mammoth code the Arbah Turim,

"The Four Rows" from which he became known as the Baal ha-Turim, "Master of the Rows." Before he wrote this code he wrote a commentary to the Torah. This commentary discusses some of the peshat or "literal meaning" interpretations of earlier commentators such as Rashi, Saadia Gaon, and Ibn Ezra. He particularly favors and frequently quotes from Nachmanides, disregarding, however, the latter's kabbalistic commentary. As an embellishment to this commentary he added non-literal sections before each of the literal interpretation sections, or as Asher terms them "delicacies to gladden the heart." According to tradition these non-literal sections were written in a single night.<sup>1</sup> It is this non-literal interpretation which is the subject of this thesis.

These two commentary sections were separated in the course of time and came to be published separately as two commentaries. The earliest known printed edition of the first one, i.e. the literal-interpretation section, appeared in Zolkiew in 1806 and in subsequent editions. The second, the non-literal commentary, was apparently more popular; it was first printed under the title of Perush ha-Torah le-Rav Yaakov Baal ha-Turim in Constantinople in 1500 and 1514 and in many subsequent editions. It is this second commentary that is also

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<sup>1</sup>Jacob K. Reinetz, Perush Baal ha-Turim al ha-Torah, Tel Aviv, Phillip Feldheim, Inc., 1971, p.10.



found in the Mikraot Gedolot of Bomberg (1546-48) and subsequent editions.

Reinetz studied some twenty manuscripts of Asher's second commentary and notes that only one of them, found in Manitoba,<sup>1</sup> also contains the first commentary. This manuscript is the oldest and was first written some 50 years after Asher's death.<sup>2</sup>

As further proof that the two commentaries were written as one, we note that the introductions to both commentaries are identical.<sup>3</sup> The one difference is a note at the end of the non-literal commentary that the terms עובדי עבודה זרה "idol worshippers" do not refer to the people among whom he lives. This could have been an addition by the publisher if it is not by Asher himself. Even in this introduction Asher states that "I have intended to write at the beginning of each section a list of embellishments, gematria and Masoretic notations to gladden the heart." In one instance in the two editions<sup>4</sup> the same comment is duplicated in both commentaries. This section is almost identical word for word; because of its literal style it properly belongs to the literal commentary.

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<sup>1</sup>Number 32.

<sup>2</sup>Reinetz, p.10.

<sup>3</sup>Comparing the non-literal Furth 1752 edition to the literal Hanover 1838 edition.

<sup>4</sup>ibid.

Since this thesis deals with the non-literal commentary, I quote from this section below so that the reader may have some idea of the nature of this other commentary:

And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying: 'Tamar, thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot; and moreover, behold she is with child by harlotry.' And Judah said: 'Bring her forth and let her be burned.' (Gen. 38:24)

Rashi's explanation is that she must be burned because she is the daughter of Shem.<sup>1</sup> And the daughter of a priest who has played the harlot must be burned. The commentary of Ramban states that the law "and the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot...she shall be burned with fire," (Lev. 21:9) is only applicable if she is engaged or married. It does not apply to a woman who is waiting to be married by her brother-in-law. Whether she is an Israelite's daughter or a priest's daughter, her punishment is only that of having violated a simple negative precept.<sup>2</sup> And if you say that marrying a childless brother's wife was customary among the Sons of Noah and their prohibitions were punished by death, one can show in Sanhedrin (51a) that it is made clear that a woman waiting to be married by her brother-in-law is not like the Sons of Noah at all.

And there is another difficulty in that punishment by death for the Sons of Noah is only by the sword (and not by fire).<sup>3</sup> Also Judah says "she is more righteous than I" (Gen. 38:26) all the more so she should be found guilty. Ramban explained the reason (for death by fire) by saying that since he (Judah) was the leader and governor of the land his daughter-in-law who played the harlot was not judged by the same law as other women who played the harlot. Rather she is judged as one who made spite of the kingdom. Therefore he said "bring her forth and let her be burned." The people came before him to do his bidding for he declared her guilty of a capital crime because of the superior rank of royalty.

According to the literal interpretation of the text, a married woman who plays the harlot is turned over to her husband who decrees life or death for her as he wishes. She (Tamar) was designated for Shelah his (Judah's) son, and she was therefore considered a married woman according to their laws.

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<sup>1</sup>Melchizekek (Gen. 14:18) is said to be Shem. (Nedarim 32b).

<sup>2</sup>Sripes, but not death.

<sup>3</sup>Sanhedrin 56a.



But our Rabbi, Judah ha-Hasid<sup>1</sup>, says that Judah did not decree that she be burned but rather they were to burn an impression between her eyes as a sign that she played the harlot. But because Judah knew that her action was because of him and that she was not really a harlot, nothing was done to her.

There are yet more difficulties about what Judah said: "Bring her forth and let her be burned". Was not Judah a king and a king does not judge nor do they judge him.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in cases having to do with life, they begin their investigation indirectly. And moreover how could he judge his own daughter-in-law? The explanation is that Isaac, Jacob, and Judah judged her and they began indirectly with Judah. In the Midrash<sup>3</sup> it says that Shem himself judged her. But this is impossible. For if you calculate the number of years from generation to generation you will find that he was already dead. Concerning what is said in Avodah Zarah (36b): "If an unmarried man had sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman the verdict is delivered by the court of Shem because of the incident of Tamar," it is not that Shem was still living but all the courts of law were called after his name.

The literal interpretation of the Bible reached its peak in the twelfth century with the commentaries of Rashi, Samuel ben Meir, Ibn Ezra and others. At the beginning of the thirteenth century there was a change. The Bible was read for its hidden meanings; each consonant, vowel, dot, space, or Massoretic note was interpreted. The early mystics by the end of the twelfth century began to expound on the Bible in this way. With the development of Kabbalah in Spain and other countries this non-literal method of interpretation became dominant. Asher, having a thorough training in rabbinics, was

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<sup>1</sup>Judah ben Isaac, 1166-1224.

<sup>2</sup>Sanhedrin 15a.

<sup>3</sup>Genesis Rabbah 85:13.

attracted to the Kabbalah but yet retained an appreciation for the literal meaning of the text.

Jacob ben Asher was especially influenced by Nachmanides and the views of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, the "Devout of Germany." The Hasidei Ashkenaz was a religious group who had common social and ideological backgrounds. Their first centers were in Regensburg in Southern Germany, and in the communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz on the Rhine. From these centers their influence spread over most of Germany and even to some extent to France. Most of their literature was written in the first half of the thirteenth century; ethical wills and a large corpus of esoteric works, some of which are mystical treatises. According to their own tradition their philosophy reached them through a long oral chain which had its beginnings in Italy in the eighth century, carried mainly by the Kalonymus family. Some of the more prominent members of this group included Samuel ben Kalonymus he-Hasid (the Pious) who lived in the second half of the twelfth century, his son Judah ben Samuel he-Hasid (d. 1217) and his pupil Elizer ben. Judah b. Kalonymus of Worms (d. 1230).

Jacob ben Asher is a product of this movement. His father, Asher ben Yehiel, a learned scholar, must have been aware of this movement. The type of exegesis which Jacob ben Asher's commentary presents is in keeping with the mystical tendencies of this movement. In many places in his code, especially in Orah Hayim he even quotes from the writings of the Hasidei Ashkenaz.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See for instance Orah Hayim Section 113.

Another strong, yet indirect influence upon Jacob ben Asher was Meir of Rottenberg. Asher ben Yehiel, Jacob's father, was the prize pupil of Rabbi Meir.<sup>1</sup> Meir's influence is especially evident in the Masoretic notations. Rabbi Meir might have even been the originator of this exegetical method; in any case some of Asher's own Masoretic notations are identical or similar to those of Meir of Rottenberg.<sup>2</sup>

Jacob ben Asher was not above inserting non-literal exegesis in his more sober law code the Arba Truim. Although I have not made a thorough study of his codes, I have found some instances of gematria. For example, in Orah Hayim, section 6, Asher says that one should say in the morning the benediction "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who hast formed man in wisdom and created in him many orifices and many cavities (חלולים, חלולים). Do not read, says Asher, חללים, חללים for the numerical equivalent of חלולים, חלולים is 248 ( $8+30+6+30+10+40=124 \times 2=248$ ). This is equal to the number of limbs a man has.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Isaac Zaav Kahana, Teshuvot Foskim Uminhagim, Jerusalem, Mtsad Ravkook, 1957, Vol.1, p.9.

<sup>2</sup>Rabbi Meir's Masoretic notations are reprinted in Kahana, op. cit. Cf., for example, Gen. 1:1 and 1:2; Kahana's notes are useful in comparing Asher and R. Meir. R. Meir also used gematria to derive Halachic decisions. See, for example, his Sefer Tashbats (edited by R. Shmshon ben R. Zadok, New York, 1970) numbers 122, 135, 156, and 251. Reinetz, op. cit., also shows parallels between Asher and Meir of Rottenberg in his discussion.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Berachot 60b and Asher ben Yehiel's comment.

While Asher's non-literal commentary was apparently very popular and widely appreciated as evidenced by its incorporation into the Mikraot Gedolot, this commentary must have presented its readers with some difficulties. The foremost aid to understanding this commentary was provided by Baruch ben Elkana, the author of a super-commentary to Jacob ben Asher's Perush al ha-Torah. Elkana's super-commentary must have been widely appreciated because it accompanied Asher's commentary in many subsequent printed editions. In some instances Elkana's comments are at times indistinguishable from Asher's text.<sup>1</sup>

Elkana, who was a cantor in the village of Wittelshofen, a village by Ansbach, chose the name Itur Bikurim for his super-commentary for the following reasons: 1) Anyone who brings gifts to a scholar is as if he were bringing first fruits (בְּכֻרִים),<sup>2</sup> 2) The term בְּכֻרִים "first fruits" is a term of importance as in Hosea 9:10: "I saw your fathers as the first-ripe (כְּבִכּוּרָה) in the fig-tree at her first season," or as in Ps. 89:28: "I will also appoint him first born" (בְּכוֹר). Also the super-commentary is a crown (עֵיסוֹר) to the Baal ha-Turim, 3) עֵיסוֹר "crown or row" can also mean "to remove." Nedarim 37b states that the stylistic embellishments (עֵיסוֹר סוּפֵרִים)... are halacha from Sinai. The Rosh, Jacob ben Asher's father, says that

<sup>1</sup> See for example Asher's comment to Gen. 27:28 in the Mikraot Gedolot.

<sup>2</sup> Ketuvot 105b.

as such they are not to be removed (עטר) from the text. Elkana wants to remove the mistakes from the first fruits, ie. Asher's commentary. 4) The numerical equivalent of עֵשֶׂר is 295 ( $70+10+9+6+200$ ) and is equal to his own Hebrew name בְּרוּךְ הוּא ( $2+200+6+20$ ) ( $8+7+50$ )=293 adding 2 for the 2 words  $293+2$  or 295.<sup>1</sup> Similarly בְּכוֹרִים "first fruits" is an anagram for מִי בְרוּךְ "Who is Baruch" which Elkana adds: that he should write such a super-commentary.<sup>2</sup> 5) Itur Bikurim as explained in Mishnah Beharot 3:10 are those fruits which surround the basket of first fruits which add to the mitzvah. Itur Bikurim's super-commentary is an addition to the commentary of Baal ha-turim.

Elkana records that he had before him a Mikraot Gedolot published in Basel (1618-1619) and a Venice 1544 edition of Asher's commentary. At times in his commentary he notes a textual variation in an unspecified Constantinople edition.

Additional super-commentaries on Asher's commentary are found in the writings of R. Yosef bar Issachar in his book Yosef Daat. (Prague, 1608) This book is actually a commentary on Rashi giving textual variants and comments. In a few places he attempts to correct the gematria of Asher. Itur Bikurim in his introduction states that after he completed his own work he was told of this book and was first

<sup>1</sup>For examples of gematria in Asher's commentary see methods 2,2, 21,22, and 23.

<sup>2</sup>This is probably an allusion to Jeremiah's scribe whose name is also Baruch. (See Jeremiah 36). See method 20 in Asher's commentary for additional examples of anagrams.



under the impression that Yosef Daat was a book on Asher's commentary and his own efforts were thus useless. He was much relieved to discover that the emphasis of Yosef Daat is on Rashi. Yosef Daat is quoted in Itur Bikurim's own super-commentary.

A later super-commentary Yad Aharon, a book written by Meir Stashavski (Peterkov, 1909) gives sources and parallels, and attempts to correct a few of the gematrias of Asher. He does not comment on every verse. His discussion has been very helpful in my attempt to find parallels and the meaning of some of Asher's comments.<sup>1</sup>

The latest super-commentary is Jacob Reinetz's Perush Baal ha-Turim al ha-Torah (Tel Aviv, 1971). Since my discovery of this book, after my translation was completed, it has been a constant companion. Reinetz has not only studied the variant manuscripts, as mentioned above, but also has been of great help in locating parallels. He has an appendix providing short essays on individual interpretations of some of Asher's interpretations.

One super-commentary Mitsaref Lakesef by Naftali Hertz (Frankfort, 1814) was not available to me. According to Reinetz, this commentary consists of attempts to correct the gematria of Asher where it apparently does not tally. Reinetz, however, does not quote from this work in his own treatment.

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<sup>1</sup>I am especially indebted to Yad Aharon in explicating the examples in methods 26 and 27.

### The Exegetical Methods

In the following enumeration of exegetical methods, I have tried to order the methods in the most simple way. The way I have found best is to arrange them by "textual units". That is, the methods are arranged in ascending order of exegetical units. Methods 1 to 56 deal with the letter(s) of a word(s). The methods begin with the first letter of the first word of the first verse of the first book of the Bible, to several letters in a word, letters in adjacent words, letters in a verse, and so on. From method 57 to 100, the textual unit is the word level, i.e. word in a verse, word in a words in a verse, words in a section, words in the Torah and so on.

This is probably not the way Asher himself would have analyzed his style but this arrangement has been very useful for our efforts in classification.

1

1# The first letter of a word is singled out for attention.

Our only example is from Gen. 1:1 where the bet, the first letter in the first word in the first verse of the first book of the Bible, is explained as standing for ברכה "blessing." Asher notes that bet occurs in first position rather than alef which stands for ארירה "curse."<sup>1a</sup>

1.1# The first letter's numerical equivalent is the basis for exegesis. In בראשית, the bet has the numerical equivalent of 2, meaning 2 worlds were created: this one and the world to come;<sup>2</sup> or, in another interpretation, this word was created for the sake of the 2 Torahs: the written and oral laws.<sup>3</sup>

A letter of a word is singled out for attention because its shape is a deviation from its normal appearance.

2# The letter is crooked ( עקומה ), and the crookedness is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Num. 24:6, Balaam describes Israel "As valleys stretched out, as gardens by the river-side, as aloes planted of the Lord..." The ayin of נטע "planted" is crooked suggesting that Israel is not firmly planted in this world but will be in the world to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Those methods marked with an asterisk exhaust all examples.  
<sup>1a</sup> Cf. Genesis Rabbah 1:14. For additional examples in which a letter stands for a word see method 4.

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid. 1:6, and Paaneah Razah. 76.



2.1# The letter is crooked, but the name of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Lev. 26:1: "You shall make no idols, neither shall ye rear up a graven image....," the pe of פסל "graven image" is crooked. This suggests that one who engages in idol worship denies the whole Torah which was given by the kiss of the mouth (פה=פ') of God.<sup>1</sup>

2.2# The numerical equivalent of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Ex. 1:9: "And he said unto his people: 'Behold the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us....,'" the ayin of עמו "his people" is crooked. This suggests that the children of Israel who came to Egypt with 70 (ayin=70) have now become more than the population of the Egyptians.

Additional examples:

- ואני ידעתי (שמות ג: יט) - נ' עקומה. רמז לחמישים מכוח.
- ואתכם אורה (ויק' כו: לג) - ז' עקומה. לומר לך שנתתי לכם ז' עממין. ולקיים התורה: חצבה עמודיה זבעה (משלי ט: א) ואחם שבעה חועבת בלבכם. (שם כו: כה)
- והארץ תעזב מהם (ויק' כו: מג) - ז' עקומה. שז' שנים נחקיים בארץ ישראל גפריה ומלח.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Song of Songs Rabbah 1:12 For other examples in which the name of a letter is the basis for exegesis see methods 7.4, 7.6, 10.1, 37, 40 and 51.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Yoma 54a.

2.3# The letter is crooked, and its general graphic character is the basis for exegesis. For example, in Num. 1:22: "Of the children of Simeon...according to the number of names by their polls...", the first lamed of לולגלחם "by their polls" is crooked at the bottom. The lamed, since it is the tallest of letters, symbolizes leadership. The leader of the tribe of Simeon sinned and thus was no longer part of the tribe.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the tribe name שמעון "Simeon" has no lamed.<sup>2</sup>

3# The letter is cut off (קטיעה), and its defect is the basis for the exegesis. In Num. 1:16: "These are the elect of the congregation...", the vav of קריאי "elect" is cut off, and now looks like a yod.<sup>3</sup> Asher explains this defect by noting that the elect of Simeon is Shelumiel whom he identifies with Zimri who was slain.<sup>4</sup>

In another example, Num. 25:12, we find a variety of methods developing from a single cut off letter. Concerning Phinehas God says to Moses: "Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace." The vav of שלום "peace" is "cut off" and resembles a yod.<sup>5</sup> Asher says we can

<sup>1</sup>CF. Num. 25:14.

<sup>2</sup>For another example in which the absence of letter(s) in a name(s) is used in the exegesis see method 50.

<sup>3</sup>Ktiv קריאי, kri קרנאי. For additional examples in which ktiv/kri is employed in the exegesis see methods 22.4, 84, and 86.

<sup>4</sup>CF. Num. 1:6 and 25:14ff.

<sup>5</sup>ktiv שלום, kri שלום.

as readily read שלים "complete" and thus Phinehas did not have a blemish. Furthermore, God gave Phinehas 10 (yod=10) gifts in the sanctuary and 10 in Israel. On these exegeses Asher reads the cut off letter as written.

Asher notes that אליה "Elijah" is soetimes written with a vav although always with a yod<sup>1</sup>, and therefore identifies Phinehas with Elijah.<sup>2</sup> Jacob is written with an extra vav<sup>3</sup> which the Patriarch will hold on to until Elijah comes with the Messiah. At that time Jacob will return the vav to Elijah's name. Here Asher uses a kind of analogy of שלים/שלום with אליהו/אליה. Capping this Messianic exegesis, Asher quotes Ps.14:7: "Let Jacob rejoice; let Israel be glad." The letters of ישמח "glad" can be rearranged to form the word משיח "Messiah".<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the numerical equivalent of שלום "peace" ( $300+30+6+40=376$ ) is equal to the numerical equivalent of זהו משיח "this is the Messiah."

$$(7+5+6) (40+300+10+8) = 376$$

<sup>1</sup>In 5 verses Elijah is written אליה and not אליהו :  
2k 1:3, 4, 8, 12; Malachi 3:23.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ralbag on 1k 17:1ff.

<sup>3</sup>Lev. 26:42; Jer. 30:8; 33:26, 49,27; 51:19

<sup>4</sup>For other examples of anagrams see methods 11.2, 20-20.6, 24.1, 45, 68.1, 84.1, and 85 (f).

4<sup>1</sup> A letter has a double form ( כפולה ), and the doubling is the basis for the exegesis. All the examples of this method involve the letter pe, which can be written פ or ף. Asher explains the double form as meaning 2 words each with a pe. For example, in Dt. 15:8: "But thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him," the pe of פתח "open" is a double letter suggesting that one should open the hand and the mouth ( פה ) in assisting the poor.

Additional examples:

וינפש (שמות לא:יז) - שתיים נפשות יש לאדם בשבת<sup>1</sup>

פנו (דבר' א:ז) - יש לכם לפנות מכל המעשים  
רעים. אי נמי בכל מקום שאתם  
פונים העננים עמהם.<sup>2</sup>

מפניך (דבר' ז:כ) - לומר לך מפניך ומפני שלוחך.

5# A letter is bent ( כפופה ), and its numerical equivalent is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Gen. 32:11: "I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown Thy servant....," the yod of קטנתי "I am small" is bent. This suggests that Jacob said to God: "Even though I have been blessed with 10 blessings<sup>3</sup> (yod=10) I am afraid for perhaps I have committed some offense."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Betsah 16a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sifre.

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 27:27-29.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Mehilta.

5.1# The letter is bent, and its numerical equivalent is the basis for the exegesis along with the shape of the letter suggested by it being bent. For example, in Gen. 37:1: "And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings in the land of Canaan," the yod of מְגוּרָיו "sojournings" is bent and looks like a kaf. Jacob said: "Even though my brother merited much honor for the honor he gave my parents<sup>1</sup>, and even though I have been blessed with 10 (yod=10) blessings I am still obligated to send 10 items to my brother<sup>2</sup> (kaf=20). I will go and prostrate ( כָּפוּת = כָּפוּ ) myself and honor my father in Hebron.

In another example, Dt. 5:28: But as for thee, stand thou here by me...., the yod of עִמָּדִי "by me" is bent and looks like a kaf. Asher interprets this as meaning God said to Moses "Stand bent in ( כָּפוּת ) in fear." And in another interpretation, God tells Moses, "Because of you I descended the 10 levels<sup>3</sup> to give you the Ten Commandments."

6# The letter is smaller than its normal size, and the size of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Gen. 23:2 Sarah died and Abraham "went to weep for her," the kaf of וּלְבַכְתָּה "to weep" is small as Abraham wept only a little, for Sarah was old.

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<sup>1</sup>Genesis 27. Genesis Rabbah 82:15.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 32:15-16.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Avot d'Rabbi Natan, par.34, Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer, par.14, and Genesis Rabbah 19:13.

6.1# The letter is small, and the numerical equivalent of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, Rebekah says to Isaac in Gen. 27:46: "I am weary of my life....," the qof of יָצָא "I am weary" is small for Rebekah knew that the Temple whose height was 100 cubits (qof=100) would be destroyed.<sup>1</sup> Asher contrasts this to Ps. 84:4: "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house and the swallow a nest for herself." The qof of קו "nest" is big, for David wanted a palace whose height would be 100 cubits and not be destroyed.

