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**Triennial Cycle (Triennial Torah Cycle) / Septennial Cycle (Septennial Torah Cycle)**

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **Second Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Elul 20, 5781 – Aug 27/28, 2021** | **Sixth Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

**Candle Lighting and Habdalah Times:** [**https://www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting.htm**](https://www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting.htm)

**Roll of Honor:**

This Commentary comes out weekly and on the festivals thanks to the great generosity of:

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**For their regular and sacrificial giving, providing the best oil for the lamps, we pray that GOD’s richest blessings be upon their lives and those of their loved ones, together with all Yisrael and her Torah Scholars, amen ve amen!**

**Also, a great thank you and great blessings be upon all who send comments to the list about the contents and commentary of the weekly Torah Seder and allied topics**.

**If you want to subscribe to our list and ensure that you never lose any of our commentaries, or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to** **chozenppl@GMail.com** **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**Blessings Before Torah Study**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our GOD, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us through Your commandments, and commanded us to actively study Torah. Amen!**

**Please Ha-Shem, our GOD, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people Israel. May we and our offspring, and our offspring's offspring, and all the offspring of Your people, the House of Israel, may we all, together, know Your Name and study Your Torah for the sake of fulfilling Your delight. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel. Amen!**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our GOD, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations, and gave us the Torah. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**Ha-Shem spoke to Moses, explaining a Commandment. "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and teach them the following Commandment: This is how you should bless the Children of Israel. Say to the Children of Israel:**

**May Ha-Shem bless you and keep watch over you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem make His Presence enlighten you, and may He be kind to you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem bestow favor on you and grant you peace. – Amen!**

**This way, the priests will link My Name with the Israelites, and I will bless them."**

**These are the Laws for which the Torah did not mandate specific amounts: How much growing produce must be left in the corner of the field for the poor; how much of the first fruits must be offered at the Holy Temple; how much one must bring as an offering when one visits the Holy Temple three times a year; how much one must do when performing acts of kindness; and there is no maximum amount of Torah that a person must study.**

**These are the Laws whose benefits a person can often enjoy even in this world, even though the primary reward is in the Next World: They are: Honoring one's father and mother; doing acts of kindness; early attendance at the place of Torah study -- morning and night; showing hospitality to guests; visiting the sick; providing for the financial needs of a bride; escorting the dead; being very engrossed in prayer; bringing peace between two people, and between husband and wife; but the study of Torah is as great as all of them together. Amen!**

**A Prayer for Israel**

Our Father in Heaven, Rock, and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel, the first manifestation of the approach of our redemption. Shield it with Your lovingkindness, envelop it in Your peace, and bestow Your light and truth upon its leaders, ministers, and advisors, and grace them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our holy land, grant them deliverance, and adorn them in a mantle of victory. Ordain peace in the land and grant its inhabitants eternal happiness.

Lead them, swiftly and upright, to Your city Zion and to Jerusalem, the abode of Your Name, as is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses: “Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And the Lord your God will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it, and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.” Draw our hearts together to revere and venerate Your name and to observe all the precepts of Your Torah, and send us quickly the Messiah son of David, agent of Your vindication, to redeem those who await Your deliverance.

We pray for our beloved Hakham His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. **Mi Sheberach…**He who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, may He bless and heal the sick person HE Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai, May the Holy One, Blessed is He, be filled with compassion for him to restore his health, to heal him, to strengthen him, and to revivify him. And may He send him speedily a complete recovery from heaven, among the other sick people of Yisrael, a recovery of the body and a recovery of the spirit, swiftly and soon, and we will say amen ve amen!

**Special Requests from Hi Eminence Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai:**

He Who blessed our holy matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, Miriam the Prophetess. Abigail, and Esther daughter of Abigail – may He bless the sick mother of three children HE Giberet Hannah bat Sarah (the much loved niece of HH Giberet Giborah bat Sarah) and send her a complete recovery in all her organs and all her blood vessels. Please HaShem, heal her now. Please HaShem, heal her now. Please HaShem, heal her now among the other sick people of Your people Israel. And so may it be His will, and we all will say with one voice: AMEN ve AMEN

**Shabbat: “Vayiqach Qorach” – “And now Qorach”**

**&**

**6th Shabbat of Consolation (Nachamu VI)**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“****Vayiqach Qorach”** | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 16:1-7 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 17:16-18 |
| **“****And now Qorach”** | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 16:8-14 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 17:19-21 |
| **“Y ahora Coré”**  | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 16:15-19 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 17:22-24 |
| B’midbar (Numbers) 16:1 - 17:15 | Reader 4 – B’Midbar 16:20-27 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Hos 10:2-12 | Reader 5 – B’Midbar 16:28-35-31 | **Monday & Thursday****Mornings** |
| Special Ashlamatah: Isa 60:1-22 | Reader 6 – B’Midbar 17:1-5 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 17:16-18 |
| Psalms 102:24-29 | Reader 7 – B’Midbar 17:6-15 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 17:19-21 |
|  |  Maftir – B’Midbar 17:13-15 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 17:22-24 |
| N.C.: Mk 10:17-22; Lk 18:18-23 | Hos 10:2-12 |   |

**Contents of the Torah Seder:**

* **Rebellion of Korach, Dathan, Abiram, and On– Numbers 16:1-15**
* **Korah and His Company Accept Moses’ Challenge – Numbers 16:16-19**
* **Moses’ Intercession – Numbers 16:20-24**
* **Destruction of the Rebels – Numbers 16:25-34**
* **The Brazen Censers – Numbers 17:1-5**
* **Israel’s Disaffection with Moses – Numbers 17:6-15**

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’Midbar (Num.) 16:1 - 1‎7:15**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Korah** the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi took [himself to one side] along with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, descendants of Reuben. | 1. **But Korach** bar Tizhar bar Kehath, bar Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On bar Peleth, of the Beni-Reuben, took his robe which was all of blue, |
| 2. They confronted Moses together with two hundred and fifty men from the children of Israel, chieftains of the congregation, representatives of **the assembly**, men of repute. | 2. and rose up boldly, and in the face of Mosheh appointed a (different) observance in the matter of the blue. Mosheh had said, I have heard from the mouth of the Holy One, whose Name be Blessed, that the fringes are to be of white, with one filament of blue; O but Korach and his companions made garments with their fringes altogether of blue, which the LORD had not commanded; and two hundred and fifty men of the sons of Israel, who had been made leaders **of the congregation** at the time when the journeys and encampments were appointed, by expression of their names, supported him. |
| 3. They assembled against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for the entire congregation are all holy, and the Lord is in their midst. So why do raise yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" | 3. And they gathered together against Mosheh and Aharon, and said to them: Let the authority you have (hitherto had) suffice you, for all the congregation are holy, and the LORD's Shekinah dwells among them; and why should you be magnified over the congregation of the LORD? |
| 4. Moses heard and fell on his face. | 4. And Mosheh heard, as if every one of them was jealous of his wife, and would have them drink of the trial-water on account of Mosheh; and he fell on his face for shame. |
| 5. He spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, "In the morning, the Lord will make known who is His, and who is holy, and He will draw [them] near to Him, and the one He chooses, He will draw near to Him. | 5. And he spoke with Korach and all the company who supported him, saying: In the morning the LORD will make known to him whom He has approved, and has consecrated to approach unto His service, and who it has pleased Him should come near in ministering, unto Him. |
| 6. Do this, Korah and his company: Take for yourselves censers. | 6. Do this: Let Korach and all the company of his helpers take censers, |
| 7. Place fire into them and put incense upon them before the Lord tomorrow, and the man whom the Lord chooses he is the holy one; you have taken too much upon yourselves, sons of Levi." | 7. put fire in them, and lay incense upon them before the LORD, tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD will make known, he it is who is consecrated. Let it suffice to you, sons of Levi. |
| 8. Moses said to Korah, "Please listen, sons of Levi. | 8. And Mosheh said to Korach and his kindred: Hear now, you sons of Levi: |
| 9. Is it not enough that the God of Israel has distinguished you from the congregation of Israel to draw you near to Him, to perform the service in the Mishkan of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? | 9. Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the congregation of Israel to draw near to do His service to fulfill the ministry of the LORD's tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? |
| 10. He drew you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you, and now you seek the kehunah as well? | 10. But so has he brought near you and all the sons of Levi with you and now do you demand the high-priesthood also? |
| 11. Therefore, you and your entire company who are assembled are against the Lord, for what is Aaron that you should complain against him?" | 11. Therefore are you and all the company of your helpers gathered together against the Word of the LORD: and Aharon, what is he, that you murmur against him? |
| 12. Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not go up. | 12. And Mosheh sent men to summon Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, to the house of the great judgment; but they said, We will not come up. |
| 13. Is it not enough that you have brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert, that you should also exercise authority over us? | 13. Is it a little thing, that you have brought us from Mizraim, a land that produces milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that ruling you may domineer over us? |
| 14. You have not even brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Even if you gouge out the eyes of those men, we will not go up." | 14. Neither have you brought us into the land producing milk and honey to give us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you blind the eyes of the men of that land, that you may overcome them? We shall not go up thither. |
| 15. Moses was exceedingly distressed, and he said to the Lord, "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them, and I have not harmed a single one of them." | 15. And Mosheh was very wroth, and said before the LORD: I beseech you, look not upon their offering, the portion of their hands; for not an ass have I taken from one of them, nor to any of them done an injury, |
| 16. Moses said to Korah, "You and your entire congregation should be before the Lord you, they, and Aaron tomorrow. | 16. And Mosheh said to Korach, you, and all the company of your helpers, come together to the house of judgment before the LORD tomorrow, you, they, and Aharon. |
| 17. Let each man take his censer and place incense upon it, and let each man present his censer before the Lord; [there will thus be] two hundred and fifty censers, and let you and Aaron each [take] his censer. | 17. And take every one his censer, and put incense upon them; and let each offer his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty censers; you also, and Aharon, each man his censer. |
| 18. So each man took his censer, and they put fire upon it and placed incense upon it, and they stood at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron. | 18. And they took every one his censer, and put fire in them and sweet incense with it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of ordinance on one side; but Mosheh and Aharon on the other side. |
| 19. Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord appeared before the entire congregation. | 19. And Korach gathered to them the whole congregation at the door of the tabernacle. And he had brought forth, from his riches, two treasures which he had found among the treasures of Joseph filled with silver and gold, and sought with them to drive the riches of Mosheh and Aharon out of the world; but the glory of the LORD revealed itself to all the congregation. |
| 20. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, | 20. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh and Aharon, saying: |
| 21. "Dissociate yourselves from this congregation, and I will consume them in an instant. | 21. Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may destroy them quickly. |
| 22. They fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, if one man sins, shall You be angry with the whole congregation?" | 22. But they bowed down upon their faces in prayer, and said: El Elohim, who has put the spirit of life in the bodies of the children of men, and from whom is given the spirit of all flesh, - if one man has sinned, wilt You be angry with all the congregation |
| 23. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, | 23. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 24. "Speak to the congregation saying, 'Withdraw from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'" | 24. I have accepted your prayer for the congregation. Now speak you with them, saying: Remove away from the tents of Korach, Dathan, and Abiram. |
| 25. Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. | 25. And Mosheh arose, and went to remonstrate with Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed. |
| 26. He spoke to the congregation saying, "Please get away from the tents of these wicked men, and do not touch anything of theirs, lest you perish because of all their sins. | 26. And he said to the congregation, Remove now away from the tents of these men of sin, who have been worthy of death from (the days of) their youth in Mizraim, for they betrayed my secret when I slew the Mizraite; they provoked the LORD at the sea; at Alush they profaned the Sabbath, and now are they gathered together against the Word of the LORD; and therefore is it fit that their wealth should be scattered abroad and destroyed. Touch not, then, anything that is theirs, nor be smitten on account of their sins. |
| 27. So they withdrew from around the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and Dathan and Abiram went out standing upright at the entrance of their tents together with their wives, their children, and their infants. | 27. And they went apart from the tents of Korach, Dathan, and Abiram round about. But Dathan and Abiram came out, with reviling words, and arose and provoked Mosheh at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. |
| 28. Moses said, "With this you shall know that the Lord sent me to do all these deeds, for I did not devise them myself. | 28. And Mosheh said, By this you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that (I do them) not from the thoughts of my heart. |
| 29. If these men die as all men die and the fate of all men will be visited upon them, then the Lord has not sent me. | 29. If these men die after the manner of dying in which all men die, and the (common) account of all men be accounted upon them, the LORD has not sent me. |
| 30. But if the Lord creates a creation, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them and all that is theirs, and they descend alive into the grave, you will know that these men have provoked the Lord." | 30. But if a death which has not been created since the days of the world be now created for them, and if a mouth for the earth, which has not been made from the beginning, be created now, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them and all they have, and they go down alive into Sheol, you will understand that these men have provoked the LORD to anger. |
| 31. As soon as he finished speaking all these words, the earth beneath them split open. | 31. And it came to pass, when he had finished speaking these words, the earth beneath them clave asunder; |
| 32. The earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses, and all the men who were with Korah and all the property. | 32. and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and the men of their houses, and all the men who adhered to Korach, and all their substance. |
| 33. They, and all they possessed, descended alive into the grave; the earth covered them up, and they were lost to the assembly. | 33. And they went down with all that they had alive into Sheol; and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from the midst of the congregation. |
| 34. All the Israel who were around them fled from their cries, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up [too]!" | 34. And all Israel who were round about them fled from the terror of their voice, as they cried and said, Righteous is the LORD, and His judgment is truth, and the words of His servant Mosheh are truth; but we are wicked who have rebelled against him: and the children of Israel fled when they heard; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up. |
| 35. A fire came forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who had offered up the incense. | 35. And a fire came out in wrath from before the LORD, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men who offered the incense. |
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| 1. The Lord spoke to Moses saying: | 1. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 2. Say to Eleazar the son of Aaron the kohen that he should pick up the censers from the burned area (but throw the fire away), because they have become sanctified, | 2. Bid Elazar bar Aharon the priest to take away the censers from among the burnings, and scatter the fire hither and thither; for the censers of these guilty men who have been punished by the destruction of their lives are consecrated; |
| 3. the censers of these who sinned at the cost of their lives, and they shall make them into flattened out plates as an overlay for the altar, for they brought them before the Lord, and have [therefore] become sanctified, and they shall be as a reminder for the children of Israel. | 3. and make of them broad plates for the covering of the altar, because they bare them before the LORD, therefore they are consecrate; and they shall be for a sign to the children of Israel. |
| 4. So Eleazar the kohen took the copper censers which the fire victims had brought, and they hammered them out as an overlay for the altar, | 4. And Elazar the priest took the brazen censers which they who had been burned had carried, and beat them out for a covering for the body of the altar, as they had before used them for the service of the altar: |
| 5. as a reminder for the children of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the seed of Aaron, shall approach to burn incense before the Lord, so as not to be like Korah and his company, as the Lord spoke regarding him through the hand of Moses. | 5. for a memorial to the sons of Israel, that no common man, who is not of the sons of Aharon, may offer incense before the LORD; and that no man should behave himself factiously to obtain the priesthood, as did Korach and the company of his helpers; and whose end would be to perish, not (indeed) with a death like that of Korach and his company, by being burned by fire, and being swallowed up by the earth, but punished with leprosy: as when the LORD said to Mosheh, Put your hand into your bosom, and his hand was stricken with leprosy; so would it be with him. |
| 6. The following day, the entire congregation of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord." | 6. But on the following day the whole congregation murmured against Mosheh and Aharon, saying: You have been the occasion of the judgment of death against the people of the LORD. |
| 7. It came to pass while the congregation were assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned to the Tent of Meeting, and behold, the cloud had covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. | 7. And it was, that when the congregation had gathered against Mosheh and Aharon to kill them, they looked towards the Tabernacle of Ordinance, and, behold, the Cloud of the Glory of the Shekinah covered it, and the Glory of the LORD was revealed there. |
| 8. Moses and Aaron came to the front of the Tent of Meeting. | 8. And Mosheh and Aharon went from the congregation to the door of the tabernacle. |
| 9. The Lord spoke to Moses saying: | 9. And the Lord spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 10. Stand aside from this congregation, and I shall consume them in an instant." They fell on their faces. | 10. Separate from the midst of this congregation, and I will consume them at once. But they bowed themselves on their faces in prayer. |
| 11. Moses said to Aaron, "Take the censer and put fire from the altar top into it. Then take it quickly to the congregation and atone for them, for wrath has gone forth from the Lord, and the plague has begun." | 11. And Mosheh said to Aharon, Take the censer, put fire in it from the altar, and sweet incense on the fire; bear it quickly into the congregation, and make atonement for them: for a destruction like that which consumed them in Horeb, whose name is Burning, has begun by commandment to kill, from the presence of the LORD. |
| 12. Aaron took [it], just as Moses had said, and he ran into the midst of the assembly, and behold, the plague had begun among the people. He placed the incense on it and atoned for the people. | 12. And Aharon took, as Mosheh had said, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and, behold the destructive burning had begun to destroy the people: but he put on incense, and made atonement for the people. |
| 13. He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague ceased. | 13. And Aharon stood in the midst, between the dead and the living with the censer, and interceded in prayer; and the plague was restrained. |
| 14. The number of dead in the plague was fourteen thousand, seven hundred, besides those who died because of the matter of Korah. | 14. But the number who had died by the plague was fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside those who had died in the schism of Korach. |
| 15. Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and the plague was checked. | 15. And Aharon returned to Mosheh at the door of the tabernacle; and the plague was stayed. |

