

Those encamping near him are therefore the tribe of Yissachar...the tribe of Zevulun... (2:5,7)

Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun were grouped together under one banner. The commentators cite various reasons for the connection between these three tribes. Rabbenu Bachya contends that since the members of these three tribes were accomplished Torah scholars, it would seem appropriate that they camp in close proximity to one another. This explanation seems puzzling, in light of the fact that Zevulun was known to engage in commerce so that his brother Yissachar could devote all of his time to Torah study. Zevulun undoubtedly appreciated Torah study. Was he, however, as scholarly as Yissachar and Yehudah? Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun were grouped together under one banner. The commentators cite various reasons for the connection between these three tribes. Rabbenu Bachya contends that since the members of these three tribes were accomplished Torah scholars, it would seem appropriate that they camp in close proximity to one another. This explanation seems puzzling, in light of the fact that Zevulun was known to engage in commerce so that his brother Yissachar could devote all of his time to Torah study. Zevulun undoubtedly appreciated Torah study. Was he, however, as scholarly as Yissachar and Yehudah?

Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl, comments that Zevulun's descendants were Torah scholars. He bases this idea on the following explanation. Leah was originally destined to give birth to four sons. Consequently, following Yehudah's birth, the Torah says, "She stopped giving birth." (Bereshis 29:35) After the incident with the duda'im, she merited bearing another child - Yissachar. Why did she merit to have Zevulun as well? The answer, claims Horav Sorotzkin, lies in the relationship between the Torah scholar and the Torah supporter that Hashem intended to project. By having Zevulun born to the same mother as Yissachar, Hashem wanted to establish brotherly love between the two. While it is crucial that Zevulun appreciate Yissachar's Torah study, it is also essential that he love him - as a brother.

By placing Zevulun next to Yissachar and Yehudah, the Torah teaches us that love should exist between the scholar and the supporter of Torah. Chazal teach us in the Talmud Shabbos 23 that "he who loves Rabbis will merit to have sons who are Rabbis." This is a compelling statement with a powerful message regarding how we should raise our children, who should be the paradigms upon whom they should model themselves, and what is viewed as Torah nachas. Chazal are basically relating to the reward for one who loves Torah scholars. Thus, since Zevulun harbored an innate love for Yissachar, the assumption logically follows that Zevulun's descendants themselves grew up to be Torah scholars in their own right. This, of course, does not mean that they ceased to support their brothers who were learning "full time". On the contrary, they exemplified the true Torah supporter. Although they themselves were proficient in Torah, they nonetheless continued to support the "Yissachars" of their generation.