In another example, Dt. 32:18: "Of the Rock that begot thee thou wast unmindful, and didst forget God that bore thee." the yod of נָשִׁי "wast unmindful" is small for God gave man 10 (yod=10) characteristics<sup>2</sup> and tested him with 10 trials. Therefore in Num. 14:17: "And now I pray thee, Let the power of the Lord be great....," the yod of יָגִדְלִי "be great" is large because Abraham was tested with 10 trials.<sup>3</sup>

7# The letter is large, and the numerical equivalent of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Dt. 6:4: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד "Hear O Israel the Lord is God the Lord is One," the dalet of אֶחָד "one" is large, for the one God reigns in the earth and heaven, and in the 4 (dalet=4) corners of the world.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mishnah Middot 4:6.

<sup>2</sup>Niddah 31a: breath, soul, beauty, sight, hearing, speech, walking, knowledge, discernment, and sense.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezer, par. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Berachot 13b.



Additional examples:

והתגלח (ויק' יג:לב) - ג' גדולה. שג' צריכין  
גילוח גדול בכל מקום שיש<sup>1</sup>  
שער: נזיר, ומצורע, ולויים.

הליהוה תגמלו זאת. (דבר' לב:ו) - ה' גדולה. לומרונכי ליהוה  
תגמלו זאת שנחן לכם ה'  
חומשי תורה.

7.1# The letter ך in this same verse, Dt. 6:4, is large, so it is not confused with the letter ך which is similar in shape. Therefore one will not read אחר and thus worship "another god."

7.2# In Dt. 6:4 the ayin of שמע "Hear" and the dalet of אחד "one" are written large and put together to form a new word עד "witness" for "Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord" (Is. 3:10) and God is Israel's witness: "And I shall be a swift witness..." (Mal. 3:5)

7.3# The letter is large and its place in the alphabet is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Dt. 18:13: Thou shalt be whole-hearted with the Lord thy God, " the tav of חמים "whole-hearted" is written large. For if you walk in uprightness it is

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mishnah Negaim 14:4.

as if you fulfilled the Torah from alef to tav (i.e. the entire Torah which is written by means of the alphabet whose first letter is alef and last letter is tav.)<sup>1</sup>

7.4# The letter is large, and the name of the letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in determining the guilt or innocence of a woman accused of adultery Num. 5:17 says: "And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle..." The ayin of ארץ "on the floor" is written large. Ayin means "eye" suggesting Job: 24:15: "The eye of the adulterer waiteth of twilight, saying: "No eye shall see me."<sup>2</sup>

7.5# The letter is large, and the word is also written defectively ( חסר ). The size of the letter and the numerical equivalent of the "missing" letter are the basis for the exegesis. In Dt. 29:27: "And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land..." the lamed of וישלחם "and cast them" is large and is a "pointer" to this word which is written without a yod. For the casting out of the 10 tribes (yod=10) was not like the casting out of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See also method 63.1 in which the position of a letter in the alphabet is used in the exegesis.

<sup>2</sup>For other examples in which the name of the letter is the basis for exegesis see methods 2.1, 7.6, 10.1, 37, 40, and 51.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 73:5.



7.6# A letter is both crooked and large, and its crookedness and largeness are utilized in the exegesis along with the name of that letter. In Dt. 17:8: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee..." the pe of יפלא "arise" is crooked and large. This not only implies the difficulty of the matter but, says Asher, is also an allusion to the מופלא, the outstanding member of the Bet Din who is liable only for the oral law. לחורה שבעל פה

8# A letter is suspended ( חלוייה ) and the numerical equivalent of the suspended letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Num. 24:8: "He shall eat up the nations that are his adversaries and shall break their bones in pieces....," the ayin of ועצמניהם "their bones" is suspended. God will uproot ( יעקר )<sup>2</sup> 70 (ayin=70) nations. He will uproot the 7 nations<sup>3</sup> now and in the future the 63 nations. "For every one of them is unclean" (Ps. 53:4)<sup>10</sup> ("unclean" has the numerical equivalent of 63 (60+3)).

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<sup>1</sup>CF. Baba Metsia 85a. For other examples in which the name of the letter is used in the exegesis see methods 2.1, 7.4, 10.1, 37, 40, and 51.

<sup>2</sup> ע עקר = עקר

<sup>3</sup>Hittite, Gergashite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizite, Hivite, and Jebusite. (Dt 7:1)

9# A letter is inverted ( הפוכין ), and the number of times it occurs is the basis for exegesis. For example, in Dt. 4:9:

לִבְנֶיךָ וּלְבְנֵי בְנֶיךָ "...but make them know) unto thy children and thy children's children..." Asher says the 3 nuns are inverted. This suggests that if one is a scholar and his son and grandson are scholars, Torah will never cease from his seed.<sup>1</sup>

Letter or letters of word(s) are highlighted by the presence of one or more crowns on top of the letter(s).

10# The number of crowns is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in the third Priestly Benediction, Num. 6:26: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and grant thee peace," וְשָׁמַח "and grant" has 7 crowns on it. This alludes to the 7 ways God will give peace: "The Lord will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee; they shall come up against thee one way and shall flee before them seven ways." (Dt. 28:7)

Additional Examples:

לְבָדָד יִשְׁכֵּן. (במד' כג:א) - ז' תגין על ש'. לומר לך שישכון בארץ ז' עממים.  
לְסַפֵּט (דבר' ו:ח) - ט' תגין<sup>2</sup> כנגד ט' אברים שבראש.

כִּי טָרֵב (שמות ב:ב) - ה' תגין. לומר שעחיד לקבל חמשי חומשי תורה. כי לקח טרב נחתי לכם.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 87a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mishnah Ohalot 99b.

10.1<sup>1</sup> The name of the crowned letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Dt. 8:9: "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread...thou shalt not lack any thing....," the resh of the word חסר "lack" is crowned. Resh is homonymous to ראש "head."<sup>1</sup> This suggests that Israel is at the top of the dust of the world.<sup>2</sup>

In another example, Moses petitions God to heal his sister Miriam. In Num. 12:13 he says: "...heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee." The resh of רפא "heal" has a crown on it. Moses said to God: "You have removed the crown of her head; heal the breaches thereof for it tottereth." (Ps. 60:4)

Similarly, in Dt. 1:17: "You shall show no favor in judgement...", there is a crown on top of the pe of the word במשפט "in judgement". This suggests that one should open ( פתח ) ones mouth ( פה=פה ) to speak for the mute.<sup>3</sup>

10.2# The crown itself is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Num. 25:11: "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest... in that he was very zealous for My sake....,"

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Menahot 53b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sifre

<sup>3</sup>For other examples in which the name of the letter is the basis for exegesis see methods 2.1, 7.4, 7.6, 37, 40 and 51.

there are crowns on the gof of "בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶחָד קִנְיָאִי" in that he was very zealous for my sake." Phinehas was crowned priest since he was zealous for the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

10.3# The numerical equivalent of the crowned letter is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Dt. 4:4: "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord..." there are crowns on the gof of הַדְּבָקִים "did cleave". The numerical value of gof is 100 and suggests the 100 benedictions that one is required to say each day.<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

ונתנה לך (שמות יג:יא) - תגין על ה'. לומר לך אם  
חשבור ה' חומשי חורה  
יתנה לך.

מיסרך (דבר' ח:ה) - תגין על מ'. לומר שהנשמה  
נוצרה במ' יום והחורה ניתנה  
למ' יום, ואם לא חשבור החורה  
שנתנה למ' יום, מיסרך ונוסל  
ממך נשמחך במ' יום.

השקיפה (דבר' כו:טז) - תגין על ק'. לומר לך בזכות  
אברהם שהוליד לק' שנים.

10.4# The number of crowns and the numerical equivalent of the crowned letters are the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Gen. 18:7: "And Abraham ran unto the herd..." the gof of the word

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Zebahim 101b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Menahot 43b.

הבקר "the herd" has 3 crowns. This alludes to the three men who came to visit Abraham<sup>1</sup>, because Abraham was hospitable to these men of God he merited a child at the age of 100 years<sup>2</sup>(gof=100).

11# Attention is drawn to a letter because there is a dot over that letter. That letter is assigned its numerical equivalent. When Lot's daughters slept with him, the narration says that Lot was drunk and "knew not when she lay down, nor when she rose up." (Gen. 19:33) The first vav of וּבָקָמָה "when she rose up" has a dot over it and is assigned its numerical equivalent of 6. Asher comments that she slept with him 6 hours before midnight while Lot's sleep was strong and therefore he did not know when she rose.<sup>3</sup> He makes a comparison to Ruth and Boaz: "and she rose up before (בִּטְרוֹם)<sup>4</sup> one could discern another." (Ruth 3:14) בִּטְרוֹם has a vav with no dot. Thus, Asher concludes, Ruth slept with him in the period of 6 hours after midnight when sleep is less strong and therefore Boaz knew who it was.<sup>5</sup>

11.1# The presence of the dot indicates that the letter is to be left out of the word and a new word is created. For example,

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<sup>1</sup>Gen. 18:2.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 21:5.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Nazir 23a, and Sifre on Numbers 9.

<sup>4</sup>בִּטְרוֹם, Kri בִּטְרוֹם, Ktiv For additional examples in which Ktiv/Kri is employed in the exegesis see methods 3, 22.4, 84, and 86.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ruth Rabba 7:1.

"and we have laid waste unto Nophat which ( אשר ) reacheth unto Medeba." (Num. 21:30) the resh of אשר has a dot and we get אש "fire". This signifies that the town was burned.<sup>1</sup>

11.2# The presence of the dot allows the letter to be re-positioned in the word; thus in the word אשר in the above verse the resh can be moved to spell ראש "chief", signifying that the chief of the town was taken out.<sup>2</sup>

11.3# A word is singled out for attention by the presence of a dot over one of its letters. That letter is not read and the remainder of the word is assigned its numerical equivalent; the word is then compared to another word with the same numerical equivalent. For example, in Num. 9:10: "If any man of you...be in a journey far off (רחוק) yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord." The he has a dot over it and thus the word can be read רקח whose numerical equivalent is  $200+8+100$  plus the 3 letters of the word = 311.<sup>3</sup> This in turn is almost equal to זהו מאספוקה  $(7+5+6) + (40+1+60+80+6+100+5) = 310$ <sup>4</sup> "this is the threshold." Therefore, the journey need not be a distant one but can merely be

<sup>1</sup>cf. Also Sifre on Numbers 9 for a different interpretation based however on the dot on the resh.

<sup>2</sup>For other examples of anagrams see methods 3, 20-20.6, 24.1, 45, 68.1, 84.1, and 85(f).

<sup>3</sup>Iture Bikurim (n.737). For more examples of gematria in which the letters of the word are included in the sum see the excursus after method 22.

<sup>4</sup>Other possible spellings are: זה (ו) איסקופה, איסקופא. For other examples of "almost equal" sets see the excursus after method 22.



outside the threshold of the forecourt during the time of the slaughtering.<sup>1</sup>

12# A letter is singled out because of its punctuation. In Num. 32:42, the he in the word לה has no mapik: "And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it (לה), after his own name." Asher explains that the omission of mapik enables one to read the negative לא in place of לה. Thus in Num. 32:42 the new name Nobah was not permanent.<sup>2</sup> In Zach. 5:11: "... to build her (לה) a house... in the land of Shinar," Asher says that he went out to build, but he did not build. Similarly in Ruth 2:14: "And Boaz said to her (לה)..." Asher says he did not speak to her himself, but only through a messenger.

Another example where a letter is singled out because of its punctuation is found in Ex. 15:26: "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Asher contrasts the absence of the dagesh in רפא,

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<sup>1</sup>This concluding statement is not actually found in Asher but it is provided by Rashi, on this verse, who also apparently derives this interpretation from the dotted he. He however does not discuss the numerical equivalents. This conclusion, that the journey need not be a distant one, is one of the opinions in a halachic debate in Pesahim 93b. The rabbi holding this view uses the dot to modify the meaning of רחקה. Cf. Sifre on Numbers 9.

<sup>2</sup>Rashi on the Num. verse, quoting from R. Moses the Preacher, has the same reason. He wonders, however, how R. Moses would explain the absence of the mapik in the Zach. and Ruth verses. Asher is apparently answering Rashi's question.

"that which healeth thee", which speaks of healing by God with the presence of the dagesh in **רפא** in Ex. 21:19 which speaks of the healing by men. The healing by men is harder ( **קשה** ) than the healing of God.

13. A word is singled out because it is written defectively ( **חסר** ). The "missing" letter is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, Ex. 32:19 says that Moses upon seeing the golden calf breaks the tablets "and cast the tablets out of his hand" ( **מִידוֹ** ). **מִידוֹ** is written without a yud (=10) for the children of Israel denied the Ten Commandments for the sake of the golden image. **פסל** "image" is written 10 times in the Torah<sup>1</sup> and the phrase **תועבת יהוה** "abomination of the Lord" is similarly found 10 times in the Book of Proverbs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **פסל** :

Ex. 20:4; Dt. 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 27:5.

**ופסל**

Lev. 26:1.

**ופסילי**

Dt. 12:3

**ופסילי**

Dt. 7:5. See method 97 for another example in which the number of times a phrase found in the Torah is counted.

<sup>2</sup> 3:32; 11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8, 9, 26; 16:5; 17:15; 20:10, 23.

Additional examples:

וימלאו ימיה והנה תרמם בבטנה - חסר י' וא' שמסרה י"א  
(שמות כה:כד) שבטים שהיתה ראויה להוליד.<sup>1</sup>

בראשון בערבעה (שמות יב:יח) חסר ו'.<sup>2</sup> ו' שעות מותר להשהות  
חמץ.

ויבאנו אל מקום הזה (דבר' כו:ט) - חסר י' שנסינו אותו י'  
נסינו ויביאנה לארץ.

13.1# A word written defectively ( חסר ) is singled out.  
Its "missing" letter alone is assigned its numerical equivalent.  
This word is also homonymous to another word. For example, the  
cities of refuge are enumerated in Dt. 4:43: "Bezer in the wilder-  
ness...and Golan in Bashan." גולן "Golan" is written without a  
vav<sup>3</sup> and is homonymous to the word גולה "exile". This, says  
Asher, alludes to the 6 (vav=6) unintentional killings which do  
not entail exile.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 63:7.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Pesahim 120a.

<sup>3</sup>The word is written plene ( מלא ) in the Masoretic text. Itur Bikurim (n.964) says Asher probably meant plene but an error crept into the text. However, as Reineitz notes (p.269, n.50) גלן written defectively is found in Joshua 20:8.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Makkot 8a. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57., 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.

14\* The "added" letter of a word that is written plene ( מלא ) is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, Ex. 19:3: "Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him from the mountain saying: 'Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel.'" וחגיד "and declared" is written plene with a yud (=10) indicating that Moses will announce the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

אותם (ויק' י:ב) - מלא ו' שחטאו בששה דברים: אש זרה, הורו לפני רבם, שחוי יין, בנים לא היו להם, נחנו עֲנִיָּהם בפרנסה, ולא נמלו עצה.<sup>2</sup>

ומועדיכם (במד' י:י) - מלא ו' כנגד פסח, עצרת, ראש השנה, יום הכפורים, סוכות, שמיני עצרת.<sup>3</sup>

העידתי (דבר' ד:כו) - מלא י' אייתי ביה י' לפרסומי למילתא.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lekah Tov.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 52a.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 20:6.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Sifre.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ketubbot 7b. See also the following method, 15, which assigns the numerical equivalent to a "superfluous" letter(s).

15\* A word written with a "superfluous" letter(s) is singled out in a verse. The "superfluous" letter(s) is assigned its numerical equivalent(s). For example, in Lev. 21:5: "They are not to make baldness upon their heads," יקרה "baldness" is written with a "superfluous" he if we follow the Kri יקרו . This alludes to the 5 (he=5) types of baldness which makes one unqualified to serve in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

לזרא (במד' יא:כ) = 1 - שפצאו כל מיני טמאים  
חוץ מאחד והוא טעמו של  
לוייתן.

והביאותיו אל-ארץ (במד' כד:יד) = 10 - שאביא אותם אל ארץ  
שנחקשה י' קדושה.<sup>2</sup>

והוא אשה בבחוליה יקח (ויק' = 12 - רמז י"ב שנים בחוליה  
שלמים. כא:יג)

16# A word is written "defectively" in that an expected conjunctive vav is omitted. The missing vav is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, in Ex. 18:13: מן הבקר עד הערב  
"from the morning unto the evening," Asher notes that the text does not say...עד...ל....

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mishnah Bekorot 7:2, and Makkot 20a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mishnah Kelim 1:6.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Yevamot 59a.

This, says Asher, is reminiscent of the Bet Din which meets till the sixth hour ( $vav=6$ ).<sup>1</sup> Asher also notes that the word ששט is found 6 times in the section Ex. 18-20.<sup>2</sup>

17 A letter(s) of a word is assigned its numerical equivalent(s). For example, in Ex. 25:8: "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." the tav and yod of ושכנתי "that I may dwell" are assigned the combined numerical equivalent of  $400+10$  or 410. This is an allusion to the First Temple which stood for 410 years.

Additional examples:

לארה (שמות ו:ג) - ו' פעמים כתיב באבות 4 ירא.  
ג' באברהם, ב' ביצחק, וא' ביעקב.  
אז ישיר (שמות טו:א) - י' שירות יש: ים, באר (במד' כא:יז), האזינו (דבר' לב:א), יהושע (י:יב), דבורה (שופ' ה: א), חנה (ש"א ב:א), דוד (תהל' יח:א), שלמה (שם ל:א), חזקיה ישעיה לח:י), ושירה לעהיד (שם מבי:).

7 מקור דמיה (ויק' כ:טז) - שה' דמים מטמאים אשה.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Shabbat 10a.

<sup>2</sup>Ex. 18:13, 16, 22(2), 26(2). For other examples in which the number of times a word found in a section is counted, see m. 83, 83.1, and 92.

<sup>3</sup>Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1.

<sup>4</sup>ibid. 26:2, 24.

<sup>5</sup>ibid. 35:9.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Mehilta.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Mishnah Niddah 1:6.



18# Each letter of a word is twice the numerical value of the letter that precedes it in the alphabet. For example, in Dt.21:17, the preceding letters of the word בכור<sup>1</sup> "first born" are ק ה י א. This is the only example we have of this method, and it is defective as Asher notes because vav (=6) is not twice he (2x5=10). He salvages the discrepancy by noting that ו is a double letter because it can sometimes be written ו"ו so there are 2 vavs for the 1 he. This is a reminder that the first born gets a double portion.<sup>2</sup>

19# Each letter of a word is the first letter of a new word. This is called a notarikun (נוטריקון). For example, the word בראשית (Gen. 1:1) can be a notarikun for ברא  
 3 בראשונה לרא אלהים or לקיע אפץ שמים תהום  
 4 שיקבלו ישראל חורתו.

<sup>1</sup>Itur Mikurim (n.1074) notes that in this verse the words are הבכר, written defectively, and הבכרה. However, in Dt. 25:6 we do find, he notes, the word הבכור written with a vav, thus vindicating Asher.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Dt. 21:17.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Hagiga 12a.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Shabbat 88a.

Additional examples:

- אדם (ברא' א:כו) - אפר, דם, מרה.<sup>1</sup>  
 ואלה המשפטים (שמות כא:א) - וחייב אדם לחקור הדין.<sup>2</sup>  
 יין ושכר אל-תשת (ויק' י:ט) - ואם שתה כדי כביעית יין  
 אסור להורות.<sup>3</sup>

20 The letters of a word are rearranged to form a new word, i.e. an anagram. Asher terms this method אוֹתִיּוֹת. For example, in Gen. 2:4: "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created," "when they were created" is rearranged to form אֶבְרָהָם for it was by the merit of Abraham that the heaven and earth were created.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sotah 5a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Avot 1:1.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Keritot 13b. See method 85 n.1 for another example of notarikun.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 12:8.

Additional examples:

לבן הארמי (ברא' כה:כ) - הרמאי.<sup>1</sup>

העשה (שמות כט:לט) - חשעה (שתשעה כהנים עטוקים  
בתמיד של שחר).<sup>2</sup>

ולהורה (ויק' י:יא) - ולתורה.

20.1# The letters of a word are rearranged to form a new word; this new word is used to explain an adjacent word. For example, Lev. 12:7: "וטהרה ממקד דמיה" "...and she shall be clean from the fountain of her blood," the letters of ממקד are rearranged to form the word מרקם "from Rekem." Thus all blood stains which come from Rekem are clean.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. ibid. 63:4, and Leviticus Rabbah 23:1.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mishnah Yoma 2:5. For other examples of anagrams, see methods 3, 20.1-6, 45, 68.1, 84.1, and 85(f).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Niddah 56b. Rekem is the name of a town whose inhabitants are idol worshippers.

20.2 The letters of one word can be rearranged to form two words. For example, the letters of בראשית (Gen. 1:1) can be rearranged to form:

בית ראש (כלומר בית ראשון שנאמר כסה, כבוד מרום מראשון  
מקום מקדשנו (ירמיה יז:יב))<sup>1</sup>

א' בתשרי (נברא העולם).<sup>2</sup>

ברא שתי (שברא שתי תורות).<sup>3</sup>

ירא שבת (לומר לך שבזכות השבת נברא העולם).<sup>4</sup>

ברית אש (שבזכות הברית שהיא המילה ובזכות האש שהיא התורה  
ניצולין מדינה של גיהנם).<sup>5</sup>

בראח יש (שברא ש"י עולמות לכל צדיק).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Pesahim 54a and Paaneah Raza 8b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rosh Hashona 27a and Paaneah Raza 8a, b.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Tikune Zohar 6b and Paaneah Raza 7b.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Tikune Zohar 5b.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 21:14.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Mishnah Uktsin 3:12 and Paaneah Raza 8b.

20.3# Some of the letters in a word are rearranged to form a new word, while other letters in that word are assigned their numerical equivalents. For example, the letters of the word חֲרוּמָה "t'rumah" (Ex. 25:2) are rearranged to form חֲרוּמָה 40-Torah (mem=40). This, says Asher, is reminiscent to the Torah which was given on the 40th day to those who ate the t'rumah.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in Ex. 35:1: "These are the words which the Lord hath commanded that ye do them." The letters of לַעֲשֶׂה "do" are rearranged to form עֲשֵׂה לַ nine 30 (lamed=30). Thus, 39 types of work are not to be performed on the Sabbath. Furthermore, עֲשֵׂה is written defectively ( עֲשֶׂה ) without a vav (=6) suggesting that the 39 types of work prohibited on the Sabbath are permitted on the 6 week-days.<sup>2</sup>

In another example of this method, the letters of וְחַרְבִּי "My sword" (Dt. 32:42) are rearranged to form וְחַרְבִּי "sword-16" which can also be read sword וְ being hypocoristic for יְהוָה. God's sword has 16 faces.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mehilta B'shlach 16:4.