**Reading Assignment:**

**The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez - Vol XIV: Final Wanderings**

By: Rabbi Yitschaq Magrisso, Translated by: Dr. Tzvi Faier

Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1983)

Vol. 14 – “Final Wanderings,” pp. 1-44

**Welcome to the World of P’shat Exegesis**

In order to understand the finished work of the P’shat mode of interpretation of the Torah, one needs to take into account that the P’shat is intended to produce a catechetical output, whereby a question/s is/are raised and an answer/a is/are given using the seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel and as well as the laws of Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew expression.

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

[cf. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=472&letter=R>]:

**1. Ḳal va-ḥomer:** "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori.

**2. Gezerah shavah:** Argument from analogy. Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications.

**3. Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad:** Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question.

**4. Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages.

**5. Kelal u-Peraṭ and Peraṭ u-kelal:** Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general.

**6. Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.

**7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎** **‎** **B’Midbar (Num.) 16:1 – 17:15‎**

**1 Korah... took** This portion is beautifully expounded on in the Midrash of R. Tanchuma, [as follows]:

**Korah... took He took himself to one side to dissociate himself from the congregation, to contest the [appointment of Aaron to the] kehunah.** This is what Onkelos means when he renders it וְאִתְפְּלֵג , “and he separated himself.” He separated himself from the congregation to persist in a dispute. Similarly, מַה־יִּקָּחֲךָ לִבֶּךָ , “Why does your heart take you away?” (Job 15:12) meaning, it removes you, to isolate you from others (Midrash Tanchuma Korach 2). Another explanation: He attracted the heads of the Sanhedrin among them with amicable words. Similarly, “Take Aaron [with words]” (20:25); “Take words with you” (Hosea 14:3) (Midrash Tanchuma Korach 1). -[Num. Rabbah 18:2]

**the son of Izhar the son of Kohath the son of Levi** [The verse] does not mention, “the son of Jacob,” because he [Jacob] prayed not to be mentioned in connection with their quarrel, as it is stated, “my honor, you shall not join their assembly” (Gen. 49:6). And where is his name mentioned in connection with Korah? In (I) Chron. (6:22, 23), where their genealogy is traced for the service of the Levites on the platform [in the Temple], as it says, “the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.” -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 4, Num. Rabbah 18:5]

**Dathan and Abiram** Since the tribe of Reuben was settled in the south when they camped, thus being neighbors of Kohath and his children who were also camped in the south, they joined with Korah in his rebellion. Woe to the wicked, and woe to his neighbor! Now what made Korah decide to quarrel with Moses? He envied the chieftainship of Elizaphan the son of Uzziel whom Moses appointed as chieftain over the sons of Kohath by the [Divine] word. Korah claimed, “My father and his brothers were four [in number]” as it says, “The sons of Kohath were...” (Exod. 6:18). Amram was the first, and his two sons received greatness—one a king and one a kohen gadol. Who is entitled to receive the second [position]? Is it not I, who am the son of Izhar, who is the second brother to Amram? And yet, he [Moses] appointed to the chieftainship the son of his youngest brother! I hereby oppose him and will invalidate his word (Midrash Tanchuma Korach 1, Num. Rabbah 18:2). What did he do? He went and assembled two hundred and fifty men, heads of Sanhedrin, most of them from the tribe of Reuben, his neighbors. These were Elitzur the son of Shedeur and his colleagues, and others like him, as it says, “chieftains of the congregation, those called to the assembly.” And further it states, “These were the chosen ones of the congregation” (1: 16). He dressed them with cloaks made entirely of blue wool. They came and stood before Moses and asked him, “Does a cloak made entirely of blue wool require fringes [’tzitzith’], or is it exempt?” He replied, “It does require [fringes].” They began laughing at him [saying], "Is it possible that a cloak of another [colored] material, one string of blue wool exempts it [from the obligation of techeleth], and this one, which is made entirely of blue wool, should not exempt itself? -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 2, Num. Rabbah 18:3]

**descendants of Reuben** Dathan and Abiram and On the son of Peleth.

**3 You take too much upon yourselves** You took by far too much greatness for yourselves.

**are all holy** All of them heard [the] words [of the commandments] at Sinai from the mouth of the Almighty. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 4]

**So why do you raise yourselves** If you have taken kingship for yourself, you should not have chosen kehunah for your brother. Not only you heard at Sinai, “I am the Lord, your God”; the entire congregation heard it. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 4]

**4 and fell on his face** **because of the rebellion, for this was already their fourth offense. [When] they sinned with the calf, “Moses pleaded” (Exod. 32:11); by the episode of the complainers, “Moses prayed” (11:2); with the spies, “Moses said to God, ‘But the Egyptians will hear...’ ” (14:13), but now, at Korah’s rebellion, he became disheartened [literally, his hands were weakened].** This is comparable to a prince who sinned against his father, and his [father’s] friend placated the king on his behalf, once, twice, and three times. When he offended the fourth time, the friend became disheartened, and he said, “How much more can I trouble the king? Perhaps he will no longer accept my petition.” -[Midrash Tanchuma 4, Num. Rabbah 18:6]

**5 In the morning, the Lord will make known** Night is a time of drunkenness for us, and it is improper to appear before Him. His real intention was to delay, with the hope that they might retract [their opposition]. -[Midrash Tanchuma 5]

**In the morning, the Lord will make known who is His** For the Levitic services.

**and who is holy** For the kehunah.

**and He will draw** them...

**near to Him** Heb. וְהִקְרִיב אֵלָיו . And the Targum [Onkelos] proves this [that it is referring to both the Levites and the kohanim], for he renders the first phrase, “He will bring them close to Him” [and the second phrase] “He will bring into His service.” The Midrashic interpretation of בּֽקֶר , morning, [rather than מָחָר , tomorrow] is: Moses said to him [Korah], The Holy One, blessed is He, assigned boundaries to His world. Are you able to transform morning into evening? That is how possible it is for you to undo this, as it says, “It was evening and it was morning... and He separated (וַיַּבְדֵּל) ” (Gen. 1:5, 7); similarly, “Aaron was set apart (וַיִּבָּדֵל) to sanctify him...” (I Chron. 23:13). -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 3, Num. Rabbah 4]

**6 Do this!...Take for yourselves censers** Why did he see fit to speak to them thus? He said to them, "Among the nations, there are various forms of worship and many priests, and they do not all gather in one temple. We, however, have only one God, one ark, one Torah, one altar, and one kohen gadol, but you two hundred and fifty men are all seeking the kehunah gedolah! I too would prefer that. Here, take for yourselves the service most dear—it is the incense, more cherished than any other sacrifice, but it contains deadly poison, by which Nadab and Abihu were burnt. Therefore, he warned them, “and it will be the one whom the Lord chooses—he is the holy one” [meaning,] that he is already in his [state of] holiness. Is it not obvious that [the one] who is chosen is the holy one? Rather, Moses told them, “I am telling you this so that you should not be found guilty. For the one He chooses will survive, and the rest of you will perish.” -[Mid. Tanchuma 5, Bamidbar Rabbah 18:8]

**censers** - מַחְתּוֹת , vessels used for stoking (חוֹתִין) coals, which have a handle.

**7 you have taken too much upon yourselves, sons of Levi** Heb. רַב לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי , [interpreted Midrashically as:] I have told you a very great thing. Were they not fools? For he warned them about it and they [still] took upon themselves to offer [the incense]. They sinned at the cost of their lives, as it says, “the censers of these who sinned at the cost of their lives” (17:3). But what did Korah, who was astute, see [to commit] this folly? His vision deceived him. He saw [prophetically] a chain of great people descended from him: Samuel, who is equal [in importance] to Moses and Aaron. He [Korah] said, "For his sake I will be spared. [He also saw] twenty-four watches [of Levites] emanating from his grandsons, all prophesying through the holy spirit, as it says, “all these were the sons of Heman” (I Chron 25:5). He said, “Is it possible that all this greatness is destined to emanate from me, and I should remain silent?” Therefore, he participated [in the rebellion] to reach that prerogative, for he had heard from Moses that they would all perish and one would escape [death]: “the one whom the Lord chooses—he is the holy one.” He erred in thinking that it referred to him. He, however, did not “see” properly, for his sons repented [and thus did not die at that time]. Moses, however, foresaw this. -[This is found in Mid.] Tanchuma [Korach 5, Num. Rabbah 18:8]

**you have taken too much upon yourselves** [The simple interpretation is:] You have taken too great a task upon yourselves, to rebel against the Holy One, blessed is He.

**8 Moses said...** He began to speak softly to him, but when he saw that he [Korah] was adamant [lit., stiff-necked], he [Moses] thought, “Before the other tribes [other versions: the rest of the tribe] join him and perish with him, I will speak to all of them as well.” He then began exhorting them [saying,], “Listen to me, sons of Levi.” -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 6, Num. Rabbah 18:9]

**9 and to stand before the congregation** to sing on the platform.

**10 He drew you near** to that service from which he has distanced the rest of the congregation of Israel.

**11 Therefore** Because of this, “you and your entire company who are assembled” with you “are against the Lord,” for I acted as His messenger to give the kehunah to Aaron, and this rebellion is not with us [but with the Lord]. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 6, Num. Rabbah 18:9]

**12 Moses sent** From here we derive that one should not persist in a dispute, because Moses sought them out to conciliate them with peaceful words.- [Mid. Tanchuma Korach 10, Sanh. 110a]

**We will not go up** Their own mouths caused them to stumble, [to say] that they would have only a downfall. - [Mid. Tanchuma Korach 6, Num. Rabbah 10]

**14 nor have you given us** This statement refers to the word “not” stated above; meaning, You have not brought us up, and You have not given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. You said to us, “I will bring you up from the affliction of Egypt to a good land...” (Exod. 3:10). You did bring us out of there, but you have not brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey. Instead, you have decreed upon us to kill us in the desert, as you said to us, “your corpses shall fall in this desert” (14:29).

**Even if you gouge out the eyes of those men...** Even if you send [messengers] to gouge out our eyes if we do not go up to you, we will not go up.

**those men** Like a person who attributes his own curse to his fellow.

**15 Moses was exceedingly distressed** Heb. וַיִּחַר לְמשֶׁה מְאֽד , he was very grieved, [not that he was angry].

**Do not accept their offering** According to its simple meaning, [Moses said,] Do not accept the incense that they will sacrifice before You tomorrow. According to its Midrashic interpretation, he said: I know that they have a portion in the daily communal offerings. Let their portions not be accepted favorably before You. Let the fire leave it and not consume it. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 10]

**I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them** I did not take a donkey from any one of them. Even when I went from Midian to Egypt, and I placed my wife and sons on a donkey to ride, and I should have taken that donkey from their property, I took only from my own property (Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 10). Onkelos renders it as שְׁחָרִית , ‘expropriated.’ In Aramaic, the king’s service is called שַׁחְוַור .

**16 they** Your company.

**17 and let each man present his censer before the Lord...** The two hundred and fifty men among you.

**19 Korah assembled... against them** with words of mockery. All that night, he went to the tribes and enticed them [saying,] “Do you think I care only for myself? I care for all of you. These [people] come and take all the high positions: the kingship for himself and the kehunah for his brother,” until they were all enticed. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 10]

**and the glory of the Lord appeared** He came in a pillar of cloud.

**22 O God, the God of the spirits** [God Who] knows the thoughts [of every man]. Your attributes are not like those of earthly beings. A mortal king against whom part of his country transgresses does not know who the sinner is, and, therefore, when he is angry, he metes out punishment upon them all. But as for You, all thoughts are revealed before You, and You know who the sinner is. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 11]

**if one man** [If one man] is the sinner, shall You be angry with the whole congregation? The Holy One, blessed be He, said, “You have spoken well. I know and will make known who sinned and who did not sin.” -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 11]

**24 Withdraw** Heb. הֵעָלוּ , as the Targum [Onkelos] renders: Withdraw from around Korah’s tent.

**25 Moses arose** He thought they would show him respect, but they did not. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 8, Num. Rabbah 12]

**27 went out standing upright** Heb. נִצָּבִים , with a haughty bearing, to curse and to blaspheme, as in, “he stationed himself (וַיּתְיַצֵּב) [in an arrogant manner] for forty days” (I Sam. 17:16), said in reference to Goliath. -[Mid. Tanchuma Korach 3, 8, Num. Rabbah 12]

**their wives, their children, and their infants** Come and see the severity of dispute. The earthly courts do not punish until [an accused] has two [pubic] hairs, and the heavenly court does not punish until one reaches the age of twenty, but here even nursing babes were punished. -[Midrash Tanchuma Korach 3]

**28 to do all these deeds** That I did by the word of God: to give Aaron the kehunah gedolah, his sons the deputy kehunah, and Elizaphan the chieftainship of the Kohathites.

**29 the Lord has not sent me** But I did everything on my own, and he [Korah] is in the right for opposing me. - [Mid. Tanchuma Korach 8, Num. Rabbah 12]

**30 But if... a creation** A new one.

**the Lord creates** to kill them through a death by which no man has died until now. And what is this creation? “And the earth will open its mouth and swallow them up.” Then you will know that they have provoked the Holy One, blessed is He, and I [Moses] have spoken by Divine word. Our Rabbis interpret it: If there was a mouth already created to the earth from the time of the six days of Creation, well and good, but if not, let God create [one now]. -[Mid. Tanchuma Korach, Sanh. 110a]

**34 fled from their cries** Because of the sound that emanated when they were swallowed up.

**Chapter 17**

**2 but... the fire** that is in the censers.

**throw... away** [the fire] on the ground, off the censers.

**because they have become sanctified** I.e., the censers [have become sanctified], and it is forbidden to derive personal benefit from them since they made them into service vessels.

**3 these who sinned at the cost of their lives** They have become willful sinners against their own lives for they opposed the Holy One, blessed is He.

**flattened out** Heb. רִקֻּעֵי , thinned out.

**plates** metal sheets beaten flat; in old French, tenves, thinned out, flattened.

**an overlay for the altar** For the copper altar.

**and they shall be as a reminder** A remembrance so that people will say, “These [plates] are from those who disputed the kehunah and were burnt.”

**4 and they beat them out** In Old French, estendre, to extend, to spread, [in modern French &?tendre].

**5 so as not to be like Korah** Heb. וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְקֽרַח , lit. and there shall not be like Korach. In order that there shall not be like Korah.

**as the Lord spoke regarding him through the hand of Moses** [The word לוֹ literally means ‘to him.’ Here it] means ‘about him,’ that is, about Aaron, He spoke to Moses that he and his sons would be kohanim. Therefore, no outsider, who is not of the seed of Aaron, shall draw near.... Similarly, every time it says, לִי , לוֹ, or לָהֶם in connection with the verb דִּבּוּר , ‘speech,’ it means ‘regarding.’ Its Midrashic interpretation is that לוֹ refers to Korah. So what is [the meaning of] "by the hand of Moses"? Why not just simply "to Moses"? It alludes to those who rebel against the kehunah. They are stricken with tzara’ath, as it says, “and he [Moses] took it out, and behold, his hand was ‘leprous,’ like snow” (Exod. 4:6). For this reason, Uzziah was stricken with tzara’ath.- [Midrash Tanchuma Tzav 11]

**11 and atone for them** This secret was given over to him by the angel of death when he went up to heaven, that incense holds back the plague... as is related in Tractate Shabbath (89a).

**13 He stood between the dead...** He took hold of the angel and held him against his will. The angel said to him, “Allow me to accomplish my mission.” He [Aaron] said to him, “Moses commanded me to stop you.” He said to him, “I am the messenger of the Omnipresent, and you are the messenger of Moses.” He said to him, “Moses does not say anything on his own volition, but only at the bidding of the Almighty. If you do not believe [me], the Holy One, blessed is He, and Moses are at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; come with me and ask.” This is the meaning of the statement, “Aaron returned to Moses” (Mid. Tanchuma Tetzaveh 15). Another interpretation: Why with incense? Because the Israelites were slandering and vilifying the incense, saying that it was a deadly poison; through it Nadab and Abihu died; through it two hundred and fifty people were burnt. The Holy One, blessed is He, said, “You shall see that it will stop the plague, and it is sin that caused their death.”-[Mid. Aggadah. See Mechilta Beshallach (Vayassa 6:5, Ber. 33a]