<sup>2</sup>Mishnah Shabbat 7:2.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Shohar Tov par.78.

20.4# The letters of 2 words can be rearranged to form 1 new word. The one example we have of this is defective. The first 3 letters of לך שהי (Num. 10:2) are rearranged to form שלך "yours". This suggests that the 2 trumpets are to be made at ones own expense.<sup>1</sup>

20.5# The letters of 2 words can be rearranged to form 2 new words. For example, the letters of והנה מלאכי "and behold the angels" (Gen. 28:12) are rearranged to form אלו הכהנים "these are the priests" whom, says Asher, are ascending and descending the altar.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly the letters of בן דוד (lev.25:49) are rearranged to form בן דוד<sup>3</sup>

20.6# The letters of 2 words can be rearranged to form 3 new words. For example, the letters of ומבמות הגיא "And from Bamoth to the valley" (Num. 21:20) are rearranged to form בא המות מבי<sup>4</sup> "the dead one went to the valley" which Asher to Dt. 36:6 "And he (Moses) was buried in the valley."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Yoma 3b, Numbers Rabbah 15:15, and Sifre.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 19:20.

<sup>3</sup>Tanhuma.

<sup>4</sup>Itur Bikurim (n.830) corrects the text from בא מות בגיא and says the extra vav which is left over is not essential.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 19:20



In another example the letters of נחלתו לשאריו "Then he shall give his inheritance to his brethren" (Num. 27:11) are rearranged to form נחלת שאריו לו "the inheritance of his brethren is his". Asher interprets this to mean the wife, meaning the husband can leave his inheritance to his wife.<sup>1</sup>

21# A letter of a word is assigned its numerical equivalent, and the rest of the word is read with the help of a homonym. For example, in Gen. 25:25: "...and they called his name Esau" the ayin of עשו "Esau" is assigned its numerical equivalent (70) and the remainder of the word (שו) is read as שוא "vanity." Thus the creation of Esau completes the 70 nations which are all vanity.<sup>2</sup>

22 A word is assigned its numerical equivalent, i.e., the total numerical equivalent of its letters. This method is called gematria. The number derived is used in one of two ways; the number itself can be the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Ex. 10:1: "And the Lord said to Moses, go to Pharaoh....," בא "go" is assigned its numerical equivalent of 3 (2+1). This says Asher, alludes to

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<sup>1</sup>Asher cites the rabbinic formulation of this method: "We may take one servile letter from one word of the text and add it to another and thus interpret the law." Baba Batra 109b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 63:12. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.

the 3 more plagues that will yet come to Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

לך לך (ברא' יב:א) 100 = (יצחק נולד לאברהם כאשר  
הוא בן מאה.)<sup>2</sup>

וזה (במד' ח:ד) 18 = (שגבוהה של מגורה י"ח  
ספחים.)<sup>3</sup>

לבדד ישכן (במד' כג:ט) 420 = (רמז לימי בית שני).<sup>4</sup>

The number derived can also be used by setting it to the numerical equivalent of another word(s). For example, the numerical equivalent of בראשית "In the beginning" (Gen. 1:1) is 913 (2+200+1+300+10+400) which is equal to the numerical equivalent of בתורה יצר "He created with the Torah" (2+400+6+200+5) + (10+90+200)=913 for on account of the Torah which is called "beginning",<sup>4</sup> the world was created.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Locusts, darkness, and slaying of the first born.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis 21:5, Cf. Tanhuma Lech laha Sec. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Menahot 28b.

<sup>4</sup>Proverbs 8:22

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 1:6.

## Additional examples:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{וילך (ברא' כח:י)} = 66 = \text{בו ביום.}^1 \\
 & \text{אתה ובניך (ויק' י:ט)} = 494 = \text{יצאו הקללים ובעלי} \\
 & \quad \text{מומין.}^2 \\
 & \text{את אשר יהיה לו (דבר' כא:טז)} = 968 = \text{מלמד שהבן נוסל בראוי} \\
 & \quad \text{בבמוחזק.}^3
 \end{aligned}$$

The numerical equivalent of a word written defectively (חסר) is derived by assigning each letter including the "missing letter" its numerical equivalent. For example, in Dt. 27:12: These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people... the word גרזים "Gerizim" is written defectively without a yod (=10). The numerical equivalent of the word is determined as if it were written with a yod (גרזי'ים) making the sum 270 ( $3+200+10+7+10+40$ ). This is equal to the numerical equivalent of "הברכה יהיה בו" the blessing will be there" ( $5+2+200+20+5$ ) \* ( $10+5+10+5$ ) \*  $2+6$  = 270.

## Additional examples:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{כרובים (שמות כה:יח)} = 278 = \text{מראה כבוד.} \\
 & \text{סולם (ברא' כח:יב)} = 136 = \text{קול (שקול חסיפה} \\
 & \quad \text{הצדיקים הוא שלם} \\
 & \quad \text{למלאכים לעלות בו.} \\
 & \text{עורב למינו (ויק' יא:טז)} = 414 = \text{זרור.}
 \end{aligned}$$

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 4:13.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ibn Ezra on this verse.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Hullin 61a.

## Excursus

Gematria is not always so simple a matter. In many examples the numerical equivalents are not equal. Most of the time there is a discrepancy of 1.

Itur Bikurim in his introduction to his super-commentary (p.25) says that being one off is not important, as one can add 1, one for the whole set (כולל). For example, in Gen. 18:1: "And the Lord appeared unto him (= Abraham) ...in the heat of the day," the numerical equivalent of כחם היום "in the heat of the day" is 129  $(20+8+40) + (5+10+6+40)$ . This, says Asher, is equal to זהו בגיהנם "this is in Gehenem"  $(7+5+6) + (2+3+10+5+3+40) = 128$ . One can count as 1 the set thus getting 128+1 or 129.

Additional examples:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &^1 257 = \text{על מים חיים (ויק' יד:ה)} \neq 258 = \text{לא במים מלוחים} \\
 &^2 622 = \text{אשר היו טמאים (במד' ט:ו)} \neq 623 = \text{זה למת מצוה} \\
 &^3 1217 = \text{כאשר מת אהרן (דבר' לב:ג)} \neq 1218 = \text{מה אהרן בנשיקה}
 \end{aligned}$$

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sifra.

<sup>2</sup>ibid. 25a.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., and Baba Batra 17a.

Sometimes the discrepancy is greater than 1. In most of the cases where there is such a discrepancy, Itur Bikurim attempts to correct the discrepancy in one of the following ways:

a. The number of words in the first set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, in Gen. 49:2: "Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob..," the numerical equivalent of "שמעו אל יסאאל" "and hear, ye sons of Jacob" is 994  $(6+300+40+70+6) + (1+30) + (10+300+200+1+30)$  . This is said to equal "זהו קצו של מלך המשיח" "this is the designated time for the king, the Messiah."

The discrepancy of 3 is made up by counting in the 3 words of the first set.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

וירא אליו (ברא' יח:א) =  $264 + 2$  תיבות =  $266$  זה בכבוד  $266$  פילה נגלה אליו. =  $266$

כראת פני אלהים (ברא' לג:י) =  $3+847 = 850$  = שר שלך.<sup>3</sup>

לא עברתי ממצותיך (דבר' כו: יג) = 1319 + 3 תיבות = 1322 ≠  
לא מן הקלושים על המוברים  
1323 =

<sup>1</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 269.

<sup>2</sup>ibid n.76, Cf. Genesis Rabbah 47:13.

<sup>3</sup> Itur Bikurim n.195, Cf. Sukah 41b.

<sup>4</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 1131;

b. The number of words in the second set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, in Gen. 29:2: "... and lo 3 flocks of sheep lying there by it," the numerical equivalent of שלשה עדרי "three flocks" is 919  $(300+30+300+5)+(70+4+200+10)$ . This, says Asher, is equal to זהו אהרן ומשה ומרים "this is Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam."<sup>1</sup>

$$(7+5)+(1+5+200+50)+(6+40+300+5)+(6+40+200+10+40) = 915.$$

The missing 4 in the second set is made up by adding 4 (there are 4 words in the second set) to its total  $(915+4=919)$ .<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

$$^3 532 = \text{חבאו מלחמה (במד' י:ט)} = \text{מלחמה גוג} + 2 \text{ חיבות}$$

$$\text{בכל עה יהיה בגדיך לבמים (במד' )} \equiv \text{זה ציצית לבגדיכם} + 3 \text{ חיבות} \\ \text{טז: לט)} \quad .724 =$$

$$^6 .171 = \text{לבני דודיהן}^5 \text{ (במד' לג:יא)} = \text{להגון להם} + 2 \text{ חיבות}$$

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 70:8

<sup>2</sup>Itur Bikurim II.165

<sup>3</sup>ibid. n. 742.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Shabbat 153a.

<sup>5</sup>Asher reads דודיהן plene (דודיהן).

<sup>6</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 920, Cf. Baba Batra 119b.



c. The number of letters in the first set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, in Lev. 6:4: "...and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes....," the numerical equivalent of "other, and carry forth" is 377 ( $1+8+200+10+40$ ) אחרים והוציא. This is said to equal "priests כהנים בעלי מומין who have a blemish" ( $20+5+50+10+40$ ) + ( $2+70+30+10$ ) + ( $40+6+40+10+50$ ) = 388. for a priest with a blemish may take out the ashes.<sup>1</sup> The discrepancy is removed by adding 11 (there are 11 letters in the first set),<sup>2</sup> thus  $377 + 11 = 388$ .

Additional examples:

אשר יאמר כי הוא זה (שמות כב:ח) =  $806 + 14$  אותיות = 820  
מורה במקצת טענה = 82<sup>5</sup>

ושש משור (שמות כח:ו) =  $1153 + 7$  אותיות = 1160  
שליש ושנים חוטים = 1159  
כנגד התורה שמתכלת בב' (בראשית) ומסיימת בל' (ישראל)<sup>4</sup>

ובין כחפיו (דבר' לג:יב) =  $584 + 9$  אותיות = 593<sup>5</sup>  
ובירושלים = 594

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Yoma 23b.

<sup>2</sup>Itur Bikurim n.168.

<sup>3</sup>ibid n. 464, and Cf. Rashi on this verse.

<sup>4</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 494, but Cf. Rashi on this verse.

<sup>5</sup>ibid. n. 1191, Cf. Zebahim 54b.

d. The number of words and the number of letters in the first set are added to its numerical equivalent, while the number of letters in the second set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, the numerical equivalent of Ex. 33:19: ויאמר אני אעביר כל

"And he said: ' I will make all my goodness pass before thee; and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee...'" is 2213  $(6+10+1+40+200) + (1+50+10) + 1+70+2+10+200 + (20+30) + (9+6+2+10) + (70+30) + (80+50+10+20) + (6+100+200+1+400+10) + (2+300+40) + (10+5+6+6) + (30+80+50+10+20)$  .

The number of words (11) and the number of letters (38) is added to this sum making a total of  $2213+11+38=2267$ . This sum is said to equal "For the Holy One Blessed be He wrapped Himself as the representative of the community."

$(300+5+100+4+6+300) + (2+200+6+20) + (5+6+1) + (50+400+70+9+80) + (20+300+30+10+8) + (90+10+2+6+200) = 2230$  . The number of letters in this second set (28) is added to its numerical equivalent making a total of  $2250+28$  or  $2268$ .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Itur Bikurim (n. 529) reading יהוה for Asher's ה , שהקדוש , and צבור for צבורי .

<sup>2</sup>Reinetz (p.202, n.68) uses the more balanced method of adding the number of letters to the first set to its numerical equivalent and adding the number of letters in the second set to its numerical equivalent. He retains Itur Bikurim's spelling corrections (above note) but retains Asher's spelling צבור (not צ'בור ). He comes out with  $2257=2256$ --still 1 off !

e. The number of letters in the first set is added to its numerical equivalent while the number of words in the second set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, in Ex. 18:13: "And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people...", the numerical equivalent of מֶמָּחָר "morrow" is 688 ( $40+40+8+200+400$ ). The number of letters in this word (5) is added to it making a total of  $688+5$  or 693. This is said to equal לְמָחָר יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים "for the morrow is Yom Kippur" ( $30+40+8+200$ )  $+(10+6+40)+(20+80+6+200+10+40)=690$ . Added to this sum is the number of words (3) making a total of  $690+3$  or 693<sup>1</sup>.

f. The number of words in the first set is added to its numerical equivalent, while the number of letters of the second set is added to its numerical equivalent. For example, the numerical equivalent of שִׁמְעוֹן וְלֵוִי אֲחִים "Simeon and Levi are brethren..." (Gen. 49:5) is 577 ( $300+40+70+6+50$ )  $+(6+30+6+10)+(1+8+10+40)$  plus the three words is 580. This is equivalent, says Asher, to אֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק אֶרֶץ "they do not have a portion in the land"  $(1+10+50)+(30+5+40)+(8+30+100)+(2+200+90)=567$  plus the number of letters (13) making a total of  $567+13$  or 580.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 424, Cf. Mehilta.

<sup>2</sup>Itur Bikurim n. 273. Simeon's portion is in Judah's allotment and Levi's portion is in the cities of refuge which are at the borders of Israel.

22.1# A word is singled out for attention and assigned its numerical equivalent. Connection is made to a second verse which contains the number of letters identical to the numerical equivalent. Connection is also made to words which occur in the Torah the number of times identical to the numerical equivalent. For example, in Num. 6:23: "Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying: 'Thus shall ye bless the children of Israel...,'" כה "thus" has the numerical equivalent of 25 (20+5). Dt. 6:24: שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד has 25 letters.<sup>1</sup> Also, the word ברכה "blessing" and שלום "peace" each occur 25 times in the Torah.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted see methods 24.2, 42, 72.1, 73, 73.1, and 89.

<sup>2</sup> ברכה: Gen 1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:5; 9:1; 12:2, 3; 16:16; 22:17; 24:1, 35; 25:11; 26:12,(2), 24; 27:27; 30:27, 30; 39:5; Ex. 20:11, 24; Num. 6:27; Dt. 12-15; 16:4.  
שלום: Gen 29:6; 43:23, 28; Lev. 26:6; Num. 6:26; 25:12; Dt. 2:26; 20:11; 29:18; השלום: Gen. 29:6; 43:27;  
בשלום: Gen. 15:15; 26:29, 31; 28:21; Ex. 18:3; לשלום: Gen. 37:4; 43:27; 44:17; Ex. 4:17; 18:7; Dt. 20:10. שלום: Gen. 37:4(2); 41:16. Itur Biku im (n.713) says we do not count Dt. 23:7: לא תדרש שלום since it contains the negative לא. See method 87 which also counts the number of times a word is found in the Torah.

22.2# A word is assigned its numerical equivalent. The number derived is assigned its equivalent letter in the alphabet, which moreover, is absent in the section in which the verse is found. For example, in Dt. 26:3: "And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand...", סַבָּ "basket"<sup>1</sup> has the numerical equivalent of 60 ( $9+50+1$ ). This is reminiscent that the offerings of first fruits are 1 out of 60.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the number 60 has the letter equivalent of sameh and this letter is absent in the section Dt. 26:1-11.<sup>3</sup>

22.3# A word is assigned its numerical equivalent; the numerical equivalent and another meaning of that word are used to derive an exegesis. For example, חַוָּה "Eve" (Gen. 3:20) equals חָוָה can also mean "to speak", for 10 measures of speech came down to the world and woman took 9 of them.<sup>4</sup>

22.4# A word is assigned its numerical equivalent, and the numerical equivalent is used to explain another word in the same verse. In Dt. 5:18 for example, a woman accused of an adulterous act is brought before the priest and "the priest shall set the woman before the Lord...and put the meal offering of memorial in her hands, which is the meal offering of jealousy, and the priest

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<sup>1</sup>The word in the verse is סַבָּ. Asher drops the article he in deriving the numerical equivalent of the word.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. y. Bikurim 3:1.

<sup>3</sup>Itur Bikurim (n.1128) notes that the verse uses the term for "basket" and not סַבָּ; for the latter word has a sameh.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 20:27, and Kidushin 49b. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 21, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.



shall have in his hand the water of bitterness that causeth the curse. "המאררים" that causeth the curse" is assigned its numerical equivalent of 496 ( $5+10+1+200+200+10+50$ ). This is twice the number 248. For the priests examine the 248 limbs of the man and the 248 limbs of the woman.<sup>1</sup> This is why מנחת קנאת ה' "meal offering of jealousy" is written הוא (he) but read הוּא (she).<sup>2</sup>

23# The numerical equivalent of a word is derived by spelling out the name of each of the letters in a word and assigning them their numerical equivalents. This method is termed במלוי by Asher. For example, the letters of the word יוסף "Joseph" (Gen. 49:3) are spelled out: יו"ד ו' וסמ"ך פ"א. Each of these "expanded" letters is assigned its numerical equivalent:

$$יו"ד = 20 + ו' = 12 + סמ"ך = 120 + פ"א = 81 = 233$$

This, says Asher, is equal to the numerical equivalent of בכורה "birthright" ( $2+20+6+200+5=233$ ).<sup>3</sup>

Additional examples:

$$שהם (שמות כז:ט) = שי"ן ה"י מ"ם ה'וחות = 455$$

$$המצות (ויק' כז:לד) = מ"ם צד"י ו"ו ה"ו = חלמירי חכמים = 612$$

<sup>1</sup> Cf. y. Sotah 85:1.

<sup>2</sup> For other examples in which ktiv/kri is employed in the exegesis see methods 3, 11, 84, and 86.

<sup>3</sup> See the following method, 23.1, for a similar example.

<sup>4</sup> Asher: ה"א, corrected by Itur Bikurim n. 495.



23.1# The numerical equivalent of a word is derived by spelling out the names of each letter in the word. However, only the last 2 letters of each letter-name are assigned their numerical equivalents. For example, in Gen 35:11: "...I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply...", the letters of the word שדי "God Almighty" are spelled out ש"י ד"ל ה"י . Only the last 2 letters of each group are assigned their numerical equivalents:

$$6+4 \text{ י"ד} + 400+30 \text{ ה"ל} + 50+10 \text{ ש"י} = 500$$

This number, says Asher, is equal to the number of limbs that a man and a woman have.<sup>1</sup>

24# The numerical equivalent of a word is derived by א"ח ב"ש, i.e. a letter may be substituted for its inverse. The full table of inverse equivalents is as follows:

א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת  
ת ש ר ק צ פ ע ס נ מ ל כ י ס ח ז ו ה ד ג ב א

The number derived can be used in two ways. The number itself can be the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Gen. 15:8: "O Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it...", במה "whereby" is converted to its inverse ש"י . This new combination of letters is then assigned its numerical equivalent of 400 (300+10+90). This corresponds to the 400 years that the children of Abraham were exiled.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>248 for a man and 252 for a woman. Cf. Beharot 45a, and Hagiga 12a. See the previous method, 23, for examples in which each letter is assigned its numerical equivalent.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Nedarim 32a.

## Additional examples:

כה...כה (שמות ז:טז, יא:ד) = ב' פעמים ל"ט = 240: וכל  
 כך מכות לקח במצרים: מ'  
 ועל הים ר'.

בטח (ויק' כה:יט) = שנ"ס = 410: שחשבו 410 עמד  
 הבית וישבו בטח.

מה (דבר' י:יב) = י"צ = 100: ששאל מעמך 100  
 ברכות בכל יום.

The number derived can also be used by setting it equal to the numerical equivalent of other word(s). For example, in Gen 11:29

"Sarah" is converted to its inverse בג"צ. This new combination of letters is then assigned its numerical equivalent of 95 (2+3+90). This, says Asher, is equal to the word יסכה (10+60+20+5=95). Thus Iscah is Sarah.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Exodus Rabbah 23:10.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mekahot 43b.

<sup>3</sup>Rabbinic tradition has it that after the death of Haran, Nahor married his niece Milcah as Abram married his niece Iscah.  
 Cf. Megillah 14a.

## Additional examples:

נאקה (שמות ו:ה) = טחד"א = 414 = האבות; לומר  
לך שעלתה צעקת האבות וחפלתם.

בנסע (במד' י:לה) = שטח"ז = 324 = ככבוד המרכבה.

אל המקום (דבר' יב:ה) = ח"ך צידפ"ו = 614 = זהו  
ירושלים.

24.1# A word is converted into "new" letters by the method of  $\text{א"ח ב"ש}$ . These letters are then rearranged to form a word. For example, in Num. 17:12: "And Aaron took as Moses spoke, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and behold, the plague was begun among the people,"  $\text{וירץ}$  "and ran" is converted to its inverse  $\text{פמגה}$ . These letters can be rearranged to form the word  $\text{מגפה}$  "plague."<sup>2</sup> Aaron apparently hastened at the onset of the plague to atone for the people to protect them from the plague.

24.2# The numerical equivalent of a word is assigned by using the method of  $\text{א"ח ב"ש}$ . That number<sup>1</sup> equal to the number of letters in that verse and to the numerical equivalent of another word which has been derived in the usual manner. For example, in

<sup>1</sup>Gf. Sifre. Sometimes Asher omits explicit reference to the inverse correspondent. For example, the word  $\text{פרץ}$  "Perez" equals 14 (6+3+5) by the method of  $\text{א"ח ב"ש}$  (6+3+5). This is equal to the numerical equivalent of  $\text{דוד}$  "David" (4+6+4=14). This is a reminder that David is a descendent of Perez. (1 Chronicles 1:5-15.)

<sup>2</sup>For additional examples of anagrams see methods 3, 11.2, 20, 45, 68.1, and 84.1.

Dt. 10:12: ועתה ישראל מה יהוה אלהיך שאל מעמך כי-אם ליראה

את-יהוה אלהיך ללכת בכל-דרכיו ולאהבה אתו ולעבד את-יהוה אלהיך בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך.