**Ketubim: Psalm** **102:24-29**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A prayer for a poor man when he enwraps himself and pours out his speech before the Lord. | 1. The prayer for the poor man, for he is weary, and will speak his prayer in the presence of the LORD. |
| 2. O Lord, hearken to my prayer, and may my cry come to You. | 2. O LORD, accept my prayer, and let my entreaty come before You. |
| 3. Do not hide Your countenance from me; on the day of my distress extend Your ear to me; on the day I call, answer me quickly. | 3. Do not remove Your presence from me in the day of my distress; incline Your ear unto me; in the day that I call, hasten, answer me. |
| 4. For my days have ended in smoke, and as a hearth my bones are dried up. | 4. For my days are consumed like smoke; and my limbs burn like an oven. |
| 5. Beaten like grass and withered is my heart, for I have forgotten to eat my bread. | 5. My heart is smitten like grass and will dry up; for I have forgotten the Torah of my instruction. |
| 6. From the sound of my sigh my bones clung to my flesh. | 6. Because of the sound of my groaning, my bones have clung to my flesh. |
| 7. I was like a bird of the wilderness; I was like an owl of the wasteland. | 7. I have become like a marsh-bird in the wilderness; I have become like an owl in the parched land. |
| 8. I pondered, and I am like a lonely bird on a roof. | 8. I stay awake all night, and I have become like a bird that flutters and wanders by itself on the roof. |
| 9. All day long my enemies revile me; those who scorn me swear by me. | 9. All the day my enemies will jeer at me; those who mock me have sworn by my word in vain. |
| 10. For ashes I ate like bread, and my drinks I mixed with weeping. | 10. For I have supped on ashes like food, and prepared my drink in weeping. |
| 11. Because of Your fury and Your anger, for You picked me up and cast me down. | 11. Because of your anger and rage, for you have lifted me up and cast me down. |
| 12. My days are like a lengthening shadow, and I dry out like grass. | 12. My days are like a shadow that lengthens; and I will wither like grass. |
| 13. But You, O Lord, will be enthroned forever, and Your mention is to all generations. | 13. But You, O LORD, Your dwelling place is eternal, in heaven You will dwell, and Your memorial is to every generation. |
| 14. You will rise, You will have mercy on Zion for there is a time to favor it, **for the appointed season has arrived**. | 14. You will arise, You will pity Zion, for it is time to have compassion on her, **for the season has come.** |
| 15. For Your servants desired its stones and favored its dust. | 15. For Your servants have desired her stones, and they will have mercy on her dust. |
| 16. And the nations will fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. | 16. And the peoples will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. |
| 17. For the Lord has built up Zion; He has appeared in His glory. | 17. For the city of Zion was built by the command of the LORD, He was revealed in glory. |
| 18. He has turned to the prayer of those who cried out, and He did not despise their prayer. | 18. He turned to the prayer of those who were made desolate, and did not despise their prayer. |
| 19. Let this be inscribed for the latest generation, and a [newly] created people will praise Yah. | 19. Let this prayer be written for a later generation, and the people yet to be created will praise Yah. |
| 20. For He has looked down from His holy height; the Lord looked from heaven to earth, | 20. For He watched from the high heavens of His holiness; the LORD looked from heaven to earth. |
| 21. To hear the cry of the prisoner, to loose the sons of the dying nation; | 21. To hear the cry of the prisoners; to set loose the children of those handed over to death. |
| 22. To proclaim in Zion the name of the Lord and His praise in Jerusalem. | 22. To tell in Zion the name of the LORD, and His praise in Jerusalem. |
| 23. When peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to serve the Lord. | 23. When peoples are gathered together, and kingdoms to worship in the presence of the LORD. |
| 24. He has afflicted my strength on the way; He has shortened my days. | 24. My strength is harmed by the weariness of the path of exile; my days are shortened. |
| 25. I say, "My God, do not take me away in the middle of my days, You Whose years endure throughout all generations. | 25. I will say in the presence of my God, "Do not remove me from the world at the halfway point of my days; bring me to the world to come, because Your years are throughout generations of generations." |
| 26. In the beginning You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. | 26. In the beginning when all creatures were created, You founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hand. |
| 27. They will perish but You will endure, and all of them will rot away like a garment; like raiment You will turn them over and they will pass away. | 27. They will perish but You will endure; and all of them like a garment will wear out; like a mantle You will change them and they will pass away. |
| 28. But You are He, and Your years will not end. | 28. And You are He who created them; and Your years do not come to an end. |
| 29. The children of Your servants will dwell, and their seed will be established before You." | 29. The sons of Your servants will abide in the land; and their offspring will be established in Your presence. |

**Rashi’s Commentary to Psalm 102:24-29**

**24 He has afflicted my strength on the way** He returns to his original complaint, “for You picked me up and cast me down. My days are like a lengthening shadow.” My enemy afflicted my strength on the way.

**25 I say** to the Lord, “You are my God.”

**do not take me away in the middle of my days** Do not take us away to destroy us from the earth in the hands of our enemies in the middle of our days. And what are our days? All the days of all generations, of Your years, You promised to keep us alive before You, as he says at the end of the psalm, “and Your years do not end...and their seed will be established before You.”

**26 In the beginning** Heb. לפנים, from the beginning.

**27 like raiment You will turn them over** like a person who turns his garment inside out to take it off.

**28 But You are He** Who stands and exists.

 **Meditation from the Psalms**

**Psalms ‎‎102:13-29**

**By: H.Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

As we look at the third portion of Psalm 102, I will repeat my introduction from the last two weeks to maintain continuity.

David composed this psalm to express the feelings of the poor man enveloped in misery. In a deeper sense these verses describe the tragic state of Israel in exile, impoverished and downtrodden. The nation is poor both financially and spiritually.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Another aspect of Israel’s poverty in exile is the poor response which their prayers receive from heaven. In better days HaShem responded generously and in abundance, but now the blessings are meager and few.[[2]](#footnote-2) Similarly we lament:[[3]](#footnote-3) *Though I would cry out and plead, He shut out my prayer*. Rav Eliezer said: *From the day the Temple was destroyed the gates of prayer have been locked tight*.[[4]](#footnote-4)

However, this psalm ends with a prophecy of hope and redemption. Prosperity will return to Israel when they return to their permanent homeland to serve HaShem eternally. Your servants’ children shall be settled, and their children will be steadfast before You.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Our chapter of Psalms contains an interesting pasuk:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 102:26*** *Of old Thou didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands.*

I’d like to explore the ‘heavens’ that are the work of His hands. This will give us some sense of where we have been and how HaShem previously treated us. At the same time, it will also show what awaits us when HaShem restores all things.

Let’s start with Rashi’s insight into the beginning of ‘heaven’.[[6]](#footnote-6) **In the beginning of God’s creation -** Rashi explains that if you wish to explain it according to its simple meaning, explain it thus: “At the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth, the earth was astonishing with emptiness, and darkness...and God said, ‘Let there be light.’”

Rashi explains that pshat of the verse as follows: “*In the beginning of God’s creation of the heaven and the earth, the earth was astonishing with emptiness.”* This is based on a linguistic analysis of the word “Bereshit,” which does not mean “In the beginning”, but “In the beginning of...” [[7]](#footnote-7)

Now let’s examine this in light of the drash: Rashi states that there is a philosophical idea alluded to in the word “*Bereshit.*” The world was created for the sake of Torah which is called “*reshit,*” and for the Jewish people who are also referred to as “*reshit*.” Both are “firsts” in terms of their centrality in the purpose of Creation. This teaches us that the heaven and the earth are intrinsically related to the Torah.

This word ‘shamayim’, is interesting in several regards. At the beginning of parashat Genesis, Rashi explains the meaning of the word “shamayim” (heavens) is that it is made up of the words *esh* (fire) and *mayim* (water).

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:8*** *And God called the firmament ‘shamayim’*… – He mixed together fire (esh) and water (mayim), forming from them the ‘shamayim’.

Since the Torah is given “from the shamayim”, it too contains both an element of fire and an element of water, and these are combined and interwoven. We learn that the Torah was given at Mt. Sinai amidst fire:

And he said: The LORD came from Sinai, And rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, And He came from the myriads holy, At His right hand was a **fiery law** unto them.

in the book of Judges, we find that it was also given in water:

***Shoftim (Judges) 5:4-5*** *Lord, when You emerged from Seir, when You marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, also the heavens dripped; also the clouds dripped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.*

Fire and water, in many respects, possess opposite characteristics, but they share in common the fact that they are the sources of the greatest physical power in the universe. The main sources of energy in the physical world are from fire and water. At the same time, both of these terms have been used in the Rabbinic writings to symbolize moral and ethical values - water as the symbol of Torah and fire as the symbol of moral passion, or, sometimes, fire as the symbol of the quality of justice and water as the symbol of the quality of mercy. These ideas have great implications for the human race.[[8]](#footnote-8)

We should also note that shamayim is plural word: Heavens. In the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy), Moshe tells the Jewish people, “You have been shown in order to know that HaShem, He is the G-d! There is none beside Him” (4:35). Rashi once more quotes a Rabbinic teaching, this time to explain what it means, ‘that the Jews were shown in order to know’: “When the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave the Torah, He opened for them the seven heavens; and just as He split the upper [regions], so He split the lower, and they saw that He was alone.” In other words, the Children of Israel were shown at Sinai a glimpse of the inner mechanics of the entire universe--from subatomic particles to black holes and beyond, presumably--so that they would know for certain that HaShem is the sole Ruler of all of this vast Creation.

The Tanach implies the existence of multiple heavens in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:14; Tehillim (Psalms) 148:4 and this is certainly taught in Ephesians 4:10 and 2 Corinthians 12:2, which mentions “the third heaven”. The Talmud teaches the existence of seven heavens.

The Tanach has seven different designations for heaven; therefore, there must be Seven heavens.[[9]](#footnote-9) However, the drash is of more interest to us as we explore Psalms chapter 102.

***Midrash Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) XIX:7*** *AND THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD TRAVELLING IN THE GARDEN TOWARD THE COOL OF THE DAY (III, 7). R. Halapay said: We know [from here] that a voice may travel, but we do not yet know that ‘traveling’ can apply to fire; and whence do we know that? From a verse elsewhere: And the fire traveled down upon the earth (Shemot IX, 23). R. Abba b. Kahana said: Not mehallek but mith-hallek is written here, which means that it [repeatedly] leaped and ascended. The real home of the Shechinah was in the nether sphere; when Adam sinned it departed to the first rakia’ [firmament]; when Cain sinned, it ascended to the second rakia’; when the generation of Enosh sinned, it ascended to the third; when the generation of the Flood sinned, to the fourth; with the generation of the separation [of tongues], to the fifth; with the Sodomites, to the sixth, with the Egyptians in the days of Abraham, to the seventh. But as against these there arose seven righteous men: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses, and they brought it down again to earth. Abraham [brought it down] from the seventh to the sixth, Isaac from the sixth to the fifth, Jacob from the fifth to the fourth, Levi from the fourth to the third, Kohath from the third to the second, Amram from the second to the first, while Moses brought it right down below. R. Isaac said: It is written, The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell (wayyishkenu) therein forever (Tehillim XXXVII, 29): then what are the wicked to do-are they to range in the air! What it means is that the wicked did not permit the Shechinah to dwell on earth.*

**Seven** Heavens are Vilon, Raki’a, Zebul, Ma’on, Machon, Araboth

1) Vilon -וילון, Isaiah 40:22 Vilon is the name of Jalon extrapolated unto Isaiah 40:22

2) Rakia - רקיע, Genesis 1:6-8, Genesis 1:17, Genesis 1:20, and Psalm 19:1-2, Psalm 150:1, Ezekiel 1:22-23

3) Shehakim - שחקים, Deut 33:26, 2 Samuel 22:12, Psalms 18:11-12, 36:5-6, 57:10-11, 77:17-18, 78:23, 89:37-38,

 108:4-5, Proverbs 8:28, Job 35:5, Job 36:28, Job 38:37

4) Zebul - זבול, Isaiah 63:15, 1-Kings, 8:13, 2 Chronicles 6:2

5) Ma’on - מעון, Deuteronomy 26:15, Psalm 26:8 Psalm 71:3, Psalm 90:1, and Zechariah 2:17 { Zechariah 2:13}

6) Makon - מכון Deuteronomy 28:12, 1 Kings 8:39, 2 Chronicles 6:30, Psalm 89:14-15, Psalm 97:2, Isaiah 4:5

7) Araboth - ערבות, Psalm 68:4-5

Now, in order to give the Torah, HaShem brought His abode, shamayim, down to the earth. When He did, monumental changes were observed on earth. It was as though an encounter with HaShem brought us to the place where we longed to be.

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:16-19*** *On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for the Eternal had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The blare of the horn grew louder and louder. As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder*.

At Mt. Sinai in the days of Moshe, HaShem gave His Torah to the Children of Israel. According to the Sages, when HaShem gave the Torah all of nature stood still. The sea did not roar. No birds sang. No creature stirred or made so much as a peep. Not even a leaf fell from the trees. In short, there was no movement whatsoever! The Midrash put it like this:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XXIX:9*** *What is the meaning of, The Lord God hath spoken; who can but prophesy? (Amos III, 8). Said R. Abbahu in the name of R. Johanan: When God gave the Torah no bird twittered, no fowl flew, no ox lowed, none of the Ophanim stirred a wing, the Seraphim did not say ‘Holy, Holy’, the sea did not roar, the creatures spoke not, the whole world was hushed into breathless silence and the voice went forth: I AM THE LORD THY GOD. So it says, These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly... with a great voice, and it went on no more’.[[10]](#footnote-10)*

The lack of movement at Sinai suggests that there were no needs during this period. At Sinai we lacked nothing, therefore, we had no need to move.

Lack of movement is an indication that there is no force moving it out of position.

The mystics explain that seeing is much higher than hearing; the next world is a world which is seen, in this world one must hear. The depth of this idea is that this is a world of process, of movement towards. *Eretz*, the Hebrew word for ‘land’, comes from a root which means *to move*. This is why the mystics say that this world, eretz, is the world of movement. This world is constantly moving towards shamayim, heaven. Shamayim is the place of the infinite. Shamayim comes from the root *shammin[[11]](#footnote-11)* which means “there”.[[12]](#footnote-12) *There,* there is no movement because everything has arrived where it should be. The word for heaven indicates where that running ends, the destination and result of all movement. The higher dimension is all “there”, no “going towards” is possible there (relatively speaking) because that is the *tachlit* (***תכלית***)[[13]](#footnote-13) *or ultimate purpose,* that is *having arrived!* This world is all movement towards, the next is all goal; this world moves through time since it is all process, the next world is beyond time because all is one there.

Eyes see things outside of oneself. Seeing is like an instantaneous picture. We perceive everything at once, but is stillness. We need multiple *seeings* to perceive movement. Seeing is the modality of the next world. We see in the light. We see a world of stillness. We have a proverb which says, “Seeing is believing”. Because we see all at once and there is no assembling necessary, what we see is considered a proof. That is why *seeing* and *proof* both come from the same Hebrew root.

Seeing is the modality of the Zohar and the other mystical writings. In these writings it says, “Come and see”. Here are a few examples:

***Yachanan (John) 1:46*** *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

***Yochanan (John) 11:34*** *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.*

***Soncino Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 38b*** *(Ps. CXXXIX, I3). Nothing so miraculous was witnessed since the creation of the world. ‘Come and see,’ he said, ‘it is written: “It is a night (leyl) of observations unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night (ha-layla) of the Lord, observations to all the children of Israel” (Ex. XII, 42). Now, why “observations” in plural, and “night” first in the masculine gender (layiil), and then in the feminine (layla)? To indicate the union which took place on that night between the Masculine and Feminine aspects in the Divine attributes, and also the same union which will take place in the future Redemption: “As in the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things”.[[14]](#footnote-14)*

Ears hear things inside of oneself. The way we hear is one sound at a time. By the time we hear the second sound, the first sound is just a memory. And so it goes with each subsequent sound. We then combine the sounds to make syllables inside our head. Our brain then assembles the syllables into words and the words into sentences, the sentences are assembled into paragraphs and the paragraphs are assembled into the final picture. By the time we have assembled the whole picture, there is no more sound. All of the sounds are just a memory. Since sounds must be assembled by the hearer, hearing is very much a subjective art. Hearing depends on the person and his background. No two persons build the same picture from the words of a speaker. We hear in the darkness. Sound characterizes this world, the world of movement.

In this world we struggle to develop the art of hearing. Those who wrestle with the Gemara are trying to reconstruct the fractured pieces of this world. For this reason, the Gemara often says, “Come and hear”. The Gemara wants us to take the broken pieces and reconstruct them in the same way that we reconstruct another person’s speech. Here are a couple of examples:

***Luqas (Luke) 21:9*** *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end [is] not by and by.*

***Berachoth 2b*** *They pointed to a contradiction [from the following]: From what time may one begin to recite the Shema[[15]](#footnote-15) in the evening? From the time that the people come [home] to eat their meal on a Sabbath eve. These are the words of R. Meir. But the Sages say: From the time that the priests are entitled to eat their terumah. A sign for the matter is the appearance of the stars. And though there is no real proof of it, there is a hint for it. For it is written: So we wrought in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rise of the dawn till the appearance of the stars. And it says further: That in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labour in the day. (Why this second citation? — If you object and say that the night really begins with the setting of the sun, but that they left late and came early, [I shall reply]: Come and hear [the other verse]: ‘That in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labour in the day’). Now it is assumed that the ‘poor man’ and ‘the people’ have the same time [for their evening meal.] And if you say that the poor man and the priest also have the same time, then the Sages would be saying the same thing as R. Meir? Hence you must conclude that the poor man has one time and the priest has another time? — No; the ‘poor man’ and the priest have the same time, but the ‘poor man’ and the ‘people’ have not the same time.*

This world is all hearing. We do not see things as they are, we merely “hear” small pieces. If we pay attention and work diligently to make sense out of the “sounds”, then we can assemble a fractured picture.

The Olam HaBa, the next world, is a world of seeing. We will see things as they are. Everything will be apparent all at once. We will not have to struggle to reassemble the pieces.

Now we can understand what the Torah meant when it said:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:19-20*** *And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And HaShem came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and HaShem called Moses [up] to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

When HaShem came down to Mt. Sinai, it means that shamayim, *there*, intersected, *here*, with this world. The world of sight intersected with the world of hearing. When this happened, we read of something very unusual:

***Shemot (Exodus) 20:18*** *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw [it], they removed, and stood afar off.*

Now we can understand why the Torah says that we saw the thunder. We perceived the Olam HaBa. We were endowed with the modality of the next world. We no longer *heard*, we *saw*. We were a part of the Olam HaBa.

No wonder we had no movement. We had entered another dimension where we perceived that we had arrived at a place where there were no more needs. We lacked nothing, therefore there was no movement. Eretz (earth) became shamayim (heaven). *Here* became *there*! We had arrived at the place we had been moving towards, when we arrived where we were supposed to be, we no longer moved, we had arrived!

It should be obvious now why the Sages said that HaShem had suspended Mt. Sinai over our heads and told us to accept Torah or be buried:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:17*** *“They stood on the bottom of [lit. under] the mountain.”*

***Shabbath 88a*** *And they stood under the mount: R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them, ‘If ye accept the Torah, ‘tis well; if not, there shall be your burial.’ R. Aha b. Jacob observed: This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah. Said Raba, Yet even so, they re-accepted it in the days of Ahasuerus, for it is written, [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.]: [i.e.,] they confirmed what they had accepted long before.*

This midrash means we had no free choice. We were seeing, and seeing is believing! This is the coercion implied by suspending the mountain over our heads.

When shamayim intersected eretz for a brief time, the nature of things changed. That brief moment was a fore-taste of the Olam HaBa. The Sages discussed this in:

***Sukkah 5a*** *and it has been taught, R. Jose stated, Neither did the Shechinah ever descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to Heaven, as it is written, ‘The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the sons of men’. But did not the Shechinah descend to earth? Is it not in fact written, And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai? — That was above ten handbreadths [from the summit]. But is it not written, And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives? — That will be above ten handbreadths. But did not Moses and Elijah ascend to Heaven? Is it not in fact written, And Moses went up unto God.? — [That was] to a level lower than ten [handbreadths from heaven]. But is it not written, And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.? -[That was] to a level lower than ten handbreadths. But is it not written, He seizeth hold of the face of His throne, and He spreadeth His cloud upon him, and R. Tanhum said: This teaches that the Almighty spread some of the radiance of his Shechinah and his cloud upon him? — That was at a level lower than ten handbreadths. But in any case is it not written, ‘He seizeth hold of the face of His throne’? — The throne was well lowered for his sake until [it reached a level] lower than ten handbreadths [from Heaven] and then hell seized hold of it.*

The mystical writings of the Nazarean Codicil also speak of the time When HaShem and shamayim will intersect eretz:

***Revelation 21:1-4*** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

When we arrive *there*, then we will perceive reality as starkly as those who awake from a dream. Then we will realize that eretz is the illusion and shamayim is the reality. *There*, we will no longer have needs that force us to move. *There*, we will no longer move because all of our needs will be met.

The Revelation at Mount Sinai was an awe-inspiring, and frightening experience. All of creation, our Sages say, shook with the piercing sound of the ram’s horn. The thunder was seen, and the lightning heard. Then – silence --. Not a dog barked, nor a bird sang. No creature spoke. The seas did not stir. Even the angels ceased to fly, as The Voice was heard: “I am HaShem your G-d ...” Thus, did G-d give the Jewish People the Torah - we had arrived!

We will again have silence at the end of the age.

 ***Revelation 8:1*** *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.*

Hearing is a sense which requires us to assemble the sounds from another person, into a cohesive picture. Thus, we would say that hearing is the forming of disparate parts into a single picture. Literally we make many into one. Hearing is the mode of this world. Seeing is the mode of the next world.

The *shema*, which is uttered twice a day by every observant Jew, is an interesting perspective into hearing. Shema is normally translated as *hear*. Chazal[[16]](#footnote-16) teach us that *shema* literally means *the gathering of many and making them into one*.[[17]](#footnote-17) The appropriateness of this definition is brought into sharp distinction when we see that the goal of the shema is that HaShem should be one and His name One.

The Shema contains 245 words (in the first verse “Shema Israel ...” and the three words that precede them), in order to complete a total of 248 words corresponding to the members of the human body. This connection to the human body should alert us to the fact that the shema is associated with our bodies.

Twice a day, the HaShem’s people cover their eyes, meditate on the unity of the Creator and intone, “Shema Israel - Hear! O Israel, HaShem our God, HaShem is One!” The Shema is the basic credo of the Jew, his first declaration of HaShem’s unity and the last words to leave his mouth when he passes from this world.

Why is it that we say “Hear! O Israel?” Why don’t we say “Look! O Israel?”

**Hearing is the modality of this world.**

**Seeing is the modality of the Olam Haba, the next world.**

Hearing requires us to work. Seeing requires no work. That is why seeing is believing. In the OlamHaba reality will be instantly apparent. The OlamHaBa is *seeing*.

***Shemot (Exodus) 20:15*** *“And all the Nation saw the voices and the flames, and the sound of the Shofar,[[18]](#footnote-18) and the mountain smoking, and the nation was afraid, and they trembled, and they stood far away.”*

When the Bne Israel stood at Mt. Sinai, the Torah records that we *saw* the voices. We saw something that is normally heard.[[19]](#footnote-19) Our Sages teach that when HaShem is manifest, then we see everything as it really is. We see reality, even if it is normally heard, because there are no broken pieces to assemble when everything is one with HaShem. Since there are no broken pieces to assemble, the Torah calls that *seeing*.

Hearing and seeing are the only senses associated with beauty. We see and hear beautiful things. This makes hearing and seeing intimately associated because they both have this modality.

When the Jewish People stood at Sinai to receive the Torah, they underwent an experience which was literally out of this world. When HaShem spoke, the Torah writes that the Jewish People “saw the voices.” There was a dislocation of the natural perception of the senses. What does it mean to see sound?

There is a fundamental difference between the two senses. With sight, we perceive a complete whole instantaneously. The essence of vision is an instantaneous whole. Sound, on the other hand, is assimilated as a collection of sounds. We order these separate pieces of information, giving them substance and definition, and in the process, we understand what it is we are hearing. This process of assembly is not instantaneous. Our brain takes time to balance and evaluate what it is hearing. In the end, *we have assembled the pieces* into a single unified picture.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The reason we say “Hear! O Israel” is that, in this world, you cannot see HaShem. You have to “hear” Him. You have to take the disparate, seemingly random elements of this world, and assemble them into a cogent whole.

There was only one time in history that you didn’t have to *hear* HaShem’s Unity; one moment when you could actually see it, and this was at Mount Sinai. There the Jewish People *saw* the voices. They saw with an incontrovertible clarity those things that usually need to be *heard*. Seeing is more than believing. When you see, you have to believe. It’s in front of your eyes.

Hearing takes place inside of a person. It requires interpretation by the person doing the hearing. This is in contrast to seeing which is external to a person and does not need interpretation, the sight speaks for itself.