And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee,  
but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and  
to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart  
and with all thy soul.....

the word מה "what" is converted to its inverse י"ץ by the method of א"ח ב"ש which is equal to 100 (10+90). There are 100 letters in the verse<sup>1</sup> and the word ממך<sup>2</sup> has the numerical equivalent of 100. God requires 100 blessings every day.<sup>3</sup>

25# A word is assigned its numerical equivalent by א"ח ב"ש and also in the usual manner. These 2 numerical equivalents are added together. For example, in Num. 9:2: "Let the children of Israel keep the Passover in its appointed season," במועדו "in its appointed season" is converted to its inverse ק"פז"ף and assigned its numerical equivalent of 577 (300+10+80+7+80). The numerical equivalent of במועדו is then derived in its usual manner (2+40+6+70+4+6 =128) and the two sums are added together yielding 577+128 or 705 which almost equals בשבת "on the Sabbath (2 300 2 400 =704).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tosafot to Menahot 43b where שלאל is written plene to arrive at the number 100. For other examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted, see, m. 22.1, 42, 72.1, 73, 73.1, and 89.

<sup>2</sup>This verse has מעמך. Reineitz (p.385, n.63) says perhaps Asher is referring to Micah 6:8. מה יהוה דורש ממך.

<sup>3</sup>Menahot 43b.

<sup>4</sup>For additional examples of "almost equal" sets see the excursus after method 22.

26# A word is converted into a new word by the method of ח"א"ט ב"ח<sup>1</sup> i.e. the alphabet is split into three groups with substitution within the group. The correspondence is as follows:

ק ר ש ת ן	י כ ל מ נ	א ב ג ד ה
ז ף ץ ף ך	צ פ ע ס נ	ט ח ז ו ה

For example, in Num. 10:35: "When the ark went forward....," בנסע "went forward" is converted into the word חשמל "glittering substance."<sup>2</sup>

27# The number of letters in a word is counted. Commenting on Ex. 28:17-20 which discusses the composition of the 4 rows of stones which correspond to the 12 tribes of Israel, Asher says that each stone has 6 letters if we enumerate the letters in the name of each tribe and augment, if necessary, with a letter or letters from the name of one of the patriarchs or from the words

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sukkah 52b and Rashi there.

<sup>2</sup>Yad Ahron (p.155) says this is a reference to Ezekiel 1:4: "And I looked, and behold, a stormy wind came out of the north,... and out of the midst thereof as the color of electrum ( חשמל )..." Rashi says this is the name of an angel. Also Cf. Hagiga 13a. for a discussion of the meaning of חשמל in Ezekiel.

שבטי ישורן "tribes of Jeshrun" which stands for all of  
Israel.<sup>1</sup>

(ברכה)	(פטרדה)	(אדם)	Name of stone
לוי	שמעון	ראובן	Name of tribe
זרהם	ב+	א+	Name of Patriarch
(יהלם)	(ספיר)	(נפך)	
זבולן	יששכר	יהודה	
ח+	צ+	י+	
(אחלמה)	(שבו)	(לשם)	
גד	נפתלי	דן	
שבטי	ב+	ק יעק	
(ישפה)	(שהם)	(חוישיש)	
בנימין	יוסף	אשר	
	דן+	ישר	

<sup>1</sup>This is probably a reference to the 72 letter name of God which, according to tradition, were in the Urim and Thummim. The 72 letters consisted of the names of the 12 tribes (50 letters) and the 3 Patriarchs (13 letters) and the letters שבטי ישראל (9 letters). We note that Asher has שבטי ישורן which also has 9 letters. Cf. Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. 9, p. 164 and Joshua Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition (New York; Athenum, 1970) pps. 95-97.



28# Two adjacent words are assigned their partial numerical equivalents. The first word is assigned its numerical equivalent outright; the second word is only partially utilized in a somewhat non-numerical fashion. For example, in Ex. 35:1: **וְאֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים** "these are the words..." the numerical equivalent of **וְאֵלֶּה** is 36 ( $1+30+5$ ). **הַדְּבָרִים** is only partially utilized; Asher derives 2 from the fact that the word is plural and an additional one for the he for a total of  $36+3=39$ ,<sup>1</sup> the number of the types of work forbidden on the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

28.1# The partial numerical equivalent of two adjacent words is derived by assigning the last letter of the first word its numerical equivalent together with the numerical equivalent of the second word. For example, in Ex. 17:16: "And he said: 'The hand upon the throne of the Lord...'", the partial numerical equivalent of **כִּי יָד** is  $10+10+4=24$ , which in turn is equal to **דָּוִיד** "David" ( $4+6+10+4$ ).

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Shabbat 70a and Rashi there.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mishnah Shabbat 7:2.

29 The initial letters of consecutive words are put together to form a new word. Asher calls this method **ראשי תיבות**. While the order of letters in the new word usually follows the order of occurrence,<sup>1</sup> e.g. **אב גדל בן** = **אגב**, the order can also be reversed<sup>2</sup> e.g. **בגא**, or scrambled<sup>3</sup> e.g. **באג** or similar combinations.

Examples:

<sup>4</sup> **מזריע זרע למינו (ברא' א:יא) = מזל**  
<sup>5</sup> **האדם לנפש חיה (ברא' ב:ז) = חלה**  
**שם העלה עלהיך (דבר' יב: יד) = חשע**

30. The initial letters of consecutive words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together. Asher terms this method **ראשי תיבות בגמטריא**.

The number itself can be the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Ex. 30:12: " **השא את ראש בני** (when) you take the sum of the children of (Israel)....," the numerical equivalents of the first letter of each word are 603 (400+1+200+2). This, says Asher, is

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere termed **ר"ת כסדרן**.

<sup>2</sup> Termed **ר"ת למפרע**.

<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere termed **ר"ת לא כסדרן**.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Genesis Rabbah 10: 7.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Eruvin 18b.

the population in thousands, i.e. 603,000.

Additional examples:

שנים ליום חמיד (שמות כט:לח)  $730 =$  (שמנין 730 חמידין היו  
קרבים לשם"ה ימים.)

חמימים שנים ליום (במד' כח:ג)  $730 =$  (לומר לך שחשבון 730  
חמידין קרבין לשנה.)

The number derived is equal to the numerical equivalent of another word(s).

For example, the initial letters of the words in Gen. 49:9:

"Judah is a lions whelp..." are assigned their  
numerical equivalents ( $3+1+10=14$ ). This is equal to the numerical  
equivalent of the word דוד "David." ( $4+6+4=14$ )<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

על ימין או על שמאל (ברא' כד:מט)  $= 381 =$  ישמעל.<sup>2</sup>

כי יסיתך (דבר' יג:ז)  $= 30 =$  ביחוד. (רמז ליהוד מן  
החורה.)

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 68:11. This might also be a word play ( ישמעל=על שמאל )

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Kiddushin 80b.

In another example the numerical equivalent of the three names of God listed at the beginning of the 13 divine attributes:

אל יהוה יהוה (10+10+1=21) equals the numerical equivalent of

אהיה God's name in Ex. 3:14 (1+5+10+5=21), 21 is also the number derived by taking the first letters of the first words of the 5 books of the Torah: בראשית ואלה ויקרא וידבר אלה (2+6+6+6+1=21)<sup>1</sup>

God's name of אהיה is mentioned 3 times in the passage Ex. 3:14. Two occurrences of אהיה equals 21x2 or 42 which corresponds to the secret name of God which has 42 letters.<sup>2</sup> The 3 occurrences of אהיה equals 21x3 or 63; these 3 occurrences have 12 letters and alludes to the 12 tribes in whose names there are 50 letters. The 50 letters of the tribes added to the 13 letters of the names of the Patriarchs equals 63.<sup>3</sup>

31 The final letters of consecutive words are put together to form a new word. Asher calls this method סופי תיבות. The order of letters in the new word usually follows the order of occurrence,<sup>4</sup> e.g. אב, בל, גל = אבגל, the order can also be reversed,<sup>5</sup> גלב or scrambled<sup>6</sup> e.g. גלב or similar combinations.

<sup>1</sup>For other examples in which אהיה is used see methods 41.2, 56 and 68.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Tractenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition p.94.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Methods 27 and 77 in which all the letters of the names of the 12 tribes are employed.

<sup>4</sup>Elsewhere termed ס"ת כסדרן.

<sup>5</sup>Termed ס"ת למפרע.

<sup>6</sup>Elsewhere termed ס"ת לא כסדרן. For additional examples in which the final letters of words are put together to form a word see methods 33, 34, and 90.

Additional examples:

וייקץ יעקב ממשנחו ויאמר (ברא' - צבור  
(כח:טז)

וביום השביעי שבת וינפש (שמות לא: - שמים  
(יז)

את האור כי טוב (ברא' א:ד) - בריה

32. The final letters of consecutive words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together. Asher terms this method

The number itself can be the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Gen. 15:13: "...know for a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger," the final letters of "a stranger" equals 210 ( $10+200$ ). This alludes to the number of years the children of Israel were in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

יברכך יהוה וישמרך (במד' ו:כד) = 45 (שם של מ"ה תיבות).<sup>2</sup>

ולא תגרעו ממנו לשמור את (דבר' = 613 (תרי"ג מצוות.  
(ד:ב)

The number derived is equal to the numerical equivalent of another word(s). For example in Gen 22:11: ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה מן השמים "And the angel of the Lord called unto him....," the numerical equivalent of the final letters equals 122 ( $1+6+20+5+50+40$ ). This,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse and on Ex. 12:40.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Jewish Encyclopedia vol.9, p.164

says Asher, is equal to the numerical equivalent of **מיכאל היה**

"It was Michael"  $(40+10+20+1+30)+(5+10+5)=121$

Additional examples:

**ואצוה את השפטים בעת ההיא לאמר = 1046 = תמחין בכל דיניך**  
**(דבר' א:סז) (שצריך שיהיו מחונין בדין.)**

**כאשר צוך יהוה אלהיך (דבר' ה:סז) = 245 = מרה.**<sup>2</sup>

**ידיו רב לו (דבר' לג:ז) = 14 = דוד.**<sup>3</sup>

The last letters of the names of the Patriarchs are assigned their numerical equivalences: **אברהם = 40, יצחק = 100, מעקב = 2**

This is equal to the numerical equivalent of **"Balaam" בלעם**

$(2+30+70+40=142)$ . For Balaam says: "let my end be like his; let me die the death of the righteous."<sup>4</sup>

33# The first and last letters of consecutive words are put together to form a word. For example, the first and last letters of

**שנה שנים** (Ex. 19:38) form the word **השמש**, "the sun"

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sifre and Rashi on this verse.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 56b.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Sifre. For additional examples in which the final letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalences and added together see methods 48, 55, and 56.

<sup>4</sup>Asher notes that the numerical equivalent of **"righteous" ישרים** is 560  $(10+300+200+10+40)$ . This in turn is equal to **אבות העולם**  $(1+2+6+400)+(5+70+30+40)=560$  i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.



recalling the fact that the context, in which the words appear, discusses two lambs which were to be offered, one at dusk and one at dawn.<sup>1</sup>

Another example, forming a word from the first and last letters of successive words in two verses, is Ex. 35:4-5  $\text{חורה} = \text{השבת ויאמר}$ , for the Sabbath should be devoted to Torah.<sup>2</sup>

34# The numerical equivalents of the first letters of consecutive words are added together. Secondly, the last letters of these words are put together to form a new word. For example, Asher explains why Balaam was killed by the avenging Israelites<sup>3</sup> by citing Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man. But the end thereof are the ways of death." The initial letters of

$\text{י' ש' ד' ר' ר' ש'}$  "There is a way that seemeth right" have the combined numerical equivalent of 24 ( $10+4+10$ )<sup>4</sup>, and the final letters form the word  $\text{שכר}$  "reward."<sup>5</sup> By following Balaam's advice, Israel

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tamid 31b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Tana d'be Eliyahu Raba chapter 1, Tur Orah Hayim par. 290. For examples in which the final letters of words are put together to form a word see methods 31, 34, and 90.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Num. 31:8.

<sup>4</sup>For additional examples in which the first letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see methods 48 and 56.

<sup>5</sup>For additional examples in which the final letters of words are put together to form a word see methods 31, 33, and 90.

lost 24,000 people in the plague.<sup>1</sup> Balaam went to Midian to receive his reward, but his end was the way of death.<sup>2</sup>

35# The last letters of several pairs of words are the same. In the only occurrence of this method in Lev. 21:11: וְעַל כָּל-נִשְׁמַת מֵת לֹא יִטְמָא. the last letters of the several pairs of words are: אָא , וו , אָא , חח , לל . Since there are 4 pairs of letters, ל , ח , א , ו, Asher says this is an allusion to the fourth log of blood which if issued from a pair of corpses carries uncleanness.<sup>3</sup>

36# A particular letter is found in each word of a verse; the name of that letter is the basis of its interpretation. For example, in enumerating the children of Benjamin, Num. 26:39 states: "of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites." Each word has a pe. Pe can be spelled פה which can mean "mouth." This, says Asher, suggests that Benjamin had a mouth but did not tell his father about his brothers' selling of Joseph.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Num. 35.9.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rashi on Num. 31:8 and Numbers Rabbah 22:5.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 4a and Rashi on Lev. 21:11.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 71:8. For other examples in which the name of the letter is the basis for exegesis see methods 2.1, 7.4, 26, 10.1, 40, and 51.

37# The number of times a letter occurs in a verse is multiplied by its numerical value. The result is a number which can be applied to a rabbinic statement. The only example we have of this method is with the letter alef in Gen. 1:1 where the alef occurs 6 times:

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ. The alef can be assigned the numerical value of 1000 as well as 1 yielding  $6 \times 1000$  or 6000. Asher relates this to the 6000 years the world exists.<sup>1</sup>

38# Words in part of a verse end with the same letter. This verse is compared to a second verse which also contains words which end in the same letter. For example, in Dt. 11:16: השמרו לכם פן-יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחוויתם להם. the last 7 words end with a mem. And in Song of Songs 5:2: פתחי לי אחותי רעייתי... the words end in a yud. This verse is taken to refer to the Torah; the verse in Dt. speaks of idolotry. Since mem=40 and yud=10, Asher says one who is an idol worshipper is as one who has denied the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses on the 40th day.

There are 7 mems in the Dt. verse. The frequency of the letter mem suggests the word מומים "blemishes" which is made up of many mems. The 7 blemishes are reminiscent of the 7 defects of idols described in Psalm 115:6-7.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Avodah Zarah 9a. For additional examples in which the number of times a letter occurs in a verse is counted see methods 38 and 39.

<sup>2</sup>"They have mouths but they speak not. They have eyes but see not. They have ears but they hear not; Noses they have but they smell not. They have hands but they handle not. Feet they have but they walk not. Neither speak they with their throat." For other examples in which homonyms are used see methods 13.1, 21, 22.3, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 94.2, and 100. And for other examples in which the number of times a letter occurs in a verse is counted, see methods 37 and 39.

39# Each word in the verse ends with the same letter. In the one use of this method Asher compares Gen 32:15: עוֹלִים מֵאֵתִים וְחִישִׁים  
 עֲשִׂים רְחִלִים מֵאֵתִים וְאֵלִים עֲשִׂים      to Num. 29:33:      וּמִנְחָתָם

All the words end with the letter mem. The letter mem itself has no exegesis but serves only to relate the two verses. The verse in Genesis enumerates Jacob's gifts to Esau; the verse in Numbers describes the additional sacrifices offered in the Temple. There are 550 animals listed in Genesis 32:15-16 and likewise, says Asher, there are 550 additional sacrifices a year offered in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

On the verse in Genesis, Asher notes there are 8 mems, the number 8 being important since there are 8 kings who reigned in Edom before a king ruled in Israel.<sup>2</sup> (In the Genesis verse Jacob is offering a gift to Esau/Edom.)

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<sup>1</sup> Additional sacrifices ( מוסף ) of Sabbath and Rosh Hodesh:	236
Additional sacrifices of Passover and the ewe which comes with the omer:	78
Additional sacrifices of Tabernacles and the 2 loaves:	24
Additional sacrifices of Rosh Hashona:	10
Additional sacrifices of Yom Kippur and the 2 he-goats and 1 ram:	13
Additional sacrifices of Sukkoth with the 70 bulls:	189

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550

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Genesis 36:31-41 and Genesis Rabbah 75:11. For additional examples in which the number of times a letter found in a verse is counted see methods 37 and 38.

The repeated number of occurrences of the letter mem suggests to Asher the word מומים ("blemishes") because the cattle presented to Esau by Jacob were blemished.<sup>1</sup> This might be a play on the plural of the letter mem מומים.<sup>2</sup>

40# The same letter is found at the beginning and end of a verse. The name of the letter is the basis for interpretation. For example, Dt. 12:21: "If the place which the Lord thy God shall choose...then shall thou kill of thy herd...after all the desire of thy soul" begins and ends with a kaf (כִּי...נֶפֶשׁ) Kaf means "hand"; this suggests that the one who slaughters must examine the lungs of the animal with his hand.<sup>3</sup>

40.1 The same letter is found at the beginning and end of a verse, and is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, Gen. 19:23: הֵשֶׁם יֵצֵא עַל הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צֹאֲרָה. begins and ends with a he. He is assigned its numerical equivalent of 5, teaching us, says Asher, that Lot walked 5 miles before the sun rose.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lekah Tov.

<sup>2</sup>For other examples in which homonyms are employed see methods 13.1, 21, 22.k, 38, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 97.2, and 100.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Isserles, Yoreh Deah 39:17; Itur Bikurim (n.1022) says the 2 kafs refers to two actions: the actual slaughtering and the examining of the lungs. Reinetz (p.392 n.30) disagrees inferring that Itur Bikurim is making his own midrash. For other examples in which the name of the letter is the basis for exegesis see methods 2.1, 7.4, 7.6, 10.1, 37 and 51.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Pesahim 93b.

## Additional examples:

מראשית ערסתיכם חתנו ליהוה הרו - מ' לומר לך שחרומת עין יפה  
חרומה לדרתיכם (במד' טו:כא) אחד ממ'.

אלף למטה אלף לכל מסות ישראל - א' לומר לך שכולם היו להם  
תשלחו לצבא (במד' לא:ד) לב אחד לאביהם שבשמים.<sup>2</sup>

נבוא מקרבך כמני יקים לך יהוה - נ' לומר שידע נ' שערי בינה.<sup>3</sup>  
אלהיך אליו תשמעון (דבר' יח:טו)

41# - A word is formed by taking the first and last letters of  
a verse. For example, the first and last letters of Dt. 6:4: שמע  
spell "demon." When one recites  
the Sh'ma with devotion (כוונה) he makes the demons flee.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly:

האזינו השמים ואדברה ותשמה - יה (יהוה) שכלל השם בראש השירה.  
הארץ אמרי פי. (דבר' לב:א)

41.1# A number is formed by taking the numerical equivalent  
of the first and last letters of a verse. For example, in Dt. 7:14:  
ברוך חהיה מכל-העמים לא-יהיה בך עקר ועקרה ובהמתך  
the numerical value of the first and last letters equals 22 (2+20),  
which signifies the Torah which is written by means of the 22 letters  
of the alphabet.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mishnah Terumot 4:3.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Yevamot 61a.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rosh Hashonah 21b.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Berachot 5a.



41.2# The first and last letters of a verse are put together to form a word. The numerical equivalent of the two letters equals the number of words in the verse from which the letters are taken. Moreover, that word reminds us of another verse which begins with the same word. For example in the verse **אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה אַתָּה הַחֲלָחָה** לְרֹאוֹת אֶת--עַבְדְּךָ אֶת-גְּדִלְךָ וְאֶת-יָדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה אֲשֶׁר מִי--אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

the first and last letters spell **אֶךְ** which equals 21 (1+20) which equals the number of words in the verse.<sup>1</sup> We are moreover reminded of Psalms 73:1

... **אֶךְ טוֹב לִישְׂרָאֵל** and the word **אֱהִיָּה** (Ex. 3:14) the numerical equivalent of which is also 21 (1+5+10+5).<sup>2</sup>

42 The number of letters in a verse is counted. For example, in Num. 6:24 : **יְבָרְכְךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ** there are 15 letters. This suggests, says Asher, the number of years that Jacob saw Abraham,<sup>3</sup> and is the number derived by adding the 3 Patriarchs to the 12 tribes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the number of words in a verse is counted see methods 44, 72, 73, 73.1, 74, and 96.

<sup>2</sup>For additional examples in which **אֱהִיָּה** is used see methods 30, 56, and 68.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Seder Olam, chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 80:13. For other examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted see methods 22.1, 24.2, 42, 72.1, 73, and 89.

43" The entire alphabet is in a verse. For example, in Ex. 16:16: **זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לִקְטוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ לְפִי אֲכָלוּ עֵמָר לְגִלְגֹּלֶת מִסֹּפֶר נִפְשֵׁיכֶם אִישׁ לְאִשֶּׁר בָּאֵהָלוּ תִקְחוּ.**

"this is the thing which the Lord hath commanded: Gather ye of it every man according to his eating...." the entire alphabet is found. Since the Torah is composed of the 22 letters of the alphabet, one who fulfills the Torah is as one who eats manna. Accordingly, God will sustain one who studies Torah as he did to those who ate the manna.<sup>1</sup>

44# The first and last letters of 2 consecutive verses are the same. They are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together. This number is equal to the number of words in the 2 verses. For example, in Ex. 21:26-27: **לְכִי-יָכָה אִישׁאֶחָת-עֵין עֲבָדוּ אוֹ-אֶחָת-עֵין וְלֹא-יִפְּלוּ לַחֲפָשִׁי אֶמְתוּ וְשִׁחֲתָה לַחֲפָשִׁי שְׁלַחְנוּ חֲתָה עֵינוּ. וְלֹא-שָׁן אֶמְתוּ יִפְּלוּ לַחֲפָשִׁי יִשְׁלַחְנוּ חֲתָה שָׁן.**

each verse begins and ends with a vav. The 4 vavs are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together: vav = 6;  $4 \times 6 = 24$ . This alludes to the 24 limbs that a slave can lose and thereby acquire his freedom.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Mehilta. For other examples in which the presence of the entire alphabet in a verse or section is employed in the exegesis, see methods 53 and 99.3.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Kiddushin 79a. For additional examples in which the number of words in a verse is counted see methods 41.2, 72.1, 73, 73.1, 74, and 96.