The ears provide two essential services for the body:

1. They allow us to hear and
2. The provide balance for the body.

Since we have one organ, our ears, that provides two different functions, we understand that these “two” functions MUST really be just *one* function.[[21]](#footnote-21) The Hebrew word for “ear” (ozen - אוזן) comes from the same root as “balance” (izzon). The root of both words uses the consonants Aleph (א), Zayin(ז), and Nun (נ), which could be read by their spiritual concepts: *G-d nurtures the soul*. What is the connection between these two words (hearing & balance)? Balance is taking two legs and bonding them into oneness, just as hearing bonds multiple words into one thought or idea. Just as walking is impossible without two legs, so hearing is impossible without the gathering and assembling of pieces.

We began this shiur with the pasuk:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 102:26*** *Of old Thou didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands.*

Let’s conclude this shiur with:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 102:27*** *They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall pass away;*

Just as Hashem endures, so also will His words of Torah. I encourage y’all to fill yourselves up with enduring things, whether by seeing or hearing. Let’s cause heaven and earth to kiss.

**Ashlamatah: Hosea 10:2-12‎**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Israel is a vine devoid of fruit fitting for it. When I increased their good, they increased for the altars; when I increased for their land, they increased pillars. | 1. Israel is a ravaged vine, although it was a choice vine when it fulfilled the Law, the fruits of their deeds have caused them to be exiled. When I increased their harvests they increased the worship at their heathen altars, when I brought goodness to their land, they improved their cult pillars. |
| 2. Their heart has parted; now they shall be desolate. That shall demolish their altars, plunder their pillars. | 2. Their heart is separated from the Law, now they will feel their guilt. Now I will bring an enemy against them, who will shatter their heathen altars, and plunder their cult pillars. |
| 3. For now they shall say, "We have no king, for we did not fear the Lord; now what shall the king do for us? | 3. For lo now they say, "We have no king, for we are not afraid before the Lord, and the king, what can he do for us?" |
| 4. They spoke words, swearing falsely, forming a covenant, and judgment shall spring up like hemlock on the furrows of the field. | 4. They speak words of violence, they swear falsely, they make empty covenants. Now I will bring against them, like the poison of venomous serpents, judgment for their falsehood on the boundaries of the fields. |
| 5. Because of the calves of Beth-aven, the neighbors in Samaria shall be frightened, for its people shall mourn over it, and its priests, would rejoice over it, because of its glory, for it has been exiled from it. | 5. Because they worshipped the calves in Bethel, a king will come up against them with his army and will exile them. They will take the calf of Samaria from them. For its people and worshippers who rejoiced over it will mourn for its glory, for it has departed from it. |
| 6. That too shall be carried off to Assyria, a gift to King Yareb; Ephraim **shall take shame, and Israel shall be ashamed** of his counsel. | 6. It too they shall bring to Assyria as tribute to the king who will come to take revenge for them. O prophet. say to them, "The house of Ephraim will receive shame, and the house of Israel will be dismayed because of the counsels of their advisers ." |
| 7. The king of Samaria is silenced and is like foam on the surface of the water. | 7. Samaria will be ashamed of her king like foam on the surface of the water. |
| 8. The high places of Aven are destroyed, the sin of Israel; thorns and thistles shall come up on their altars, and they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us up," and to the hills, "Fall upon us." | 8. The high places of Bethel will be desolate; the sins of Israel have caused them to be exiled. Thorns and thistles will grow over their heathen altars. Now I will bring on them such distress that they will be as if mountains covered them or hills fell upon them.  |
| 9. Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel! There they remained; the battle against the haughty did not overtake them in Gibeah. | 9. From the days of Gibea the people of the house of Israel have sinned. There they arose and rebelled against My Memra, by appointing a king over them but they were not worthy that the kingship should be established for them in Gibeah. There warriors came against them for slaughter; fathers with sons went up. |
| 10. With My will, I chastised them, and nations shall gather about them, when they bind them to their two eyes. | 10. By my Memra I brought punishment on them and gathered the Gentiles against them and they exercised dominion over them as one ties a yoke of oxen to its two rings. |
| 11. And Ephraim is a goaded heifer that loves to thresh, and I passed over her fair neck; I will cause Ephraim to ride, Judah shall plow, Jacob shall break his clods. | 11. The congregation of Israel is like a heifer which they teach to plough but it does not learn; she loves to follow her own desires. For I delivered them from the servitude of Egypt; I removed the strong yoke from their necks; I caused the house of Israel to dwell on the fortified land of the Amorites, conquering before them. As for those of the house of Judah, I gave them the inheritance which I promised their father Jacob. |
| 12. **Sow righteousness/generosity for yourselves, reap according to loving-kindness, plow yourselves a plowing, and it is time to seek the Lord, until He comes and instructs you in righteousness/generosity.** | 12. **O house of Israel, perform acts of goodness, walk in the path of righteousness/generosity, establish for yourselves instruction in the Law. Behold, the prophets say to you at all times, “Return to the service of the Lord." Now he will be revealed and bring righteous/ generous deeds for you.** . |
| 13. You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, you have eaten fruit of lies, for you have relied on your way, on the abundance of your mighty men. | 13. You have devised oppression, you have done wickedness, you have received the punishment for your deeds, because you have trusted in your ways, in your many warriors. |
| 14. And a tumult shall rise in your peoples, and all your fortresses shall be plundered, as the plunder of a peaceful people by an ambush on a day of war; the mother with the children was dashed to pieces. | 14. But the tumult of war will arise among your people, and all your fortified cities will be plundered, as the peaceful are plundered in an ambush" on the day of battle, when mothers and children are killed. |
| 15. So has Bethel done to you because of the evil of your wickedness; at dawn, the king of Israel has been silenced. | 15. This is what the sins you committed in Bethel have brought you, because of the wickedness of your deeds. Finally, at dawn; the king of Israel will be shamed and humiliated. |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Hosea 10:2-12**

**2** **Their heart has parted** from Me.

**now they shall be desolate. That** is the thing that shall demolish (וְעָרְפוּ) thier altars, i.e., it will destroy them. This is an expression similar to (Deut. 21: 4) “and they shall dehead (יַעֲרֹף) ”; (Ex. 13:13) “and you shall behead it (וְעֲרַפְתּוֹ).” He will break their neck. Another explanation according to Midrash Aggadah: Peace is great, for, even if Israel worships idols, but there is peace among them, Satan does not bring charges against them, as it is said: (above 4:17) “Ephraim is joined: although he worships idols, let him alone.” Strife, however, is hated, as it is said: “Their heart has parted; now they will be guilty.” Satan can open his mouth to bring charges. [from unknown Midrashic source]

**3** **For now** when evil befalls them.

**they shall say, We have no king,** Our king, upon whom we relied, saying, “He will go forth at our head and will wage our wars,” is of no avail to us.

**4** **swearing falsely** Heb. אָלוֹתשָוְא, swearing falsely. אָלוֹת is, in construction, like כָּרֹת, a present tense.

**forming a covenant** with pagan worship. Therefore, judgment of torments and retribution shall spring up upon them.

**like hemlock** which is a bitter grass, springing up on the furrows of the field. And Jonathan renders:

**on the furrows of the field** for the iniquity that they move back the boundaries of the field.

**the furrows** Heb. תַּלְמֵי. The furrow of a plowshare is called תֶּלֶם. Another explanation:

**on the furrows of the field** where they erect their altars, as it is said (below 12: 12): “like heaps on the furrows of the field.” There the judgment for their iniquity shall spring up on them. Another explanation:

**swearing falsely** Every covenant they form with one another they break.

**and...shall spring up like hemlock** which springs up on the furrows of the field, which is a bitter grass, so do their judgments spring up and bitterness grows for the poor and needy. Amos, too, says: (6:12) “For you have turned judgment into hemlock.”

**5** **Because of the calves of Beth-aven etc.** Because of the retribution destined to befall the calves in Bethel, called Beth-aven in the Book of Joshua (7:2).

**shall be frightened** Heb. יָגוּרוּ. Its neighbors who were in Samaria shall be frightened over it. Why? For its people mourn over it, and its priests, who would constantly rejoice over it will not mourn over its glory, for it has been exiled.

**6** **That too shall be carried off to Assyria** This took place in the twelfth year of Ahaz, “And the Lord (sic) aroused the desire of Pul king of Assyria...and they exiled the Reubenites and the Gadites etc.” (I Chron. 5:26), and he took the golden calves that were in Bethel and went away, to fulfill what was said: “That too shall be carried off to Assyria.” [from Seder Olam ch. 22]

**a gift to King Yareb** This is Sennacherib.

**Ephraim shall take shame** Heb. בָּשְׁנָה. **Jeroboam, who was from the tribe of Ephraim, shall take shame for himself, that he erected this calf for a deity.**

**and Israel shall be ashamed** **of that counsel that they took counsel to make them, as it is said: (I Kings 12:28) “The king took counsel and made two golden calves.”**

**7** **The king of Samaria is silenced** Heb. נִדְמֶה. The king of Samaria is silenced, and he is like foam on the surface of the water, which is eskoume (ecume) in Old French.

**8** **The high places of Aven** i.e., the high places of Bethel.

**thorns and thistles shall come up on their altars** for their worshippers have gone into exile, and no one turns to them anymore.

**and they shall say** i.e., Israel shall say.

**to the mountains, Cover us up** lest our enemies see our shame.

**9** **Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel!** Heb. חָטָאתָ. This word חָטָאת is punctuated weakly, since it is of the feminine gender and of the past tense. Comp. (Lev. 25:21) וְעָשָת, “and it shall produce”; (Gen. 16:8) בָאת, “have you come”; (Deut. 32:36) אָזְלַת, “their power is gone.” From the days of Gibeah of Benjamin, Israel sinned. Since the incident of the concubine in Gibeah (Jud. 19) took place during the time of Othniel the son of Kenaz, who was the first of the judges, at the time of Cushan-rishathaim, and in whose time the image of Micah existed, and all this we find in Seder Olam (ch. 12).

**There they remained** They adhered to that trait since then.

**the battle...did not overtake them in Gibeah** Since the iniquity of idolatry was with them and they were not concerned about it, they were not victorious in the battle of Gibeah against the Benjaminites. Scripture calls them בְּנֵי עַלְוָה, lit. sons of haughtiness, who made themselves superior (עֶלְיוֹנִים) and did not heed their brethren to deliver the people of Gibeah. Jonathan, however, translates this in reference to their request for a king and their crowning Saul. However this does not appear to me to follow the Hebrew wording. Moreover, the context fits the former interpretation.

**10** **With My will, I chastised them** According to My will, I always chastised them from judge to judge, and I delivered them into the hands of their plunderers.

**and nations shall gather about them, when they bind them to their two eyes** Since Hosea compares them to a heifer as stated further: “Ephraim is a goaded heifer,” he, therefore, compared their chastisement to a cow, which they tire with plowing and they bind it to the yoke of the plowshare, and the pegs of the yoke penetrate it, [i.e., they penetrate the yoke,] one on this side and one on that side, next to the ox’s two eyes. And so did Jonathan render: as one hinds a “padna” on its two eyes. “Padna” is a yoke of oxen.

**11** **And Ephraim is a goaded heifer** Heb. מְלֻמָּדָה, porpojjnte in O.F. punctured, wounded in many places with the oxgoad, which is called agojjlon in O.F. I.e., many chastisements have I brought upon her, yet she has not humbled herself, and he always loves to thresh the grain in a place of food and fat, and she did not subject herself to be plowing, i.e., they did not subject themselves to My Torah, but follow the vision of their heart.

**that loves** Heb. אֹהַבְתִּי. The “yud” is superfluous. Comp. (Gen. 31:39) “stolen by day (גְּנֻבְתִי).”

**and I passed over her fair neck** Therefore, I bring upon them kings who will weaken their strength.

**I will cause Ephraim to ride, Judah shall plow etc.** If you wish that I would cause Ephraim to ride upon the nations, Judah shall plow, and Jacob יְשַּׂדֶד, shall break his clods with a plowing of good deeds, as Hosea explains and says: plow yourselves a plowing etc.

**12** **Sow righteousness for yourselves** But you have plowed wickedness etc.; therefore, a tumult shall rise in your people.

**plow yourselves a plowing** **Engage in the Torah and from there you will learn to go on the good way, to overpower temptation, like a person who plows the field to turn over the roots of grasses which sap the strength of the grain in the summer many days prior to sowing, and you shall set aside a time to seek the Lord, i.e., for the study of the Torah.**

**until He comes and instructs you in righteousness/generosity** **When you toil in it, He will give you to understand to let you know its secrets with righteousness/generosity.** Another explanation:

**Plow yourselves a plowing** **Do good deeds before oppression comes upon you, and that will cause for you that your prayer will be accepted in time of necessity, and then it will be a time fit for you to seek the Holy One, blessed he He, for all your necessities, for then your cry will be heard, and He will cast down (יוֹרֶה) charity to you; i.e., He will rain down charity to you.** Comp. (Ex. 15:3) “He cast (יָרָה) into the sea.”

**Special Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 60:1-22**

**Shabbat Nachamu VI**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has shone upon you. | 1. Arise, shine, Jerusalem; for the time of your salvation has come, and the glory of the LORD will be revealed upon you. |
| 2. **For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a gross darkness the kingdoms, and the Lord shall shine upon you, and His glory shall appear over you.** | 2. **For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and gloom the kingdoms; but the Shekhinah of the LORD will settle in you, and His glory will be revealed upon you.** |
| 3. **And nations shall go by your light and kings by the brilliance of your shine.** | 3. **And peoples will come to your light, and kings before your brightness.** |
| 4. Lift up your eyes all around and see, they all have gathered, they have come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be raised on [their] side. | 4. Lift up, Jerusalem, your eyes round about, and see all the sons of the people of your exiles who are gathered together, they come to your midst; your sons will come from far, and your daughters will be carried on hips. |
| 5. Then you shall see and be radiant, and your heart shall be startled and become enlarged, **for the abundance of the west shall be turned over to you, the wealth of the nations that will come to you.** | 5. Then you will see and be radiant, and you will fear and your heart widen in fear of sins; **because the wealth of the west is transferred to you, the possessions of the peoples will be brought into your midst.** |
| 6. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah, all of them shall come from Sheba; gold and frankincense they shall carry, and the praises of the Lord they shall report. | 6. The caravans of the Arabians will cover you around, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come. They will be burdened with gold and frankincense, and those who come with them will be declaring the praises of the LORD. |
| 7. All the sheep of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall serve you; they shall be offered up with acceptance upon My altar, and I will glorify My glorious house. | 7. All the sheep of the Arabians will be gathered into your midst, the rams of Nebat will minister to you; they will be offered up for pleasure upon My altar, and I will glorify My glorious house. |
| 8. Who are these that fly like a cloud and like doves to their cotes? | 8. **Who are these that come openly like swift clouds, and (are) not to be checked? The exiles of Israel, who are gathered and come to their land, even like doves which return to the midst of their windows!** |
| 9. For the isles will hope for Me, and the ships of Tarshish [as] in the beginning, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, in the name of the Lord your God and for the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you. | 9. For islands will wait for my Memra, those who go down in ships of the sea - which spreads its sails first? -to bring your sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because He has glorified you. |
| 10. And foreigners shall build your walls, and their kings shall serve you, for in My wrath I struck you, and in My grace have I had mercy on you. | 10. The sons of Gentiles will build up your walls, and their kings will minister to you; for in My wrath I smote you, but in My pleasure I will have mercy upon you. |
| 11. And they shall open your gates always; day and night they shall not be closed, to bring to you the wealth of the nations and their kings in procession. | 11. Your gates will be opened continually; day and night they will not be shut; that men may bring into your midst the possessions of the Gentiles, with their kings chained. |
| 12. **For the nation and the kingdom that shall not serve you shall perish, and the nations shall be destroyed.** | 12. **For any people and kingdom that will not serve you, Jerusalem, will perish; those peoples will be utterly destroyed.** |
| 13. The glory of the Lebanon shall come to you, box trees, firs, and cypresses together, to glorify the place of My sanctuary, and the place of My feet I will honor. | 13. The glory of Lebanon will be brought into your midst, cypresses, planes, and pines together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of the dwelling of My Shekhinah glorious. |
| 14. And the children of your oppressors shall go to you bent over, and those who despised you shall prostrate themselves at the soles of your feet, and they shall call you 'the city of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.' | 14. The sons of those who subjugated you will come bent into your midst; and all who used to incite you to anger will bow down to beseech from you at your feet; they will call you the City of the LORD, Zion with which the Holy One of Israel is pleased. |
| 15. Instead of your being forsaken and hated without a passerby, I will make you an everlasting pride, the joy of every generation. | 15. Whereas you have been forsaken and cast out, with no one passing through, I will make you glorious forever, a house of joy from generation to generation. |
| 16. And you shall suck the milk of nations and the breast of kings you shall suck, **and you shall know that I am the Lord, your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.** | 16. You will be satisfied with the possessions of the Gentiles, you will be indulged with the plunder of their kings; **and you will know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the Strong One of Jacob.** |
| 17. Instead of the copper I will bring gold, and instead of the iron I will bring silver, and instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron, **and I will make your officers peace and your rulers righteousness.** | 17. Instead of the bronze which they plundered from you, Jerusalem, I will bring gold, and instead of iron, I will bring silver, instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. **I will make your guardians peace and [appoint] your rulers in virtue.** |
| 18. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither robbery nor destruction within your borders, and you shall call salvation your walls and your gates praise. | 18. Violence will no more be heard in your land, spoil and breaking within your border; they will celebrate salvation upon your walls, and upon your gates they will be praising. |
| 19. **You shall no longer have the sun for light by day, and for brightness, the moon shall not give you light, but the Lord shall be to you for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory.** | 19. **You will no longer need the sun for light by day nor even the moon for brightness by night; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.** |
| 20. Your sun shall no longer set, neither shall your moon be gathered in, for the Lord shall be to you for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be completed. | 20. Your kingdom will no more cease, nor your glory pass away; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning will be ended. |
| 21. **And your people, all of them are righteous, shall inherit the land forever, a scion of My planting, the work of My hands in which I will glory.** | 21. **Your people will all be virtuous; they will possess the land forever, My pleasant plant, the work of My might, that I might be glorified**. |
| 22. The smallest shall become a thousand and the least a mighty nation; I am the Lord, in its time I will hasten it.**{S}** | 22. He that is smaII among them will become a thousand, and he that is faint a strong people: I am the LORD; in its time I will bring it. |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 60:1-22**

**4 shall be raised on [their] side** [Jonathan renders:] on the flanks, the flanks of the kings, they will be raised.

**5 Then you shall see and be radiant** Heb. וְנָהַרְתָּ , from נְהוֹרָה , [Aramaic for light,] then you shall see and be radiant [from Jonathan].

**and your heart shall be startled and become enlarged** And your heart shall wonder and become enlarged.

**for the abundance of the west shall be turned over to you** for the abundance of the west shall be turned over to you [after Jonathan].

**the wealth of the nations** The possessions of the nations [after Jonathan].

**6 A multitude** Heb. שִׁפְעַת , A multiplicity.

**the young camels of Midian** Heb. בִּכְרֵי . [Jonathan renders:] הוֹגְנֵי . They are young camels. Comp. (Jer. 2:23) “a swift young camel (בִּכְרָה) .”

**and Ephah** They, too, are of the sons of Midian. Comp. (Gen. 25:4) “Ephah and Epher.”

**7 the rams of Nebaioth** Heb. אֵילֵי , rams of Nebaioth [after Jonathan].

**9 as in the beginning** Like ‘as in the beginning,’ meaning in the days of Solomon, like the matter that is stated (I Kings 10:22): “For the king had at sea ships of Tarshish, etc.; once in three years, the ships of Tarshish would come, etc.” Tarshish is the name of the sea.

**in the name of the Lord your God that is called upon you**, for they will hear a report of Him and the name of His might, and come.

**for He has glorified you** He has given you glory.

**10 and in my grace** Because I favored you; in old French, en mon apayemant.

**11 And they shall open your gates always** Heb. וּפִתְּחוּ . This is an expression of opening in the strong conjugation (פִּעֵל) , since their opening is a perpetual opening, a constant opening. Just as שַׁבֵּר is an expression of breaking, so is פִּתְּחוּ an expression of opening. Tresoverts in O.F.

**13 box trees, firs, and cypresses** Species of trees of the forest of Lebanon.

**14 Zion of the Holy One of Israel** [Lit. Zion the Holy One of Israel. Jonathan renders:] Zion desired by the Holy One of Israel, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

**16 and the breast of kings** Heb. וְשֽׁד , an expression of breasts (שָׁדַיִם) and ‘you shall suck’ proves it.

**17 Instead of the copper** that they took from you.

**and I will make your officers peace** [Jonathan renders:] And I will make your officers peace and your rulers with righteousness. פְקֻדָּתֵךְ Your appointed officers. Our Rabbis stated: The officers who came upon you in your exile and the rulers who pressed you will be counted for you as peace and charity (Baba Bathra 9a). [That is, the money they have exacted from you will be counted as charity.]

**19 You shall no longer have** You shall not require the light of the sun.

**20 neither...be gathered in** Heb. יֵאָסֵף , an expression similar to (Joel 2:10) “gathered in (אָסְפוּ) their brightness.” Gathered in their light.

**21 in which I will glory** That I will glory with them. Pourvanter in French.

**22 in its time** I will hasten it If they are worthy, I will hasten it; if they are not worthy, it will be in its time.

**Abarbanel On**

**Pirqe Abot – Chapters of the Fathers**

**Pereq 2, Mishnah 7**

**Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had five disciples: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus; Rabbi Yehoshua hen Hananyah; Rabbi Yosi ha­Kohen; Rabbi Shimon hen Netanel; and Rabbi Elazar hen Arokh. He used to describe their qualities thus: Eliezer hen Hyrcanus is a plastered cistern which does not lose a drop; Rabbi Yehoshua hen Hananyah- happy is she who bore him; Yosi ha-Kohen is a *hasid;* Shimon hen Netanel fears sin; Elazar hen Arokh is an overflowing spring.**

**He used to say: If you were to put all the sages of Israel on one pan of the scale and Eliezer hen Hyrcanus on the other, he would outweigh them all.**

**Abba Shaul used to say in his [Rabban Yohanan's] name: If you were to put all the sages of Israel on one pan of the scales, even with Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, and Elazar ben Arokh on the other, he would outweigh them all.**

Abarbanel begins his exposition of this *Mishnah* by pointing out se­veral difficulties. With regard to none of the other sages mentioned in *Pirqe Abot* are we told explicitly who their disciples were. Hillel, for instance, had 80 disciples, of whom Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai was the most junior, yet this information is not given in the *Mishnayot* citing Hillel. Why then was Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai singled out? Furthermore, the *Mishnah* states he had five disciples, but he most certainly had many more than that. When Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai lists the distinguishing intellectual features of the five, he summarily defines those of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananyah as, "Happy is she who bore him." Are the mothers of the other four disciples not to be praised for giving birth to such scholars? Why only the mother of Yehoshua ben Hananyah? In this and the following *Mishnayot,* the disciples are variously mentioned with the title Rabbi and without. There must be some reason for this inconsistency. Lastly, it is simply untenable that in the same *Mishnah* two versions should prevail: Rabban Yohanan hen Zakkai is reported to have said that Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was the greatest of all the sages, whereas Abba Shaul reports him as saying that Elazar hen Arokh was the star.