There are, moreover, 24 words in these 2 verses. If one adds to these 24 words שין and עין, which are the technical "shorthand" terms for the loss of limbs by a slave, we get 26. This is reminiscent of Gen. 9:25-26; וַיֹּאמֶר אֱרֹר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים

יְהִי לְאַחִי. וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לְמֹנֶה. which also have vavs at the beginning and end of each verse and, in addition, have 26 words. These verses relate to the servitude of the Canaanites.

45# Two verses are compared by rearranging the letters of a word from the second verse to form a word that is found in the first verse. For example Num. 14:4: "Let us make a captain<sup>1</sup> (רֹאשׁ) is compared to Ex. 32:1: "...make us a God who shall go before us." The letters of אֲשֶׁר "who" are rearranged for form רֹאשׁ "captain." Therefore, just as the Ex. incident happened after 40 days<sup>2</sup> so the Num. incident happened after 40 days.

46# The number of letters in a section is counted and related to an adjacent verse. For example, in the section Num. 10:35-36, which is enclosed by inverted nuns, there are 85 letters. Any section of Scripture which contains, as this one, 85 letters, is to be saved from fire<sup>3</sup> recalling the next verse: "...and the fire of the Lord burnt among them." (Num. 11:1)

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse and Sanhedrin 107a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ex. 24:18. For other examples of anagrams see methods 3, 11, 2, 20.1-6, 69.1, 84.1, and 85(f).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Shabbat 115b.

47# Two adjacent words are assigned their numerical equivalents and multiplied by the number of times they are found together in a section. For example, the words אב המון "father of a multitude" are found twice in the sedra לך לך (Gen. 12-17).<sup>1</sup> Their numerical equivalent is  $104 \times 2 = 208$   $(1+2) \times (5+40+6+50) \times 2$ . This is equal to the numerical equivalent of נצח "Isaac."  $(10+90+8+100 = 208.)$

48# The first letter of the first word of each verse in a section is assigned its numerical equivalent. In Jacob's blessing to Dan in Gen. 49:16-18 the first letters of the first words of the verse are לשעתיך יהיו לך . Their combined numerical equivalent is 44  $(4+10+30)$ .<sup>2</sup> This number is equal to the numerical equivalent of the word כדוד "as David."<sup>3</sup>

In another example, Joseph's blessing to the tribes in Gen. 49: 3-27, the first letter, after each tribal name in a section is assigned its numerical equivalent and the last letter of the blessing is assigned its numerical equivalent.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Gen. 17:4 : לאב המון .Asher drops the lamed in deriving the numerical equivalent.

<sup>2</sup>For additional examples in which the first letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see m. 34 and 56.

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 49:16: "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." Rashi interprets כןאס "as one" to mean the "most distinguished" tribe. This then refers to David who is from the tribe of Judah.

<sup>4</sup>For additional examples in which the final letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see methods 32, 55, and 56.

5 = עלה ...	2 = ראובן בכורי
30 = בישראל...	1 = שמעון ולוי אחים
2 = מחלב...	1 = יהודה אמה
50 = דוד...	30 = זבולן לחוף
4 = עבד...	8 = יששכר חמר
5 = יהוה...	10 = דן ידין
2 = עקב...	3 = גד גרוד
20 = מלך...	300 = מאשר שמנה
200 = שפר...	1 = נפתלי אילה
6 = אחיר...	2 = יוסף בק
30 = שלל	7 = בנימין זאב

354

365

There are 354 days in the lunar year and 365 days in the solar year.

49# A word is formed by taking the first and last letters of a "section."<sup>1</sup> For example, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2-14) begins with an alef in the word אנכי and ends with a kaf in the word כרעך. This spells אך which is reminiscent of the first word in Ps. 73:1... אך טוב לישראל.

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<sup>1</sup>Asher applies the term "section" to any portion of a text which discusses the same topic. This "section" may extend in size from a portion of text bracketed by a petihau or stuma to a chapter or more. We use the term "section" to describe this textual unit.

50# In a group of related names in a section some letters are absent. For example, in the names of the tribes (Gen. 49:1-27) enumerated in Jacob's blessing, the letters chet, gof, and tsade are absent.<sup>1</sup> Jacob wanted to reveal what would befall the tribes in the end ( קץ ) of days; but since the letters gof and tsade were not in their names<sup>2</sup> he thought that there was some sin, חטא standing for חטא , but was reassured when he could not find the letter chet among their names.<sup>3</sup>

51# In a group of related names in a section, a letter is found to be present in only one of the names and therefore singled out for attention. For example in the names of the 12 tribes, the sons of Jacob,<sup>1</sup> the letter ס occurs only in the name יוסף . Since ס and ש are sometimes interchangeable in Hebrew words,

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<sup>1</sup> ראובן, שמעון, לוי, יהודה, יששכר, זבולן, דן, נפתלי, גד, אשר, יוסף, בנימין.

For another example in which the absence of a letter from a name is used in the exegesis see method 2.3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Yoma 73b.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Similarly in Num. 23:21: לא הביט און ביעקב ולא-ראה עמל בישראל יהוה אלהיו עמו וחזקת כלך בו. Balaam saw no evil in Jacob because the letter chet (i.e. "sin") is not found in the names of the tribes. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 21, 22.3, 30, 39, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2 and 100.



Asher regards the ו as a clue for ו "tempter," and explains that the tempter of Esau is Joseph. Similarly, the letter י is found only in the name י means "eye" and is reminiscent of Job 24:15: "the eye of the adulterer waits of the twilight!"<sup>1</sup> The adulterer referred to is a descendent of Simeon whose adultery is described in Num. 24:6 and 25:14.

52# All the letters of the alphabet except one are found in a section.

(1) The missing letter is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, in the section Dt. 27:1-9, which describes the crossing of the Jordan, the letter sameh is absent. The children of Israel are said to have traveled 60 (sameh = 60) miles ( מ ) before they erected the stones.<sup>2</sup> (Cf. Dt. 27:5)

(2) The missing letter is the first letter of a word which is the basis of the exegesis. For example, in the section Ex. 25:31-40 which describes the menorah, there is no sameh. Also in the Creation Story of Gen. 1:1-2:1 there is no sameh. The absence of the sameh suggests the absence of ו "Satan" since sameh and shin can be substituted for each other. For where there is light (suggested by the menorah and creation) neither Satan nor a demon can rule. Asher cites Proverbs 6:23: "the commandment is a lamp and its teaching is a light", saying that the mouth of Satan is closed ( ש ) from vilifying.

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<sup>1</sup>For other examples in which the name of the letter is the basis for exegesis, see methods 2.1, 7.4, 7.6, 10.1, 37 and 40.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sotah 33b, Sanhedrin 44a.

In the section of blessings (Lev. 26:3-13) and Jacob's blessing to Esau (Gen. 27:28-29) there are 2 letters missing: sameh and the final pe. The sameh is for שטן "Satan" and the final pe for אֵין , אֵין , אֵין (terms for anger) indicating the absence of these negative qualities from the blessings.<sup>1</sup>

53# The entire alphabet is found in a section. For example, the entire alphabet is found in Dt. 33:20-21, Moses' blessing of Gad. Moses fulfilled all the Torah, which is composed of the 22 letters of the alphabet; he is buried in the territory of Gad,<sup>2</sup> since Gad is the subject of Moses' blessing that contains the 22 letters.

Similarly, Moses' blessing of Joseph in Dt. 33:13-18 contains the entire alphabet. Joseph's casket was carried with the Ark because Joseph fulfilled the Torah.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joshua Trachtenberg in Jewish Magic and Superstition says: "I may also mention the malache kabbala 'angels (or demons) of destruction' who made their initial appearance in the Talmud, and who were not absent from the medieval scene. Their names end with the letter pe, we are informed. The fact that the titles of the daily synagogue services, the eighteen benedictions, the prayer yozer or, and the grace after meals do not contain this letter, was cited as proof that prayers serve as a protective agent from these destroying angels." (p.28)

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sifre and Rashi on this verse.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Sotah 13a. For other examples in which the presence of the entire alphabet in a verse or section is used in the exegesis see methods 43 and 99.3.

54: Derived forms of the same root are found in 2 similar verses. These words are compared; the letters which are different are assigned their numerical equivalents. For example, the daily sacrificial offering is constituted, among other things, of a "tenth part of an ephah...mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil" (Ex. 29:40; Num. 28:5). In the Exodus verse "tenth" is written ועשרן and in the Num. verse ועשרית. The differing letters yod and tav are assigned their numerical equivalents of 10 and 400 (=410). This, says Asher, is reminiscent to the 410 years the first Temple existed. Similarly, "mingled" in the Exodus verse is written בלול and בלולה in the Numbers verse. The "extra" he (=5) alludes to the 5 kinds of meal offerings<sup>1</sup> which atones for the soul which has 5 names.<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

במדבר סין (שמות סז:יא) במדבר סין (במד' לג:יא)  
שנחסף לו י' כנגד עשרת הדברות. סין ימים היה משה בהר.

פסל כל חמונה (דבר' ה:כח) לכל חמונה (שמות כ:ד)  
כנגד ו' דברים: חבניה זכר או נקבה, חבניה כל בהמה, חבניה  
כל צפור, חבניה כל רומש, חבניה כל דגה. (דבר' ד:סז-יח)

כל המקום (דבר' יא:כד) כל מקום (יהושע א:ג) שה' שבטים  
לא הוריש יהושע.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> מנחת הסולה, מחבת, מרחשת, מאפה, ריקיקין

<sup>2</sup> Genesis Rabbah 4:11.

<sup>3</sup> Joshua 18:2: "And there remained among the children of Israel 7 tribes which had not yet received their inheritance" Rashi: Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manassah received their share in the days of Moses across the Jordan. In the land of Canaan Judah and Ephraim already were assigned their inheritance. For other examples in which similar verses are compared see methods 54.1, 64.3, 64.4, 80, 81 and 82.

54.1# In a related example the letters which are different are assigned their numerical equivalents and subtracted. The result is the basis for the exegesis. For example, Num. 10:14-17 lists the leader of each tribe as they set forth from the wilderness of Sinai. In each one the word  $\text{נסו}$  "set forward" is found except for the tribe of Judah which has  $\text{נסו}$  (Num. 10:14). The nun is assigned its numerical equivalent of 50 and the yod its numerical equivalent of 10; the difference being  $50 - 10$  or 40. This, says Asher, alludes to the 40 years in the desert in which the bones of Judah were carried in the coffin.<sup>1</sup>

55# The last letters of the first words of each book of the Torah are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together.

(5=) אלה (200=) וידבר (1=) ויקרא (5=) ואלה (400=) בראשית  
The total (611) is equal to the numerical equivalent of  $\text{ירא}$  "fear"  
( $10+200+1+400$ ) and alludes to Ps. 111:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Makkot 11b. For other examples in which similar verses are compared see methods 54, 64.3, 64.4, 80, 81, and 82.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 18:17. For additional examples in which the final letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see methods 32, 48, and 56.

56# The first letters of the first words of each book of the Torah are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together. The last letters of the last words of each book of the Torah are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together.<sup>1</sup> The first and last letters with their numerical equivalents are:

40	בראשית...במצרים	2
40	ואלה...מסעיהם	6
100	ויקרא...סיני	6
6	וידבר...ירחל	6
<u>30</u>	אלה...ישראל	<u>1</u>
126		21

The sum of the first letters (21) is equal to אהיה "I am" (Ex. 35:1)  $(1+5+10+5=21)$ ; <sup>2</sup> the sum of the last letters (126) equals הוא אלהינו זה "This is our God  $(5+6+1)+(1+30+5+10+50+6)+ (7+5)=126$ ". These two sums are reminiscent of Is. 41:4: "I, the Lord am the first, and with the last am the same."

<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the final letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see methods 32, 48, and 55. And for additional examples in which the first letters of words are assigned their numerical equivalents and added together see methods 34 and 48.

<sup>2</sup>For other examples in which אהיה is used, see methods 30, 41.2, and 68.

57/ A word is written defectively ( חסר ). Asher interprets the defectiveness of the word. For example, in Gen. 1:14: "let there be lights;" מארה "lights" is written defectively without vavs. This alludes to the fact that only the sun and not the moon actually gives light.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

ושמעו לקלך (שמות ג:יח) חסר ו; רצון לומר שאינך צריך להרבות בקלך כי מיד ישמעו לך.

כבר את-אביך ואח אמן למען חסר י', שאין אריכה ימים בעולם יארכון (שמות כ:יב) הזה.

שמן למארה (שמות כה:ו) חסר ו', ולא לאורה הוא צריך.<sup>4</sup>

Two words which sound almost alike are defective. The "missing letter" is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example in Num.11:11, God says to Moses, "Why have I not found favor in thy sight?" מצחי "I found" is written defectively without an alef. This is compared to Job 1:21: Naked came I out of my mother's womb..." יצחי "came I" is also written defectively without an alef and sounds like מצחי . Alef (=1) alludes to the 1 God to whom Moses said, "If I have not found favor in Thy sight, why did I come out of my mother's womb?"

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Pesikta Rabbat: sec. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Exodus Rabbah 3:11.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Kiddushin 39b. Itur Bikurim (n.437) says the world to come is created with a yod. Just as the world to come is hidden from us so is the yod of וארכון . Cf. Menahot 29b.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Shabbat 22b.



57.1<sup>1</sup> A word is written defectively ( חסר ) making it possible for a word play. For example, in Gen. 37:16 Joseph asks of his brethren: "...where they are feeding the flock." רָעִים "feeding the flock" is written without a vav and can be read רָעִים "evil". This is an allusion to the days of the evil King Jeroboam who began to rule in Shechem,<sup>1</sup> the same place where the flock was feeding.<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

כלנה (ברא' מב:לו) כתיב חסר (קרי ביה כלנה) שעלי מוטל מזון  
נשותיהם שהם כלוחי.

וירכתו על צידון כתיב חסר. הוא לשון צידה שהיה מספק מזון  
(ברא' מט:יג) לישכר.

ככלהו לדבר (שמות) מה כלה מקושטת בכ"ד קישוטין המנויין כישיע  
אף חלמיד חכם צריך להיות מרושט בכ"ד ספרים. (לא:יח)

58# A word is a palindrome, i.e. it is read the same backward as forward. For example, in Ex. 30.42 the word ונתנו "then shall they give..." is the same read forward and backward. This means, says Asher, that whatever a man gives to charity will eventually be returned

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<sup>1</sup>Kings 12:25

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 37:12.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Exodus Rabbah 41:6. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 21, 22.3, 38, 39 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.

to him and he will not ever lack because of his giving charity.<sup>1</sup>

59# A new word is formed by reading a word backwards.

According to tradition each of the 3 Priestly Benedictions is assigned to a Patriarch; the second benediction is given to Isaac,<sup>2</sup> the second Patriarch. The first word of this benediction רא' read backwards is רא' for Isaac's ascent to the altar constituted proof i.e. ראיה of loyalty to God.

60 Exact homonyms or semi-homonyms (words close in sound) are employed for exegesis. נח (Gen. 6:9) for example, can mean "comfort."<sup>3</sup> In Gen 28:16: "And Jacob awakened out of his sleep,"

ממשינו "his sleep" suggests משנה "Mishna" indicating that Jacob meditated on Torah<sup>4</sup>. המהמס "the night hawk" (Lev. 11:16) is so named because it does violence חמס.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tur Yerah Deah n.247. Itur Bikurim (n.511) says that there is also an allusion here to the 2 givings of shekels for Israel and for Haman. He quotes Megillah 13b: "It is well known beforehand to Him at whose word the world came into being that Haman would one day pay shekels for the destruction of Israel." Therefore, God made the shekels for Israel come before the shekels of Haman.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Asher's proof of this in method 73.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 84:8.

<sup>4</sup>ibid. 69:5.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Ibn Ezra on this verse. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 20.3, 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.

Additional examples:

וירא בלק(במד' כב:ב) בא ללוק דמן של ישראל.

יורו משפטיך ליעקב (דבר' לג:י) שיפוצו בכל ישראל ללמוד  
תורה.

• 61 A word is singled out in a verse; this word is contrasted with a synonymous word or expression which does not appear. For example, Abraham tells his servant Eliezer to find a wife for his son Isaac. Eliezer is to go "to my kindred" (ממשפחתי) (Gen. 24:41). Abraham did not say אל בית אבי ("to the house of my father"); for if you do not find him a wife from the house of my fathers, go to the house of my mother.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

ויאמר להם השלום לו ויאמרו שלום (ברא' כט:ו) ולא אמרו שלום לו, כו אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים. (ישעיה נז:כא).

ויקם בלעם וילך וישב למקומו וגם הלך לדרכו. (במד' כד:כה)  
ולא אמר הלך לדרכו (לבלעם) שנטרד מדרכו וירד לגיהנם.

ויאמר בני-גד ובני ראובן אל משה (במד' לב:כה) ויאמרו היה לו לומר אלא הגדול שבהם דיבר בשביל כולם.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gen. 24:38.

62 A word or phrase is singled out and is explained by a word association. For example, Ex. 19:6 states: "And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests..." If the children of Israel had been worthy, says Asher, all of them would have become High Priests and not just Aaron and his seed.<sup>1</sup> But in the future all of Israel will indeed be priests for it says in Isaiah 61:6 "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord..."

In another example, Lev. 1:11 states in reference to the sacrifices: "And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward..." This is to defend against Jer. 1:4: "...out of the north the evil shall break forth."

Commenting on Dt. 1:16: "And I charged your judges at that time saying..." Asher says that "at that time" refers to each judge in his generation for he is as Moses was in his generation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sifre.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rosh Hashona 25'.

## Additional examples:

ותכחין עיניו מראת (ברא' כז:א) משום דכתיב: כי השוחד יעור  
(דבר' טז:יט) והוא לקח שוחד  
מעשו.

על נפש מת לא יבא (במד' ו:ו) לומר לך שאם חשרה עליו שכינה  
מחמת נזרו שלא<sup>2</sup> יאמרו שהוא  
דורש אל המתים.

וימסרו מאלפי ישראל (במד' לא:ה) שמסרו עצמם על קדושת השם  
להצלת ישראל.

63 A number is singled out in a verse and is utilized to explain an adjacent verse. For example, Dt. 16:16 "Three times a year..." the number 3 is used to explain the meaning of "Judges and officers shall thou make thee..." (Dt. 16:18). "Judges", says Asher, refers to the Sanhedrin which meets at three places; the Temple Mount, the Temple Court, and the Chamber of Hewn Stone.<sup>4</sup> It is also reminiscent of the 3 rows of scholars who sit before the Sanhedrin.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tanhuma.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Sifre.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:4.

<sup>5</sup>ibid 11:2.

63.1# A number stated in one verse is related to the following verse. The numerical equivalent of a word in a third verse is equal to that number. That number is then assigned its letter equivalent whose position in the alphabet adds exegesis to the verses. For example, Dt. 8:4: "Thy rainment did wax not old upon thee...these 40 years," is followed by "And thou shalt consider in thy heart..." Therefore 40 is the age for understanding.<sup>1</sup> Further proof is taken from Is. 6:10: "...understanding with their heart" The numerical equivalent of **לבב** "their heart" is equal to 40 (30+2+2+6). Furthermore, the letter mem which equals 40 is in the middle of the alphabet as the heart is in the middle of the body.<sup>2</sup>

63.2# A number is singled out in a verse; it is related to the same number occurring in another verse. For example, in Gen 33:3: Jacob met Esau and "bowed himself to the ground 7 times." This is reminiscent of Proverbs 24:16: "...a righteous man falleth 7 times and riseth up again "....and Proverbs 26:25: "For there are 7 abominations in his heart."

63.3 A number is singled out in a verse; its occurrence is explained by reference to the occurrence of that number in another context. For example, in Lev. 12:2: "If a woman be delivered, and bear a male, then she shall be unclean 7 days..." The 7 also refers to the 7 days of mourning for just as one comes into the world, so he leaves.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Avot 5:21.

<sup>2</sup> See also method 7.3 in which the position of a letter in the alphabet is used in the exegesis.



## Additional examples:

ועשית שנים כרבים (שמות כה:יח) כמו שני חברים שנושאים  
ונותנים בדברי חורה.

שבעת הנרות (במד' ח:ב) כנדג ז' המזלות חנכ"ל  
שצ"ס.

עשה לך שתי חצוצרות (במד' י:ב) כנגד אברהם ויעקב שעשו מלחמה  
ונצחים.

64 Attention is drawn to certain words whose occurrence in a  
verse is assigned specific rhetorical functions. (1) The words אך, רק  
and אפס are said to possess limiting functions. (מיעוט)  
(2) The words אך and או are assigned the quality of inclusion.  
( ) לרבות אך limits the topic being considered. For  
example, in Ex. 31:13: "Verily ( אך ) ye shall keep My Sabbaths..."  
the word אך suggests that there are times when one cannot keep  
the Sabbath, such as when saving a life,<sup>1</sup> offering sacrifices,<sup>2</sup> or  
building attack bulwarks against a city.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Yoma 85b.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tosefta Shabbat 16:13.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Shabbat 19a.

## Additional examples:

- אך בעשור לחדש (ויק' כג:כז) שמכפר לשביט ואינו מכפר לשאינם שבים.
- ואך את הדבר (במד' כב:כ) יכול אם ירצה לקלל ישראל עמהם או אם ירצה לברך ישראל יברך האומות. ח"ל אך: חלק.
- אך כאשר יאכל את חצבי ואח האיל (דבר' יב:כב) שאינן חייבין במתנות.<sup>2</sup>

In Gen. 7:23: "...and Noah only was left..."

אך is used after the word וישאר which is also said to have limiting properties. The principle applied in this case is that limitation after limitation includes rather than excludes; the first limitation is וישאר and the second one is אך. Therefore Noah's survival included also the survival of Og the giant who still remained alive through the flood.<sup>3</sup>

64.1# רק also has a limiting function. After the conquest of Sihon, the Israelite say: "Only the cattle we took for a prey..." (Dt. 2:35) רק "only" suggests that the fat ones were excluded to be offered as sacrifices.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Shavuot 73b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Hullin 130a and Rashi there.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Zebahim 113b.

## Additional examples:

- רק עם- חכם ונבון הגוי הגדול הזה      שאינם יודעים טעם, כלאים  
(דבר' ד:ו)      ורפה וכיוצא בהם.
- רק באבחיך חשק יהודה לאהבה אותם      שגם עליהם יש דין. אברהם  
(דבר' י:טו)      במה אדע, יצחק אהב את עשו  
2. יעקב אמר נסחרה דרכי מיחורה.

64.2#      אפס      also has a limiting function. For example, in describing the requirements of the shmitah "the year of release" Dt. 15:3-4 says: "...whatsoever of thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release. Howbeit..."      אפס      "howbeit" limits the requirements of release for a loan secured by a pledge does not fall within the terms of the shmitah.<sup>3</sup>

643      אק      is inclusive and can include things not specifically mentioned in the verse. For example, in Num. 21:6: "And the Lord sent fiery serpents (אק) among the people..."

אק      tells us that dogs and wild animals were also sent in this plague.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tanhuma Hukat 7.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 36:4.

<sup>3</sup>Mishnah Sheviit 10:8.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Numbers Rabbah 19:12.

## Additional examples:

אח הכחנה... אחציץ... (שמות לט: שהיה לכל אחד ואחד התיק שלו.  
כז, ל)

והביא אח-קרננו (ויק' ד: כג) בקרבן נשיא רבוי לומר שיביא  
קרבן שמן גדול, לפי שנכלל יום  
אוכל פסומנה, ולא יהא שלחנו  
רבו ריקס.

אח-הברכה (דבר' יא: כז) לרבות כי לא נפל אחד מכל דברו  
טוב ובקלה לא אמר אח אלה  
והקללה.

In another example **אח** adds another dimension to a commandment. In comparing 2 verses we find that in respect to the herd (בקר) the "laying of hands" is termed **וסמך ידו** (Lev. 3:2) but in respect to the sheep and goats it is termed **וסמך את ידו** (Lev. 1:13). The reason given by Asher is that the herd animal is strong and can withstand the "laying of hands" and thus one can perform this action with all ones strength;<sup>3</sup> but the sheep and goats are weak and so one cannot use all his strength. Therefore in respect to the sheep and goats it is written **אח** to provide us with the additional information that these animals are weak.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hagiga 7a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Tanhuma R'eh 4.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Zebuhim 33a.

<sup>4</sup>For other examples in which similar verses are compared see methods 54, 54.1, 64.4, 80, 81, and 82.

64.4# The inclusive quality of **אח** is also seen in its being used to add 1 to the apparent numerical equivalent of an adjacent word. For example, in Dt. 26:17: **אח יהוה האמרתה** "Thou hast affirmed the Lord..." **יהוה** is abbreviated **ה** (for **השם** "the Name") and assigned its numerical equivalent of 5. The word **אח** adds 1 more making the total 5 + 1 or 6. This, says Asher, alludes to the 6 orders of the Mishnah.<sup>1</sup>

64.5' The particle **או** is also inclusive. Comparing the terminology used for sacrifices, we find it is written about large herd animals **אם זכר אם נקבה** "whether male or female" (Lev. 3:1). But with respect to sheep and goats it is written **זכר או נקבה** "male or female." **או** includes the sacrificing of young animals who are 13 months old.<sup>2</sup>

65# The Masoretic text has a pesik after a word, which Asher explains as a pause. For example in Num. 3:38: **והחנים לפני המשכן | קדמה לפני אהל-מועד | מזרח משה | ואהרן ובניו...** "And those that were to pitch before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrising were Moses, and Aaron and his sons...", the pesik between "Moses" and "and Aaron and his sons...", is explained by Asher as being a pause. Moses was in one place alone and Aaron and his sons were in another place alone.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This seems to be the exegetical method. Asher does not tell us explicitly how he derives the number 6.

<sup>2</sup>הפלים. Cf. Mishnah Parah 1:3. Cf. also method 64 in which **אך** in one special case has the quality of inclusion. For other methods in which similar verses are compared see methods 54, 54.1, 64.3, 80, 81, and 82.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Tamid 26a. Asher does not interpret the pesik between **אהל-מועד** and **מזרח**.

## Additional examples:

ויאמר משה אל אהרן ולאעזר ולאיתמר | בניו (ויק' י:ו)  
לומר שאף הם היו ראויים אלא שפסקה מהם הגזירה.

איש איש יהיו טמא | לנפש או בדרך לכם (במד' ט:י)  
לומר לך שיש חילוק בן הטמאים, איש נדחה ואין ציבור נדחין.<sup>1</sup>

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד (דבר' ו:ג)  
לומר שע"פ שראפס כמה דמיונות ואע"פ שאני בא עם זה במדת הדין  
ועם זה במדה הרחמים אע"פ הכל אחד.<sup>2</sup>

66# A word is singled out for attention by the occurrence of 2 different trope/accents marks on a single word. For example, in the one occurrence of this method which describes the removal of Nadab and Abihu who were struck down by God for offering "strange fire," Mishael and Elzaphan are instructed by Moses in Lev. 10:4 to "draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp."

קרבו "draw near has 2 accents;<sup>3</sup> this shows that Mishael and Elzaphan did not go near them in the sanctuary, but rather they

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Pesahim 66b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mehilta Yitro 20:2.

<sup>3</sup> גרשים actually גרש חלשה



stretched out a spear of iron and dragged them outside.<sup>1</sup>

67# A word is repeated in a verse; the apparent redundancy is the basis of the exegesis. For example, in describing what classes of people defile a priest, Lev. 21:1 states: "And the Lord said unto Moses: 'speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them: There shall none defile himself for the dead among his people.'" Asher assigns the 2 words "speak" and "say" 2 meanings. The first word is interpreted to mean that a priest may not defile himself on account of others; the apparent redundancy "says" is interpreted to mean that a priest may defile himself on account of a corpse that has no one to bury it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Itur Bikurim (n.583) says the name of the 2 accents are being utilized in the explanation. חרסה is sometimes called חרסה which resembles חרס "shield;" a shield and a spear are weapons which are used to defend oneself. These weapons were their defense so as not to draw near the sanctuary. Therefore they dragged (גרש גררה) them from the sanctuary. This interpretation relates to Sifra which states that a spear of iron was used to drag the bodies from the sanctuary. Reineitz (p.229,n.27) says the interpretation is not based on the names of the accents; but the fact of the 2 accents shows that the 2 did not really draw near but rather there was a distance between them and the dead ones inside.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 26:8 which has the reverse.

68 The number of times a word or derived forms of a word is found in a verse is counted. For example, the word נח is found 3 times in Gen. 6:9: <sup>נח</sup>אלה חולדות, <sup>נח</sup>נח איש צדיק חמים היה בדורחיו אה האלהים <sup>נח</sup>החלהך נח.

This means, says Asher, that Noah saw 3 worlds and saved his 3 sons.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, God's name אהיה is found 3 times in Ex. 3:14: ויאמר

אלהים אל-משה אהיה אשר אהיה יומר כה תאמר לבני ישראל אהיה <sup>corresponding to the 3 Patriarchs.</sup><sup>2</sup>

The 2 words לך לך "Get thee" in Gen. 12:1 are counted in the same way even though they are not the same in meaning; unvocalized they appear the same. The double occurrence of לך לך reminds us that just as Abram was told to get out of his country by לך לך so Israel was exiled twice.

Additional examples;

ומה כל-בכור בארץ מבכור פרעה הישב על-כסא עד בכור השפחה אשר אחר הרחים וכל בכור בהמה. (שמות יא:ה) ג' פעמים בכור כנגד בכור לאב ובכור לאם וגדול הבית. ובכור בהמה אינו מהחשבון שהוא צריך לגופה.

וכל-קרבן מנחתך במלח במלח ולא המלח (ויק' ב:יג) ג' פעמים מלח משום דבג' מקומות המלה נהון: בלשנת המלח ועל הכבש ועל המזבח.<sup>4</sup>

שפטים ושטרים חתן-לך...ושפטו את-העם משפט צדק. (דבר' טז:יח) ג' פעמים שפט שדיני ממנו בג'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tanhuma.

<sup>2</sup>For other examples in which אהיה is used in the exegesis see methods 30, 41.2, and 56.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rashi on Ex. 12:30.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Menahot 21b.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 2a.

68.1# The number of times a word is found in a verse is counted. The number of words between each occurrence of the word is counted and is found to be the same. For example, in Ex. 12:2:

החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you," the word חדש "month" is found 3 times. Furthermore, between each occurrence of the word "month" there are 3 words. This, says Asher, is an allusion to the first of Nisan which is the New Year for 3 things; kings,<sup>1</sup> festivals,<sup>2</sup> and months.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the numerical equivalent of חדש "month" is 312 ( $8+4+300$ ) which is almost equal to the numerical equivalent of לרגלים "for festivals" ( $30+200+3+30+10+40=313$ ).<sup>4</sup> And finally, the letters of לכם "to you" found in the above verse can be rearranged to form the word מלך "king";<sup>5</sup> and ניסן "Nisan" has the same numerical equivalent as למלכים "for kings" ( $50+10+60+50=170=30$ ).

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rosh Hashona 5a.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. ibid

<sup>3</sup>Cf. ibid 7a.

<sup>4</sup>For additional examples of gematria in which there is a discrepancy of 1, see the excuses after method 22.

<sup>5</sup>For other examples of anagrams see methods 3, 11.2, 20, 20.6, 24.1, 45, 84.1, and 85(f).

69# Two words in construct are found repeated within a single verse; the number of repeated occurrences is counted. For example,

ואתנה את-הלויים נחנים is found 5 times in Num. 8:19: לאהרן מתוך בני-ישראל לעבד את-עבדו בני-ישראל באהל מועד ולכפר על-בני-ישראל ולא יהיה בבני-ישראל נגף בגשח בני-ישראל אל הקדש.

Within בני ישראל, says Asher, there are 5 groups: priests, levites, Israelites, converts, and freed slaves.<sup>1</sup>

70 The order of certain words within a verse is explained. For example, Gen. 29:13 describes Laban's meeting with Jacob; "...he embraced him and kissed him." At first Laban embraced Jacob to see if there was any money in his girdle. When he did not find any he kissed him to see if there were any precious stones in his mouth.<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

הקלות יחדלון והברד לא יהיה ענן

הקלות יחדלון והברד לא יהיה ענן  
(שמות ט:כא) לא אמר על הקולות שלא יהיו במתן תורה.

הואיל וכחש בין ביהוה ובין בעעמיתו שמכחש בדבר שאינו יודע בו אלה הקבלה וחבירו. (ויק' ה:כא)

וזכרתי את-בריתי יעקב ואף את-בריתי האבות מנויין למפרע. אומר הקב"ה יצחק ואף את-בריתי אברהם אזכר. אני זוכר מאין באתם ומונה וההשמש אזכר. (ויק' כו:מב) היחס עד למעלה, עד בן יעקב בן יצחק בן אברהם.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rashi on this verse says the 5 corresponds to the 5 books of the Torah.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 70:13.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Exodus Rabbah 12:3.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 6:4.

71- A sequence of related words, enumerated in a verse or verses, is counted. For example, in Ex. 1:7: פרו וישרצו וירבו

"(And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty" 6 actions are listed. This suggests that six who were born in one belly (i.e. suggesting extraordinary fertility).<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

והוצאתי... והצלתי... וגאלתי... ולקחתי ד' לשונות של גאולה  
(שמות ו: ו, ז) כנגד ד' מלכיות.

אליהם... עתודים... כבשים (במד' ז: יז) ג' מינים כנגד כהנים,  
לויים, וישראלים. וכנגד  
חורה, נביאים, וכסובים.

תשמעו... ושמרתם... ועשייתם (דבר' ז: יב) ג' כנגד מקרא, משנה,  
תלמוד.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse, Exodus Rabbah 1:7, and Yad Aharon p. 65.

72 The number of words in a verse is counted. For example,  
in Ex. 21:1: ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם

"Now these are the ordinances which thou shall set before them"

there are 5 words. This, says Asher, tells you that he who judges  
righteously is likened to one who had fulfilled the 5 books of the  
Torah.

Additional examples:

ויעש יהוה אלהים לאדם ולאשה - 8 כנגד ה' בגדי כהונה.  
וכתנות עור וילבשם. (ברא' ג:  
כא)

יברך יהוה וישמרך (במד' ו:כד) - 3 כנגד ג' ברכות שאמרו  
בו: ואברךך (שם יב:ב)  
והיה ברכה (שם), ואברךך  
מברךך (שם יב:ג).

בנים אתם ליהוה אלהיכם לא תתגדדו - 12 כנגד י"ב שבטים שנקראו  
ולא-תשימו קרחה בין עיניהם למת.  
(דבר' יד:א)

72.1# The number of letters in each of two related verses is  
counted. The difference is equal to the numerical equivalent of a  
word which is found in one of the verses. For example, in the first  
version of the Ten Commandments the commandment Ex. 20:12: כבד  
את-אביך ואם אמך למען יארכון ימך על האדמה אשר אליך נתן לך.

<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the number of words in a verse  
is counted see methods 41.2, 44, 73, 73.1, 74, and 96.



"Honor thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" has 53 letters. This commandment in the second version of the Ten Commandments, Dt. 5:16, has 80 letters:<sup>1</sup>

כבוד את-אביך ואת-אמך כאשר צוך יהוה אלהיך למען יאריך ימך

ולמען ייטב לך על האדמה אשר-יהוה אלהיך נתן לך.

for the phrase "and that it may go well with thee" is added. The difference of 80-53 or 17 is equal to the numerical equivalent of

טוב "good" (9+6+2) a form of which is found in the added phrase.

73# The number of letters and words in a verse is counted.

For example, in the first verse of the Bible בראשית ברא אלהים

there are 7 words and 28 letters.

This is compared to the response in the Raddish יהא שמייה רבה. מברך

which also has 7 words and 28 letters.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, says Asher, all who respond..... אמן יהא שמייה רבא

with all his might becomes a partner with God in the work of creation.

In the second Priestly Benediction (Num. 6:25): יאר יהוה פניו

there are 5 words and 20 letters. This,

says Asher, refers to Isaac who came after the 20th generation<sup>3</sup> and observed the 5 books of the Torah.

<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted see methods 22.1, 24.2, 42, 73, 73.1, and 87.

<sup>2</sup>Note that Asher substitutes the word לעלמי for לעלמי. Yet in his Tur Orah Hayyim n.56, Asher has יהא שמייה רבא מברך לעלמי לעלמי, thus retaining the

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Pirke Avot 5:2. For other examples in which the numbers of letters in a verse is counted see methods 22.1, 24.2, 42, 72.1, 73, and 89. For other examples in which the number of words is counted see methods 41.2, 44, 72, 73.1, 74, and 96.

73.1# The number of letters and words in one verse is equal to the number of letters and words in a second verse. For example, in Lev. 12:3: **וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו** "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" there are 5 words and 23 letters. In Gen. 2:1: **ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל--צבאם** "And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of thereof" there are also 5 words and 23 letters.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, says Asher, circumcision can be performed on the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

74# The number of words in part of one verse is found to be the same as the number of words in a part of another verse. For example, in Ex. 24:7: **כל אשר-דבר יהוה נעשה ונשמע** there are 6 words; and in Ex. 24:3: **כל הדברים אשר דבר יהוה נעשה** there are 6 words. Together they are 12 words, corresponding to the 12 tribes who said the 6 words: **שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד** and the 6 words: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד** which are Jacob's i.e. Israel's response.

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<sup>1</sup>Read **ויכולו**. For additional examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted see methods 22.1, 24.2, 42, 72.1, 73 and 89. And for additional examples in which the number of words in a verse is counted see methods 41.2, 44, 72, 73, 74, and 96.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Shabbat 132a.

75 A verse begins and ends with words derived from the same root. For example, Lev. 13:52 describes the handling of leper's clothing: "And he shall burn the garment.....it shall be burnt with fire." ( ושרף...השרף ) The verse begins and ends with a derivative of שרף "to burn." Therefore, anything of the leper's which is forbidden to be used is to be burned.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples;

והבשר...בשר (ויק' ז:יט) - לומר שאם נמטא הבשר מקצתו  
נמטא כולו.<sup>2</sup>

כי-יקח...לקח (דבר' כד:ה) - לומר נשא אשה בבחורתו ישא אשה  
בזקנתו.<sup>3</sup>

75.1# A verse begins and ends with words derived from the same root; other words derived from the same root are also found in the verse and are counted together. For example, Num. 32:54: והנחלתם  
אם-הארץ בגורל למשפחתיהם לרב חרבו את-נחלתם ולמעט את-נחלתו...התנחלו.  
begins and ends with the same root derivative נחל "to possess."  
Asher infers that it made no difference whether or not the lots fall at a distance from each other. The נחל is found 4 times in the verse; each tribe, says Asher, are to have 4 places; the mountain, plain, low land, and by the sea.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sifra, and Rashi on Lev. 13:51.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Tosefta Korbanot 5:5.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Yevamot 62b.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Baba Kama 81b.

76# A word is singled out for attention. A homonymous word is used to relate that verse with its adjacent verse. For example, in Gen. 24:62-63: "...for he dwelt in the land of the South. And Isaac went to meditate in the field," the word לשוח "to meditate" is homonymous to the word שיחכים "who becomes wise." Thus, one who desires to become wise should turn to the south when he is praying.<sup>1</sup>

Additional examples:

- בצטק חשפט עמיתך. לא תלך רכיל - אזהרה לדיין שלא יהא רך  
(ויק' יט:ה) לזה וקשה לזה, ולא יאמר  
אני מוכה וחברי מחייביו.<sup>2</sup>
- ואת גולן בבשן. וזאת החורה - רמז הוי גולה למקום חורה.<sup>3</sup>  
(דבר' ד: מג, מד)
- אשתו אשר לקח. לא יחדל (דבר' - לומר שלא יחדיל את אשתו  
בחשמיש המטה.) כד:ד,ה

77# The Masoretic text notes that after verses Num. 10:34 and 10:36 two nuns are inverted. These nuns are not read as part of the text. Asher assigns the nun its numerical equivalent (50) and makes the following observations: (1) Moses wanted to take the tribes in whose

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Baba Batra 25b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Ketubot 46a.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Sanhedrin 31a.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Avot 4:18. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13., 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 91, 99.2, and 100.

names there are 50 letters<sup>1</sup> over the Jordan whose width is 50 cubits<sup>2</sup> but the sin he committed prevented him from doing so. (2) This section enclosed by the inverted nuns logically belongs 50 sections earlier in the text i.e. after Num. 2:17.<sup>3</sup>

78 Two phrases in adjacent verses are singled out for attention and are the basis for the exegesis. For example, referring to the Passover, Ex. 12:8 states: "And they shall eat the flesh in that night..." while the next verse says "Eat not of the ram..." Since one verse says to eat and the next verse says not to eat, Asher suggests that one should eat for the honor of Passover but not to eat gluttonously.<sup>4</sup>

Additional examples:

יין ושכר... ולהבדיל (ויק' י:ט, י) - שמבדילין על היין.<sup>5</sup>  
 דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל... אני - לומר שבני ישראל ייחדו  
 יהוה אלהיכם. (ויק' יט:כג, כד) השם ויאמר יהוה אחד.  
 ולא נחן יהוה לכם לב לדעתי ואולך - רמז עד ארבעים שנים אין  
 אחכם ארבעים שנה (דבר' כח: ג, ד) עומד על דעה רבו.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Sotah 36a. Cf. methods 27 and 30 in which all the letters of the names of the 12 tribes are employed.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Sifre on Dt. 3:26.

<sup>3</sup>This is only 48 sections back. Reineitz (p.298,n.59) quotes Paanah Razah giving another interpretation of the inverted nuns, but he does not try to correct the Asher text.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Pesahim 70a.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Shavuot 18b.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Avodah Zarah 5b.

79# Two adjacent phrases within a verse are singled out for attention and their close proximity is the basis for the exegesis. The number of times a third phrase is found in the section is related to the exegesis. For example, In Lev. 19:2 the phrase "speak unto the congregation of Israel" is followed by "you shall be holy." Speaking in holiness, i.e. prayer, needs a congregation of at least 10 men. Therefore the phrase "I am the Lord your God" is found 10 times in the sedra קדשים (Lev. 19:2-20:27).<sup>1</sup>

80# Derived forms of the same root are found in two similar verses; each form is assigned its numerical equivalent. For example, in the daily sacrificial offering "the one lamb" is written אֶחָד הַכֹּבֶשֶׁת in Ex. 29:39 and אֶחָד הַכֹּבֶשֶׁת in Num. 28:4. The first one, אֶחָד, is assigned its numerical equivalent of 18 (5+1+8+4). This, says Asher, corresponds to the 18 benedictions of the Amidah which were ordained to correspond to the daily sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> The second one, אֶחָד, is assigned its numerical equivalent of 13 (1+8+4) and alludes to the 13 priests who at times officiated at the daily sacrificial offerings.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>19:2,3,4,10,25,31,34,36; 30:3,24. For other examples in which the number of times a phrase found in a section is counted see methods 86 and 87.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Berachot 26b.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Yoma 25a. For other examples in which similar verses are compared see methods 54, 54.1, 64.3, 64.4, 81, and 82.



81# Contrasting word-orders of similar phrases are compared. For example, in the phrase found in Lev. 26:2: **אֶת שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ** "keeping" is written after **שַׁבְּתוֹתַי** "My Sabbaths." But in the phrase found in Dt. 5:12 **(שִׁמְרוּ) שְׁמֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** "keeping" is written before **הַשַּׁבָּת** "the Sabbath." This suggests, says Asher, that one may add from the profane to the holy either before or after the Sabbath, i.e. the length of the Sabbath rest may be expanded by a few moments or so either before or after sunset.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in the phrase found in Num. 20:5: figs, vines, pomegranates, "figs" is written first, but in the phrase found in Dt. 8:8: "vines, figs, and pomegranates," "vines" precedes "figs." Asher points out that "vines" usually comes first as in Micah 4:4: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree," but in the Num. verse "figs" comes first because the fig tree eventually ceased bearing fruit. This alludes to the wood of old fig trees of which they used to fix the fire for the Altar, but they did not use the wood of the vine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Tosafot to Berachot 27b.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Mishnah Tamid 2:2,5.

Additional examples:

זכר לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל עבדיך. (שמות לב:יג) כאן הקדים האבות לעבדיך וכתב החם: זכור לעבדיך לאברהם... (דבר ט:כז) הקדים עבדיך לאבות. לומר כי היו עבדיו מתחלה ועד סוף. וכיוצא בו דוד עבדי (מ"א יא:יג) ועבדי דוד (וחז' לד:כד).

ובן יונה או חורץ (ויק' יב:ו) בכל מקום מקדים חורים לבני יונה חוץ מכאן, לפי שאינו מביא אלא אחד ואם ימצא יונה לא חקח חור לפי שבן זוגו מתאבל עליו ואינו מזדווג לאחר.<sup>2</sup>

82 . Two similar phrases are singled out and compared. The terminology is compared. For example, Num 31:8 states: "...Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword." Joshua 13:22 state: "Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer did the children of Israel slay." The added words "the soothsayer" suggests, says Asher, that Balaam was brought before Moses and judged according to the law "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Megillah 11a.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Reinetz, p. 234, n.11. For other examples in which similar verses are compared see methods 54, 54.1, 54.3, 64.4, 80, and 82.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sifre.

## Additional examples:

במספר שמות... לבת אבתם (במד' א:ב) ובפרשה פנחס (שם כו:ב) לא כתיב<sup>1</sup>  
 באותו מניין במספר שמותם אלא כחבו כאן להודיע שלא שנינו שמותם במצרים!  
 ולכך כתיב לבית אבתם לומר לך שנקראו בשמות אבותם.<sup>2</sup>

נעברה נא בארצך. (במד' כ:יז) ובסיכון אמר אעברה (שם כא:כב) אלא  
 אמר זכור מה שאמר עשו נסעה והלכה (ברא' לג:יב) ולכך אמר אחיך  
 ישראל (במד' כ: יד).

אל גדול ונורה (דבר' ז:כא) ולא אמר גבור,<sup>3</sup> אלא הזכיר גדול כנגד  
 אברהם דכתיב ביה:אל הגדול (יהושע יד:טו) והנורה כנגד יעקב דכתיב  
 ביה מה נורה המקום הזה (ברא' כב:יז). והזכיר אלו שמצינו שנלחמו  
 אברהם עם המלכים ויעקב כנגד לבן, ועשו, אבל מצינו כיצחק שנלחם.

83. The number of times given forms of a root are found in  
 a section is counted. For example, in the sedra בחקתי (Lev. 26:3-  
 27:34) the word עון "iniquity" in various forms is found 6 times.<sup>4</sup>  
 This, says Asher, is reminiscent to the 6 times that Israel was exiled,  
 three by Sennacherib and 3 by Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Exodus Rabbah 1:33.

<sup>2</sup>Itur Bikurim (n.685) points out that לבית אבתם is also in  
 the Pinhas section (26:2).

<sup>3</sup>As in Dt. 10:17. For other examples in which similar verses are  
 compared see methods 54, 54.1, 64.3, 64.4, 80, and 81.

<sup>4</sup>עון 26:40; עונם 26:40,41,43; בעונם 26:39; בעונה 26:39.

Additional examples:

קדש יי' אפעים בויקרא כב:ד-טז	כנגד י' א דברים שבין חרומה לקודש.
אשם ה' פעמים בויקרא ז:	כנגד חמשה אשמות וודאים.
נגע צערת י' פעמים ויקרא יג-טז	שעל ידי י' דברים נגעים בא.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Hagigah 22a.

<sup>2</sup>There are 6 occurrences of the form אשם in Lev. 6-8; 6:10; 7:5; 7:1,2; 7:7; 7:37. The 6 probably refer to the 6 guilt offerings listed in Mishnah Zebahim. The 6 with their biblical references are: sacrilege (Lev. 5:15), false dealings (Lev. 6:6), nazirite (Lev. 6:12), leper (Lev. 14:12), intercourse with a married woman (Lev. 19:20), and the suspensive guilt offering (Lev. 5:17-19). Itur Bikurim (n.571) and Feinets (p.224,n.22,23,) list 5 guilt offerings leaving out the suspensive guilt offering.

<sup>3</sup>13:3,9,19,20,25,27,47,49,59; 14:32,34.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 17:3. For other examples in which the number of times a word found in a section is counted see methods 16, 83.1, and 92.

83.1# All the derived forms of a root in a section are collected and their numerical equivalents are added together. For example, in Num. 10:29-32 the derivatives of טוב ("good") with their numerical equivalents are as follows:

והטבנו (vs. 29) = 78

טוב (vs. 29) = 17

הטוב (vs. 32) = 22

הטיב (vs. 32) = 41

והטבנו (vs. 32) = 78

236 = ביריחו (in Jericho)<sup>1</sup>

Similarly the word זה occurs twice in Num. 18:9-11.<sup>2</sup> This equals 24 (12+12) and is reminiscent, says Asher, of the 24 priestly endowments.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rashi on Judges 1:16. For examples in which the number of times a word found in a section is counted see methods 16, 83, and 92.

<sup>2</sup> Num. 9:11 has וזה. Asher apparently is disregarding the conjunction vav.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hullin 133b and Baba Kama 110b.

84# The number of words in a section is counted and that number is assigned a scriptural word equivalent. For example, there are 58 words in Moses' prayer to God in Dt. 9:26-29.  $58 = 7 \times (8+50)$ , the "grace" which Moses found while praying to God;<sup>1</sup> 58 is also equal to  $\text{פרי}$  "fruit" ( $50+6+2$ ), recalling Is. 57:19: "(God) who created the fruit of the lips."<sup>2</sup>

In the Ten Commandments, Ex. 2-14, there are 172 words.  $172 = \text{אפי}$  "reward" ( $70+100+2$ ) recalling Ps. 19:12: "In keeping of them there is great reward."<sup>3</sup>

84.1# The numeral representing the number of words in a section is formulated into letters and those letters are re-arranged to form a word. For example, in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2-14) there are 172 words; 172 in letters is  $\text{אפיו}$  or  $\text{אפי}$ .  $\text{אפיו}$ <sup>4</sup> is a hint to Eliezer who gave Rebekah a half shekel ( $\text{אפיו}$ ) weight.<sup>5</sup>  $\text{אפי}$  relates to Gen. 26:5: "...because ( $\text{אפי}$ ) Abraham (Eliezer is Abraham's servant) hearkened unto My voice" and also relates to Ps. 19:12 "Moreover by them is thy servant warned in keeping of them there is great reward ( $\text{אפי}$ ).

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ex. 33:9

<sup>2</sup>ktiv  $\text{פרי}$ , kri  $\text{פרי}$  For additional examples in which ktiv/kri is employed in the exegesis see methods 3, 11, 22.4, and 86.

<sup>3</sup>For more examples of  $\text{אפי}=172$  see Asher on Ex. 20:14.

<sup>4</sup>For other examples of anagrams see methods 3, 11.2, 20-20.6, 24.1, 45, 68.1, and 85 (f).

<sup>5</sup>Gen. 24:22.



Other verses are cited in which these same 3 letters occur: וארצנה  
עקב (שם קיט:לג) , מורשה קהלה יעקב (רבר' לב:ד)

He also cites the rabbinic statement: ועשה תורה קבע (אבות א:טו)

85# The first and last words of a section are related by means of a word play on both of the words. For example, the list of men who are to take the census of Israel begins with אליצור (Num 1:5) and ends with עיני (16 v). Asher uses word play on both names by means of Dt. 32:10: יצרנו כאישון עין "He kept him as the apple of his eye." Moreover עיני sounds like ענן "cloud."<sup>1</sup>

86# The number of times a phrase is found in a section is counted. That number is equal to the numerical equivalent of a letter of a word found outside the section. For example, "the children of Gad and the children of Reuben" are mentioned 8 times in Num. 32.<sup>2</sup> Asher relates this to Prv. 20:21: "An estate may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but in the end thereof shall not be blessed."

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<sup>1</sup>Reinetz (pps. 277,278; n. 7) quotes Yad Aharon who notes that אליצור is a notarikon for אל יצרנו. The letter of עיני can be rearranged to form the word עין or ענן. For other examples of notarikon see method 19 and for other examples of anagrams see methods

3, 11.2, 20-20.6, 24.1, 45, 68.1, and 84.1. For other examples of homonyms employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 91, 99.2, and 100.

<sup>2</sup>32:1,2,6,25,29,31,33,34,37. For other examples in which the number of times a phrase found in a section is counted see methods 79 and 87.

מבחלה "hastily" is written with a het (=8)<sup>1</sup> thus the tribes of Gad and Reuben took their allotment first and in the end they were exiled 8 years before the rest of the tribes.<sup>2</sup>

87# A phrase is found a number of times in a section; that number is counted and the total number of words in the several phrases is also counted. For example, the phrase כאשר צוה יהוה את משה "as God commanded Moses" is found 19 times in the section Ex. 38:21-40:38, i.e. 18 times כאשר...משה כן עשו and 1 time משה...כאשר<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ktiv מבחלה, Kri מבחלה. For other examples in which kri/dtiv is employed in the exegesis see methods 3, 11, 22.4, and 84.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rashi on the Proverbs verse.

<sup>3</sup>

עשה את כל אשר צוה יהוה את משה	8
כאשר צוה יהוה את משה	70
ויעשו בני ישראל ככל אשר צוה יהוה את משה	9
ככל אשר צוה יהוה את משה כן עשו בני ישראל	13
את כל העבודה	
והנה עשו אותה כאשר צוה יהוה	6
ככל אשר צוה יהוה אותו כן עשה	7
	<hr/> 113

Asher relates these to the 18 benedictions of the Amidah and the extra 19th benediction added by the Rabbis. These 19 phrases have 113 words which correspond to the number of words in the closing formulas ( חַיִּימוֹת ) in the 19 benedictions.<sup>1</sup> Also, says Asher, the word "heart" is found 113 times in the Torah indicating that one must have devotion (כוונה לב) when reciting the Amidah.<sup>2</sup>

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1

- |     |          |                           |
|-----|----------|---------------------------|
| 1.  | ב' א' ה' | מגן אברהם.                |
| 2.  | ב' א' ה' | האל הקדוש .               |
| 3.  | ב' א' ה' | מחיה המתים.               |
| 4.  | ב' א' ה' | חונן הדעה.                |
| 5.  | ב' א' ה' | הרוצה תשובה.              |
| 6.  | ב' א' ה' | חונן המרבה לסלח.          |
| 7.  | ב' א' ה' | גואל ישראל.               |
| 8.  | ב' א' ה' | רוטני הולי עמו ישראל.     |
| 9.  | ב' א' ה' | מברך השנים.               |
| 10. | ב' א' ה' | מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל.      |
| 11. | ב' א' ה' | מלך אוהב צדקה ומשפט.      |
| 12. | ב' א' ה' | שובר איבים ומכניע זדים.   |
| 13. | ב' א' ה' | משען ומבטח לצדיקים.       |
| 14. | ב' א' ה' | בונה ירושלים.             |
| 15. | ב' א' ה' | מצמיח קרן ישועה.          |
| 16. | ב' א' ה' | שומע תפילה.               |
| 17. | ב' א' ה' | המחזיר שכינתו לציון.      |
| 18. | ב' א' ה' | הטוב שמך ולך נאה להודות.  |
| 19. | ב' א' ה' | המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום. |

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Reineitz (p 112, n.19) also tries to find 113 occurrences. For other examples in which the number of times a phrase found in a section is counted see methods 79 and 86. Also see method 22.1 which also counts the number of times a word is found in the Torah.

88# The number of verses in a section <sup>ל</sup> is counted. For example, in the sedra האזינו (Dt. 32) there are 52 verses; because Israel transgressed them, no person came to Judah for 52 years.<sup>1</sup>

There are 10 verses in Lev. 26:4-13, which describe the blessings bestowed upon Israel if they obey God's commandments. This corresponds to the 10 blessings of Isaac<sup>2</sup> and to the Ten Commandments.

89# The position of a verse in a "section" and the number of letters in that verse are the same. For example, the 6th commandment (Ex. 20:13) is לא תרצח "Thou shalt not murder," and it has 6 letters; Asher notes that man (who should not be murdered) was created on the 6th day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Shabbat 145b. Rashi explains the 52 years as from the time of the exile in the days of Zedekiah until the reign of Cyrus who brought the exiles back to rebuild the Temple.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 27:28-29: "So God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the fat places of the earth and plenty of corn and wine. Let peoples serve thee and nations bow down to thee. Be Lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee."

<sup>3</sup>For additional examples in which the number of letters in a verse is counted see methods 22.1, 24.2, 42, 72.1, 73, and 73.1.

90# In a list of nouns in a section, the first noun is said to be in its initial position because it is the most important. This is shown by taking the final letters of consecutive words in another verse elsewhere in which this noun is also found. For example, in the section Dt. 14:12-18: "But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the great vulture, and the bearded vulture, and the osprey..." The great vulture ( הנשר ) is in its initial position because of Job. 39:27. "Does the vulture ( נשר ) mount up at thy command?" Taking the final letters of אם על פיו "at thy command," we form the word מלך "king."<sup>1</sup>

91# In a list of related names in a section, one name is not as closely related. Its presence is explained by Asher by means of a word play. For example, in the section enumerating the kings that reigned in Edom (Gen. 36:31-43) only the wife of king Hadar, Mehetabel is cited. (vs 39) Hadar, Asher says, ruled through his wife for she was the daughter of מי זהב ('Me-zahav') (vs 39) and therefore very rich. ( מהו זהב = מי זהב = what value has gold? )<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For other examples in which final letters of words are put together to form a word see methods 31, 33, and 34.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse and Genesis Rabbah 83:3. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, 99.2, and 100.

92# The number of items in a section is counted. For example, in the sedra קדשים (Lev. 19-20) there are 70 commandments corresponding to the 70 nations from which Israel is separated.<sup>1</sup>

Another example is Dt. 21:3-4, which describes the עגלה ערופה "heifer with a broken neck." In these verses there are 4 commandments<sup>2</sup> corresponding to the 4 directions (i.e. apparently the whole world) which breaking the heifer's neck atones. Also the words חלל "slain" and עגלה "heifer" are found 4 times in the larger section dealing with the heifer.<sup>3</sup> (Lev. 21:1-9) The words חלל and עגלה remind us that the purpose of the sacrifice is to atone for the slain person.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Leviticus Rabba 24:5.

<sup>2</sup>"...(1) You shall take a heifer which hath not been wrought with (2) and which hath not been drawn in the yoke...(3) valley which may neither be plowed (4) nor sown."

<sup>3</sup>21:1 חלל; 21:2,3,6. החלל; 21:4(2)21:6 העגלה; 21:3 עגלה. For other examples in which the number of times a word found in a section is counted see methods 16, 83, and 83.1.

<sup>4</sup>Asher ben Yehiel, the father of Jacob ben Asher, writes at the end of b. Yom Kippur, chapter 19, that we relate the atonement of Yom Kippur to the עגלה ערופה "heifer with a broken neck." He notes that the priest on Yom Kippur says the Name of 4 letters. It is perhaps from this association that Jacob ben Asher derives the number 4.



93# A name is conspicuously absent in a section. For example, the name of Moses, almost invariably present in every sedra from Exodus on,<sup>1</sup> is omitted in the sedra חַצוֹנָה (Ex. 27-30:10). The reason for this is that Moses said "Blot me I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written." (Ex. 32:32). And his request was fulfilled in this way.

94# A section is divided up into equal divisions; the same phrase is repeated in the first and last verses of each division. The several phrases in the entire section are counted. For example, the offerings of the 12 tribes for the dedication of the altar are enumerated in Num. 7:12-83. This section is divided up into 12 parts, with 6 verses for each tribe. This, says Asher, corresponds to the 6 days of creation. The representative of each tribe is named at the beginning and end of each division. For example, the offerings of the tribe of Judah are described in verses 12-17. Judah's representative "Nashon, the son of Amminadab" is named in verse 12 and again in verse 17. Since there are 12 divisions and each name is listed twice in each division; we then have 24 names, reminiscent, says Asher, to the 24 hours that are in a day.

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<sup>1</sup>Itur Bikurim (491) notes that Moses' name is also not mentioned in the sedra שׁוּפְטִים, רֵאָה, עֵקֶב.

95# The petiha ( פתיחה ), i.e. one of the 2 primary Masoretic marks which divides the body of the text into sections, is interpreted by Asher to mean a pause. For example, Num. 25:19: "And it came to pass after the plague" is followed by a petiha. The next 2 verses continue: "that the Lord spoke...take the sum of all the congregation..." Asher says that the petiha shows that the text makes a stop between the plague and the taking of Israel's census so that the plague would not affect the census.

96# A number of similar verses in the Torah is counted; the number of words in those verses is also counted. In his comment to Gen. 14:19, Asher says that 7 verses in the Torah are benedictions directed to God.<sup>1</sup> These 7 benedictions allude to the 7 benedictions of the Amidah recited on the Sabbath and Festivals. Moreover, these 7 verses have 100 words in all, which correspond to the 100 benedictions that one is required to recite every day.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gen. 9:26; 14:19 20; 24:27,28; Ex. 18:10; Dt. 8:10; 33:20.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Menahot 43b. For additional examples in which the number of words in a verse is counted see methods 41.2, 44, 72, 73, 73.1, and 74.

97# All the occurrences of a phrase in the Torah are counted. For example, the phrase "flowing with milk and honey" is found 16 times in the Torah.<sup>1</sup> This, says Asher, is reminiscent to the land of Israel in which the trail of milk and honey measures 16 parsangs.<sup>2</sup>

98 A word is singled out for attention by counting the number of times that word is found in Scripture. That number relates to the exegesis of that verse. For example, in Gen. 1:4: "...God divided the light from the darkness," Asher notes that the word

ויבדל "divided" is found three times in Scripture.<sup>3</sup> This is an allusion to the text of the Havdalah ceremony which is recited at the end of the Sabbath in which one must not recite less than 3 divisions: בין קדש לחול...בין אור לחושך...בין ישראל לעמים

Similarly in Gen. 24:67: "Isaac brought her into his mother's tent..." Asher notes that the word האהלה "tent" occurs 8 times

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<sup>1</sup>There are 15 in the Torah and 1 in Joshua: Ex. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:27; 14:8; 16:13,14; Dt. 6:3; 11:9; 26:9,15; 27:3; 31:20; Josh. 5:6. See method 13 for another example in which the number of times a phrase found in the Torah is counted.

<sup>2</sup>Megillah 6a: "...Resh Lakish said: I have myself seen the trail of milk and honey round Sepphoris and it is 16 miles by 16 miles..." Rabbah bar bar Huna in the name of R. Jochanan said: I have myself seen the trail of milk and honey of the whole land of Israel and it extends 22 parsangs in length and 6 parsangs in breadth." Reineitz in his appendix (p.454) quotes R. Meir Yehiel's short explanation for the difference between Asher and Megillah.

<sup>3</sup>Here; Gen. 1:7; 1 Chronicles 28:1. See methods 99-99.3 which also counts the number of times a word is found in Scripture.

in scripture.<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the Shekinah who is worshipped by Israel in 8 places: in the Tabernacle, Gilgal, Shilo, Nob, Gibeon, the First Temple, the Second Temple, and in the world to come.<sup>2</sup>

Additional examples:

<p>ד' שכל כיור שאינו מחזיק כדי שירחצו ממנו ארבעה כהנים כאחד אינו כיור.<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>לרחצה (שמות ל: יח)</p>
<p>ג' בהי עניינא והיינו דחנן ג' אשרוח הן.<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>תשרפון (דבר' יב: ג)</p>

95/ All the occurrences of a word(s) in Scripture are isolated. They are connected by relating one or all of the verses in which the word(s) occurs. For example, the word ידברית occurs two times; once in Gen. 11:1: "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech" and once in Eccles. 5:6: "For though the multitude of dreams and vanities there are also many words..." Asher relates the second

<sup>1</sup>Here; Gen. 18:6; Ex. 18:7; 3, 33:8,9; Num. 15:26; Josh. 7:22; Judges 4:18.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Yoma 10a.

<sup>3</sup>Here; Ex. 40:30(2); 2 Chron. 4:6.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Zebahim 19b.

<sup>5</sup>Here; Dt. 7:5,25.

<sup>6</sup>i.e., we find 3 times תשרפון in the matter of the אשרה.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Avodah Zarah 45a.

occurrence to the first verse saying that they spoke a great many vanities.<sup>1</sup>

Another example, שוכה "to Succoth" is found twice in Scripture. It is found in Ex. 12:37: "And the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth..." and in Gen. 33:17: "And Jacob journeyed to Succoth..." Asher connects to the verses by saying that it was by the merit of Jacob that the children of Israel came out of Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

The word וידר "and he vowed" is found three times: "And Jacob vowed..." (Gen. 28:20), "And Israel vowed..." (Num. 21:2), "And Jephtah vowed..." (Judges 11:30) All the righteous ones made vows. Asher quotes Ps. 132:2: "How he swore unto the Lord, vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob", "Mighty One" is connected to Jacob in this verse because Jacob was the first one to make a vow.<sup>3</sup>

99.1# A word is found twice in Scripture. One occurrence is at the beginning of a verse, and the other occurrence is at the end of a verse. The placement of the words is the basis for the exegesis. For example, in Lev. 21:8 which is speaking of the priest, וקדש "Thou shalt sanctify him," is at the beginning of the verse. But in Ex. 19:23:... "set bounds about the mount and sanctify it," is at the end of the verse. The first וקדש is in its initial

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 38:6. See methods 98 and 99.1-99.3 which also counts the number of times a word is found in Scripture.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Tanhuma.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 70:1.

position because the holiness of the priest is primary in that he begins to speak first, takes from the manna first, and is the first one called up to the Torah.<sup>1</sup> The Ex. verse, says Asher, is about the sage whose holiness is at the end, i.e. after he dies. He cites Ps. 16:3: "As for the holy ones that are in its earth." Only when they are dead will the holiness of the sage be recognized, Asher says, recalling Job. 15:15: "He puts no trust in his holy ones..."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly the word וּמְקַלֵּל "he that curseth" is found twice in Scripture. One occurrence is at the beginning of Ex. 21:17: "And he that curseth his father or mother shall be surely be put to death;" the other occurrence is at the end of 2Sam. 16:5 "And when King David came to Bahurim, a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out and kept on cursing as he came." Thus, if one who curses is at the head of the Sanhedrin he will become the tail and be killed.<sup>3</sup>

The word וּלְרֵבְקָה "And to Rebekah" is found twice in Scripture; once at the beginning of Gen. 24:29: "And Rebekah had a brother..." and once at the end of Gen. 26:34: "And when Esau was 40 years old he took to wife Judith...and they were a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah." Isaac's eyes were dim from the smoke of the idol worship of Esau. But for Rebekah this was not strange since

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gitin 59b.

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps this is telling us something about Asher's own stature in the commentary.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Rashi on Sam. 16:10 who likens one who curses the king to the head of the Sanhedrin.



she was accustomed to this since her father had been an idolotrous priest. Therefore, Isaac's name is first in the second verse to show that the bitterness was more to Isaac than to Rebekah.<sup>1</sup>

In another interpretation the two verses are linked together by citing the statement "he who marries a woman the son will cling to her brother." Because Rebekah's brother Laban was wicked she bore Esau, the wicked one.

99.2# All the occurrences of a certain word in Scripture are enumerated. In one place the word is written defectively ( חסר ) and in the other place it is written plene ( מלא ). Asher explains why the words are both defective and plene. For example, in Gen. 2:7: "Then the Lord God formed man....," "formed" יָצַר has 2 yods. But in Gen. 2:19: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast....," "formed" יָצַר has 1 yod. Asher explains that while man has 2 inclinations, good and evil,<sup>2</sup> the beasts have only the evil inclination.<sup>3</sup>

In another example, Ex. 35:27: "And the rulers brought onyx stones...." "rulers" מְשָׁלִים is written defectively without yods because these rulers were lax in bringing their contribution for the dedication of the altar.<sup>4</sup> But in Josh. 22:32:..."and the princes,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 65.2.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 14.1.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Berachot 61a.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Rashi on this verse, and Sifre Nisa 7:3.

returned from the children of Reuben and from the children of Gad...," "princes" ( וְהַנְּשִׂאִים ) is written plene with two yods. Asher explains that the princes from Reuben and Gad were willing to bring their contribution and thus וְהַנְּשִׂאִים is written doubly plene for these 2 tribes.

In another example, Gen. 6:4, a word play is also used. "The Nephilim were in the earth..." Nephilim הַנְּפִלִים is written defectively without a yod after the pe. In Num. 13:33, "And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak..." Nephilim הַנְּפִלִים is written plene with yods. Asher explains that in the Gen. verse, Sihon and Og fell ( נָפַל ) from the heaven,<sup>1</sup> and at the time of the Num. verse the second generation of Nephilim were living and thus הַנְּפִלִים is written plene.

99.3# All the occurrences of a word in Scripture are singled out. One of the verses in which the word appears contains the entire alphabet and is related to the other verses. For example, the word נסה "decided, venture" occurs twice in Scripture. It occurs once in Dt. 4:34: או הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים לְבוֹא לִקְחָהּ לוֹ גּוֹי מִקְרֹב בְּמִסַּח בְּאֶחָהּ וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה וּבִיד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְזוּעַ נְטוּיָהּ וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדִלִים כִּכְלָ אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרִים לְעֵינֵינוּ.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Rashi on Gen. 6:4. For other examples which involve homonyms see methods 13.1, 20.3, 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50, 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, and 100.

"Or hath God decided to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by trials...according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before thine eyes." This verse also contains the entire alphabet. It also occurs in Job 4:2: "If one venture a word unto thee with thou be weary: But who can withhold himself from speaking?" God wanted to give Israel the Torah, which is written by means of the 22 letters of the alphabet, in Egypt, but the Attribute of Justice said "test (נסה) them first; test them before you make them listen to you." <sup>1</sup>

100# All the occurrences of a phrase in Scripture are singled out for attention. The several occurrences are connected by a word homonymous to the first word in the phrase. For example, the phrase

וַיָּה בָּמִי "and it came to pass in the days" is found 5 times in Scripture.<sup>2</sup> וַיָּה is homonymous to וָיָי "woe," for there were days of woe in each of the occurrences of the word וַיָּה.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For additional examples in which the entire alphabet is found in a verse or section see methods 43 and 53.

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 14:1; Ruth 1:1; Is. 7:1; Jer. 1:3; Esther 1:1.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Genesis Rabbah 42:4. For other examples in which homonyms are employed in the exegesis see methods 13.1, 20.3, 21, 22.3, 38, 39, 50 57.1, 60, 76, 85, 91, and 99.2.

### Concluding Comments on Asher's Exegetical Methods

The methodology delineated in the preceding section shows us how Asher viewed Scripture. Literally every type of mark in the Bible provided material for exegesis; letters, words, vocalization, trope notes, and various other Masoretic notations and calculations are all utilized. In contrast with his literal commentary (see pp. 3-6) which focuses on the ideas presented within the text, his non-literal commentary often rests on the external aspects of the written or printed text which may have nothing to do with the text contents.

Some of the external aspects are scribally determined; i.e. they are external signals which existed prior to Asher's scrutiny of the text. These are, for example, abnormally shaped letters (methods 5-8), the presence of crowns on letters (method 10), words written defectively (method 13), plene (method 14), or even two trope marks on a single word (method 66). However other external aspects would not be visible without the intervention of Asher's inventive re-reading. These are, for example, notarikun<sup>1</sup> (method 19),

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<sup>1</sup>Notarikun is a system of abbreviation by which word(s) can be shortened by writing only one letter of the word. There are basically two categories of notarikun. 1) Each letter in a particular word is the abbreviation of a whole word. This is what Asher uses. 2) A word is broken up into various component parts. For example ראובן "Reuben" is divided into רָא וּבִן "see, a son." A variant of this is the transposition of letters in one syllable words. כֶּרֶם "corn" Lev. 2:14, is transposed into כֶּרֶם "tender and easily crushed" Cf. Menahot 66b. We do have examples in Asher's exegesis of transposition. See methods 20-20.6.

gematria<sup>1</sup>, (method 22), forming words from initial letters of consecutive words (method 29), or from final letters of consecutive words (method 31). Asher uses these external aspects as vessels which he fills with allusions, images, and references from his vast storehouse of rabbinic literature.

The easiest and most frequently used methods are those which depend on simple textual manipulation. These are, for example, like anagrams (method 20), homonyms (method 60), word proximity (method 78), and Masoretic notation (methods 94-100). The most frequent are Masoretic notations, i.e. the gathering of all the occurrences of a word in Scripture and connecting their contexts. This is a method which can be operated on every word which has a mate in Scripture. We can probably assume that Asher had a Masoretic handbook giving him listings of such words in Scripture.

Next to Masoretic notations gematria is the most popular method. About three-fourths of the methods involve numerical equivalents of some sort, either of letter(s) or word(s). We have already noted that gematria became very popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

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<sup>1</sup>Gematria is the manipulation according to numerical equivalents. It can also mean "calculation" as in Avot 3:18. The use of letters to stand for numbers was used by the Babylonians and Greeks. Gematria was also used among interpreters of dreams in the Hellenistic world and was a prevalent method in the time of the Second Temple. (Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 7, pp. 369-370.)

along with other types of non-literal exegeses. (see p. 6) It is not unreasonable to suppose that Asher also had access to "gematria hand-books" which provided him with tables of words corresponding to numbers and vice versa.

Less frequent are methods such as Atbash, (method 24), Atbach (method 26) or each word in a verse ending with the same letter (method 39. These methods are based on more than the Scriptural material itself and require additional ideas in order to complete the exegesis. Atbach, for example, occurs only once. This unique example is used to explain a word which gave many commentators quite a bit of trouble (see p. 56, n.2) and is not an easy method since it requires manipulating the alphabet in 3 sections.

It is surprising how often Asher's apparently artificial or contrived exegesis often coincides with a midrashic statement. In many instances we find parallels in the midrash to his use of gematria. The midrashic statement is often "unproven" and most often does not use gematria in its own statement; but when seen with Asher's gematria the midrash seems to work better, i.e., the gematria provides the textual link which the midrash seems to omit. Three examples may make this clearer. Gen. 6:13 states: "And God said to Noah: 'The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth.'" Genesis Rabbah 36:7: " R. Huna and R. Jeremiah in R. Kahaba's name

said: 'Even the three handbreadths of the earth's surface which the plough turns was washed away.' Asher provides a textual link via gematria: מַשְׁחִיתָם "will destroy them" has the numerical equivalent of 798.  $(40+300+8+10+400+40)$  This is equal to הִיא שלשה טפחים "It is three handbreadths"  $(5+10+1) = (300+30+300+5) + (9+80+8+10+40) = 798$ .

Lev. 16:16 states: "And he shall make atonement for the holy place... and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, that dwelleth with him in the midst of their uncleanness." Yoma 56b reading this verse states that the Shekinah even dwells with those who are unclean.

Asher: השכן אהם בתוך "That dwelleth with them in the midst" has the numerical equivalent of 1244.  $(5+300+20+50) + (1+400+40) + (2+400+6+20)$ . This is almost equal to אף על פי שהם טמאים היו "even though they are unclean the Shekinah is among them"  $(1+80) + (7+30) + (300+5+40) + (5+10+6) + (9+40+10+40) + (5+300+20+0+50+5) + (2+10+50+10+5+40) = 1245$ .

Dt. 22:6: "If a bird's nest chance be found...thou shall not take the dam with the young." Rashi citing Hullin 138a states that this excludes that which is always at hand as in the case of the courtyard.

Asher: קרא קר "nest chance" has the numerical equivalent of 46.  $(10+100+200+1) + (100+50)$ . This is almost equal to פרט למזומן "excludes that which is at hand"  $(80+200+9) + (30+40+7+6+40+50) = 462$ .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The examples given can easily be multiplied. Reineitz's notes provides parallels to rabbinic literature for about all kinds of numerical manipulations. Cf. especially Gen 7:10, 11:27, 18:7, Ex. 4:17, 10:10, 15:4, 27:20, 28:6, 30:13, Lev. 21:1, 16:12, 16:16, 19:27, 19:28, 20:18, 21:1, Dt. 12:13, 17:15, 18:10, and 22:6.



The basic text of the ancient Rabbi was afterall Scripture. It seems plausible to believe that they constructed their midrashim out of Scripture rather than by letting their imagination roam without any discipline. It does not seem out of order to speculate that there may have been some oral tradition of gematria and other similar non-literal exegeses which preceded and accounted for the midrashic statements, yet which were not included in the written text of the midrash. To be sure, there are examples of gematria in some midrashim. This leads us again to suspect that some statements in the midrash might have been preserved without their gematria or similar exegetical basis. In this connection we have noted above (p.8) that Asher uses gematria even in his halachic corpus, the Tur.

There are areas of study suggested by this thesis which could not be investigated at this time. Asher's leteral commentary deserves a separate paper in itself. It would be best to study this work with Nachmanides commentary in as much as Asher often cites him in his own commentary.

Another possible area is the problem of the influence of magic and superstition in Asher's commentary. For example, Asher commenting on the proximity of the phrases: "Ye shall not eat of the blood" and "...neither shall ye practice divination" in Lev. 19:26 states that this means that one is not to divine by food as murderers do, who eat bread over the dead person so the avenger does not take vengeance." Trachtenberg in his Jewish Magic and Superstition states that "murderers ate bread and salt immediately after their crimes to prevent the return of the victim's spirit to wreak vengeance upon them" (p. 160,161) Perhaps Asher was referring to this custom.

The following is a comprehensive list of all the verses which Jacob ben Asher comments on. They are listed by the exegetical methods described above; Verses marked with an asterisk are discussed in the text pages 12-126. The following abbreviations should be noted:

I = Itur Bikurim adds correction

R = Reinetz adds correction

1	Gen.	1:1*	7.4	Num.	5:17*
1.1	Gen.	1:1*	7.5	Dt.	29:27*
2	Num.	24:6*	7.6	Dt.	17:18*
2.1	Lev.	26:1*	8	Num.	24:8*
2.2	Ex.	1:9*	9	Dt.	4:9*
		3:19*	10	Gen.	46:2
	Lev.	26:33*		Ex.	2:2*
		26:43*		Lev.	9:7
2.3	Num.	1:22*		Num.	6:26*
3	Num.	1:16*			23:9*
		25:12*		Dt.	5:28
4	Ex.	31:17*			6:8*
	Num.	23:3	10.1	Num.	12:13*
	Dt.	1:7*		Dt.	1:17*
		5:4			3:24
		7:12			8:9*
		7:20*	10.2	Num.	25:11*
		9:7	10.3	Gen.	10:11
		13:6		Ex.	13:11*
		15:8*		Lev.	23:43
		16:16			26:13
		17:6		Num.	2:33
5	Gen.	32:11*			5:31
5.1	Gen.	37:1*			11:12
	Dt.	5:25*			12:8*
6	Gen.	23:2 *			15:20
6.1	Gen.	27:46*			28:3
	Dt.	32:18*		Dt.	2:3
7	Lev.	13:33*			5:16
	Dt.	6:4*			5:28
		32:6*			4:4
7.1	Dt.	6:4*			8:5*
7.2	Dt.	6:4*			5:28
7.3	Dt.	18:13*			26:16*
					31:16
					32:47
			10.4	Gen.	18:7 *
			11	Gen.	19:33*

11.1	Num.	21:30*	Lev.	10:2*
				11:4
11.2	Num.	21:30*		17:2
				19:16
11.3	Num.	9:10*		22:13
			Num.	6:23
12	Num.	32:42*		7:17(2)
	Ex.	15:26*		9:1
				10:10*
13	Gen.	24:47		13:29
		25:24		16:2
		26:33		20:16
		27:29		22:30
	Ex.	12:18*		23:2
		13:9		31:2
		19:6	Dt.	1:15
		21:11		1:19
		25:24*		2:4
		27:20		4:26*
		31:4		4:42
		31:18		15:10
		32:19*		15:14
	Lev.	8:34		31:2
		23:40		31:31
	Dt.	1:13		32:13
		1:19		34:4
		1:20(2)		
		1:32	15	Ex.
		3:25		15:17
		5:28		18:20
		9:17		Lev.
		15:8		21:5*
		21:20		21:13*
		26:9		Num.
		31:17		10:36
		32:8		11:20*
		32:13		13:30
		32:33		14:24*
		32:40		22:6
		33:9		27:13
				27:19
			Dt.	21:7
13.1	Dt.	4:43*	16	Ex.
				18:13*
14	Gen.	27:3	17	Gen.
		28:40		26:33
		48:20		37:17
	Ex.	13:10		49:2
		19:3*		Ex.
		32:11		4:2
		34:12		6:3*
		38:21		14:15
				15:1*
				16:1
				18:1
				25:8*
				38:24
				42:11
				46:4

	Lev.	10:11 15:11 16:23 19:9 20:16* 21:10 26:9		Dt.	5:16 6:5 11:12 16:18 21:20 21:15
	Num.	8:6	20.1	Lev.	12:7*
18	Dt.	21:17*	20.2	Gen.	1:1*
19	Gen.	1:1 * 1:26 3:24 17:21 32:3 37:3 41:35 47:29 49:8		Lev.	16:4
	Ex.	21:1	20.4	Num.	30:17
	Lev.	10:9*			
	Num.	11:27	20.5	Lev.	25:49*
	Dt.	12:21 18:10(2)	20.6	Num.	21:20* 27:11*
20	Gen.	1:27 2:4* 8:7 9:21 18:7 25:20* 28:12 38:18 47:28 49:22	21	Gen.	25:25*
	Ex.	14:27 15:26 22:17 25:10 29:39* 32:22 32:34	22	Gen.	1:1(5)*-I 1:2 1:4(3) 1:5(2) 1:14 R 1:27(2) 2:22 4:14 4:14 6:9 6:11(3) 13 6:16 7:4 7:10 11 10:8(2) 12:1(3) *
	Lev.	10:11* 21:1 26:3 26:6			2 3 18:1(3) 2 7 18:8(2) 18:18 20 27(2) 19:12 19:26
	Num.	10:9 17:3 25:7 25:12			

21:23  
 22:2  
     4  
     11  
     11  
 22:17  
 23:1  
     2  
     14  
 24:49  
 24:49 I  
 24:60  
 25:19  
     22(2)  
     23(2)  
     25  
     27  
 26:5  
 27:5(2)R  
 27:9  
 27:33 I  
 28:10(2)†  
     12(6)  
     15  
     14 R  
 29:2(2)  
     3  
     13 I  
 30:13  
     14  
     15  
 31:22  
 32:6  
     9  
 32:11  
     14  
     25  
     25  
     27 I  
 33:2  
     3(2)  
     5  
 33:10 I  
     14  
 35:11  
 36:20  
 37:1  
     2(2)  
     5  
     15  
 37:3 I

37:2  
     3  
     5  
 39:10 I  
 39:15  
 40:10  
 40:10 I  
 41:1 I  
 41:13  
 41:45  
     55  
 42:6  
     7  
     11  
 42:37 I  
 43:9 I  
 44:18  
 44:18 I  
 45:12(4) I  
 45:23 I  
 45:23 I, 23  
     27 I  
 47:2 I  
 47:2  
     28 (2)  
     29  
     31  
 48:14(2)  
     5  
     18  
 48:19(3)  
 48:19 I  
 48:20(3)  
     22  
 49:2(2)  
     6  
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     7  
     8  
     2  
     9  
 49:9(2)  
     10(4)I  
     21  
     22  
 49:27  
 Lev. 1:5  
     2:13  
     4:27  
     6:3  
     6:4 I  
     6:9  
     6:13  
     6:13  
     6:13 I

6:27	25:10
7:30 I	36
9:1 I	36
9:22 R	51
10:1	26:3 I
10:9 *	5
10:11	8
11:2 I	10
11:15	19
11:29	19
37	21
39	2:2
12:2	Num. 5:9 I
12:2	6:2
12:3	24
12:4 I	26
12:7	27
13:10	27 I
13:54	7:14 I
14:15	18
15:3	8:2 I
4	2 I
4	4 *
11	4
12	4
14	4
16	4
16	8:16
16	9:6
19	10:9 I
19	9
16:1	10:32 I
1	10:35
3	35
6	11:1
12	16
16	20 I
27	12:1 I
28	1
18:18	3
19:9	13:2
20	3
23	16
21:1	16 I
21:1	33 I
21:1	14:44
21:1	15:31
21:5 I	38
13	38
22:32 I	39 I
23:3	39
3	16:1
40	1 I
	2



17:23		Dt.	2:5 I
19:2			2:25
20:1			3:23
1 I			24
10			27
12			4:27
12			27
28			27
28			45 I
21:5			5:24 I
22:2 I			6:8
22:4 I			12
5			13 I
5			7:14
6 I			14
22:30			20
30			20
23:3 I			26
4 I			8:5
5			6
7I			6
7			8:10
7			8:15 I
23:9 *			9:9
9			10
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11			13:9 I
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13			18 I
20			18
25			21 I
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5	22.4	Dt.	5:18*
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3		Ex.	27:9*
5		Lev.	27:34*
18	23.1	Gen.	35:11*
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12		Ex.	6.3
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19		Lev.	3:6
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27	Ex.	28:17*			30:12*
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28	Ex.	35:1*		Dt.	1:1
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28.1	Ex.	17:16*			24:7*
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		16:32			16
		21:1			19:34
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34	Num.	31:8*		46	Num.	10:35*
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50	Gen.	49:1*	59	Num.	6:25*
51	Gen.	49:1*	60	Gen.	6:9
52	Ex.	25:31*			8:21
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53	Dt.	33:13*			35:23
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54	Ex.	29:40*			49:14
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55	Dt.	1:1*			27:3
56	Dt.	1:1*			25:23
57	Gen.	1:14*			26:20
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	23			13
	32			14
	23:7			8:2*
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	20:8		Lev.	3:13*
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15			Num.	20:5*
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24		82	Ex.	10:1
25				25:10
25			Lev.	1:9
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4			Num.	1:2*
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24		83	Gen.	1:1
25				18:23
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		8:4			24:67*
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		10:72		Dt.	12:3*
		14:13			
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83.1	Num.	10:29*			2:2
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84	Dt.	9:26*			6
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84.1	Ex.	20:2*			12
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85	Num.	1:5*			21
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86	Num.	32:1*			23
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87	Ex.	30:21*			11
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88	Dt.	32:1*			16
	Lev.	26:4*			21
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89	Ex.	20:13*			6:11
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90	Dt.	14:12*			16
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91	Gen.	36:39*			7:4
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92	Lev.	19:1*			23
	Dt.	21:3*			8:2
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93	Ex.	27:30*			4
					11
94	Num.	7:12*			21
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95	Num.	25:19*			9:26
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96	Gen.	14:19*			11:1 *
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Ex. 23:26  
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Ex. 38:8  
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 Lev. 44:13  
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	18		26
	18		31
	24:10		34
	11		12:6
	11		13
	12		13:10
	25:5		20
	11		33
	11		33
	28		14:9
	34		14
	40		16
	45		19
	46		24
	52		40
	26:5		16:1
	8		14
	12		15
	16		15
	17		21
	25		26
	33		29
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Num.	1:19		30
	50		31
	2:31		33
	3:40		17:3
	4:19		20
	5:3		28
	6		18:4
	17		19
	23		19
	24		19:9
	31		15
	6:2		19
	20		21
	20		20:3
	8:2		10
	19		19
	25		25
	9:13		26
	13		21:4
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	15		15
	17		15
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	10:25		22:3
	28		4
	34		6
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			23

Num.	23:3		Dt.	7:1
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	7			8:3
	10			9
	13			12
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	19			9:4
	21			19
	22			21
25:12				10:10
	14			12
26:6				18
	15			11:4
27:7				25
	17			26
30:8				12:5
	14			15
	17			26
	19			13:7
	24			9
	26			14:25
	30			29
32:17				15:2
	21			8
	32			10
33:4				16:9
	52			18:4
	54			8
35:8				15
	17			19:3
	22			17
	23			21:2
	33			22:2
Dt.	1:1			2
	3			5
	5			6
	10			9
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	17			12
	28			13
	35			23:3
	39			6
	46			14
2:31				19
	25			24:1
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	24			25:2
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4:4				11
	20			12
	35			26:14
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Dt. 27:2  
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99.1 Gen. 24:29\*  
       Ex. 21:17\*  
       Lev. 21:8\*

99.2 Gen. 2:7\*  
       6:4\*  
       Ex. 35:27\*

99.3 Dt. 4:34\*  
       5:28\*

100 Gen. 14:1\*