Abarbanel solves these difficulties in the following manner. Unwil­ling to relinquish his opinion that there is a basic difference between Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi and Rabban Gamliel whether Torah alone is sufficient to enhance the life of the Jew, or whether Torah with *derekh eretz* is the paradigm of Jewish conduct, Abarbanel is convinced that the disciples in this *Mishnah* tend to side with Rabban Gamliel. The five disciples were not listed in this *Mishnah* to sing their praises or the praises of their teacher. They were cited by the redactor of the Mishnah only for the purpose of showing that they supported the view of Rabban Gamliel against Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi, and, incidentally, against their own teacher, Rabban Yohanan, and against Hillel and Shammai. The redactor, therefore, wished to stress that these five disciples were sages of the first rank, in proof of which he cited Rabban Yohanan's praise of them. Furthermore, apparently only these five said anything which can be construed as support for Rabban Gamliel's view and that is why they were singled out from Rabban Yohanan's other disciples. When the *Mishnah* mentions them in rela­tion to Rabban Yohanan, it omits the title, Rabbi, because Rabban Yohanan certainly did not address them with it. When, however, they are cited for what they themselves said, they are given their due title.

All the pronouncements of the disciples in the following Mishnayot are remarkably devoid of any mention of Torah studies. All they speak about are social and emotional attitudes in choosing a proper way of life - not a word about the study of Torah. Against this background we can understand why Rabban Yohanan hen Zakkai chose to single out these five disciples, although he had a host of others.

As stated above, in order to stress that these five were sages of the highest caliber, the *Mishnah* reports Rabban Yohanan's praise of their talents, which he bestowed in order to encourage others to try to emulate them. He begins with Rabbi Eliezer hen Hyrcanus, who is known in Talmudic literature as "The Great Rabbi Eliezer," who had an almost perfect memory, which was no doubt cultivated by his diligence in study. Rabban Yohanan hen Zakkai describes him as a plastered cistern which does not lose a drop. The Talmud (Sukkah 27b) relates that in his long life, **Rabbi Eliezer never gave a pronouncement unless he had heard it from his teacher at one point in his lifetime.**

Concerning Yehoshua hen Hananyah, of whom Rabban Yohanan said, "Happy is she who gave birth to him," Abarbanel infers that he was so congenial, supportive and sympathetic to his peers that everyone lauded him with that accolade. Other commentaries, cited by Abarbanel, refer to the story told by the sages that when Yehoshua's mother was pregnant she made the rounds of all the synagogues and academies praying that the child that she was carrying should become a great Talmudic scholar. Hence, when eventually Rabbi Yehoshua hen Hananyah became the outstanding luminary, people declared, "Happy is his mother in that the Almighty heard her prayers."

Rabbi Yosi ha-Kohen was described as a *Hasid.* What is a *Hasid* in the view of Abarbanel ? One who goes beyond the accepted norms in performing the positive *mitzvot* such as charity. Parenthetically. Abar­banel identifies Yosi ha-Kohen with the famous Yosef ben Gurion who was a disciple of Rabbi Yohanan hen Zakkai at the end of the Second Commonwealth.

In reference to Shimon hen Netanel, we are told that he feared sin. According to Abarbanel, this means that he was meticu­lous in his observance of negative *mitzvot,* the prohibitions. The term, *Hasid* is associated with positive commandments and the term *yerei shamayim* refers to the negative commandments.

Finally, he assesses Rabbi Elazar as a spring which steadily increa­ses its flow, which implies that he possessed a phenomenal talent for innovative thinking. In short, each one of these five students was, in his own singular, inimitable ability, superior to the others.

According to the first part of the *Mishnah,* Rabban Yohanan hen Zakkai was of the opinion that Eliezer ben Hyrcanus was the best of them and said that he outweighed all the other sages of Israel. In the second part, 1however, Abba Shaul is quite certain that the master valued Rabbi Elazar hen Arokh over the others and believed that he outweighed all the sages put together and including Eliezer hen Hyrcanus. To Rabbi Yohanan hen Zakkai, Elazar hen Arokh, with his sharp, incisive mind, was the epitome of a scholar. Rabbenu Yonah sees no clash between the two parts of the *Mishnah* because one was superior in overall knowledge; the other in depth and penetration.

Abarbanel apparently accepts Rabbenu Yonah's interpretation, but also propounds his own thinking on the conflict between the two parts of our *Mishnah.* With simple logic he asserts that when Yohanan hen Zakkai said that Eliezer hen Hyrcanus outweighed all the other sages of Israel, none of the other four were included, since he, their teacher, would hardly call his disciples "sages of Israel." Rabbi Eliezer would outweigh the other sages because of the breadth of his erudition and knowledge. There is no contradiction between that and Aba Shaul's statement, because Elazar hen Arokh was not included in the other pan of the scale. In his incisiveness and depth of thinking Elazar ben Arokh outweighed them all, including Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. In this critical evaluation, the other three disciples were not mentioned since their greatness was not in the field of scholarship, but rather in morals and ethics.

**Miscellaneous Interpretations**

**Midrash Shemuel** first inquires into the accuracy of the statement that Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had five students. It is known that he had a host of others. The answer lies in the superfluity of the phrase “HAYU LO” in the Hebrew text of the *Mishnah,* which can be translated literally as "There were five disciples (to him) to Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai." The message is that from these five disciples Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai himself received something - increased knowledge that he would not have had without them. Indeed, he had many other students, but these five were the ones that contributed to his additional erudition.

In evaluating the attributes of the five, he begins with Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and describes him as a plastered cistern which does not lose a drop. Although a plastered cistern has an unpleasant aspect in that elements of the plaster mix with the water, in the case of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus the waters of Torah were not affected by any strange philosophies, and yet he retained everything he learned.

Yehoshua ben Hananyah was described as one whose mother should be blessed, probably because of the extensiveness of his dedication to the mitzvah of "Honor your father and your *mother".*

Rabbi Shimon ben Netanel was termed, "One who feared sin" because he acted with restriction even in matters that were permissible. He feared that if he did not bridle his actions he would plunge into sin.

Midrash Shemuel considers the virtue of Shimon ben Netanel to be on a higher level than that of Yosi ha-Kohen who was described as a *Hasid.* It is possible that one veers to *Hasidut* because he has an innate tendency towards it. It did not require too much effort on his part; the one who fears sin however, needs to be ever on the alert and prepared to do battle with the evil inclination.

Elazar is compared to a spring that gathers force because of his extraordinary and unmatched ability in the exercise of *pilpul.* The words "extraordinary" and "spring" must be taken together. By the laws of nature, a spring is an extension of a larger body of water. The further the waters of the spring travel, the force of the torrent becomes weaker. The phenomenon in the case of Rabbi Elazar ben Arokh was that he was like fresh spring water whose flow never wanes and continues to stream on with the gusto of a river.

**Verbal Tallies**

**By: H. Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

**& HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah**

**Bamidbar (Numbers) 16:1 – 17:15**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 102:24-29**

**Hoshea (Hosea) 10:2-12**

**Mk 10:17-22, Lk 18:18-23,**

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Psalm are:**

Son / Children - בן, Strong’s number 01121.

Upon / Before - פנים, Strong’s number 06440.

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Ashlamata are:**

Son / Children - **בן**, Strong’s number 01121.

Took / Receive - **לקח**, Strong’s number 03947.

Israel - **ישראל**, Strong’s number 03478.

Upon / Before - **פנים**, Strong’s number 06440.

**Bamidbar (Numbers) 16:1** Now Korah, the **son <01121>** of Izhar, the **son <01121>** of Kohath, the **son <01121>** of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the **sons <01121>** of Eliab, and On, the **son <01121>** of Peleth, **sons <01121>** of Reuben, **took <03947> (8799)** men: 2 And they rose up **before <06440>** Moses, with certain of the **children <01121>** of **Israel <03478>**, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

**Tehillim (Psalms) 102:28** The **children <01121>** of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established **before <06440>** thee.

**Hoshea (Hosea) 10:6** It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall **receive <03947> (8799)** shame, and **Israel <03478>** shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

**Hoshea (Hosea) 10:7** As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam **upon <06440>** the water.

**Hoshea (Hosea) 10:9** O **Israel <03478>**, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the **children <01121>** of iniquity did not overtake them.

**Hebrew:**

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Reading****Num. 16:1 – 17:13** | **Psalms****102:24-29** | **Ashlamatah****Hos 10:2-12** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **lae** | God | Num. 16:22 | Ps. 102:24 |  |
| **rm;a'** | said | Num. 16:3Num. 16:5Num. 16:8Num. 16:12Num. 16:15Num. 16:16Num. 16:20Num. 16:22Num. 16:23Num. 16:24Num. 16:26Num. 16:28Num. 16:34Num. 16:36Num. 16:37Num. 16:41Num. 16:44Num. 16:46Num. 17:1Num. 17:10Num. 17:12 | Ps. 102:24 | Hos. 10:3Hos. 10:8 |
| **#r,a,** | land, earth | Num. 16:13Num. 16:14Num. 16:32Num. 16:33Num. 16:34 | Ps. 102:25 |  |
|  **aAB** | brought, came, went, comes | Num. 16:14Num. 16:43Num. 17:8 |  | Hos. 10:12 |
|  **!Be** | son | Num. 16:1Num. 16:2Num. 16:7Num. 16:8Num. 16:10Num. 16:12Num. 16:27Num. 16:37Num. 16:38Num. 16:40Num. 16:41Num. 17:2Num. 17:5Num. 17:6Num. 17:9Num. 17:10Num. 17:12 | Ps. 102:28 | Hos. 10:9 |
| **rBeDI**  | spoke, speak | Num. 16:5Num. 16:20Num. 16:23Num. 16:24Num. 16:26Num. 16:31Num. 16:36Num. 16:40Num. 16:44Num. 16:47Num. 17:1Num. 17:2Num. 17:6 |  | Hos. 10:4 |
| **rb'D'** | words | Num. 16:31Num. 16:49 |  | Hos. 10:4 |
| **[r;z<** | descendant | Num. 16:40 | Ps. 102:28 |  |
| **ajx** | sin | Num. 16:22 |  | Hos. 10:9 |
|  **ha'J'x;**  | sins | Num. 16:26 |  | Hos. 10:8 |
| **dy"**  | through, hand | Num. 16:40 | Ps. 102:25 |  |
| **hw"hoy>** | LORD | Num. 16:3Num. 16:5Num. 16:7Num. 16:9Num. 16:11Num. 16:15Num. 16:16Num. 16:17Num. 16:19Num. 16:20Num. 16:23Num. 16:28Num. 16:29Num. 16:30Num. 16:35Num. 16:36Num. 16:38Num. 16:40Num. 16:41Num. 16:42Num. 16:44Num. 16:46Num. 17:1Num. 17:7Num. 17:9Num. 17:10Num. 17:11Num. 17:13 |  | Hos. 10:3Hos. 10:12 |
| **~Ay** | day |  | Ps. 102:24 | Hos. 10:9 |
| **laer'f.yI** | Israel | Num. 16:2Num. 16:9Num. 16:25Num. 16:34Num. 16:38Num. 16:40Num. 16:41Num. 17:2Num. 17:5Num. 17:6Num. 17:9Num. 17:12 |  | Hos. 10:6Hos. 10:8Hos. 10:9 |
| **dAbK'** | glory | Num. 16:19Num. 16:42 |  | Hos. 10:5 |
| **hs'K'** | closed, covered | Num. 16:33Num. 16:42 |  | Hos. 10:8 |
| **ble** | of my own will, heart | Num. 16:28 |  | Hos. 10:2 |
| **xq;l'** | took, take | Num. 16:1Num. 16:6Num. 16:17Num. 16:18Num. 16:39Num. 16:46Num. 16:47Num. 17:2Num. 17:9 |  | Hos. 10:6 |
| **x;Bez>mi** | altar | Num. 16:38Num. 16:39Num. 16:46 |  | Hos. 10:2Hos. 10:8 |
| **hx'n>mi** | offering | Num. 16:15 |  | Hos. 10:6 |
|  **hf,[]m;** | works | Num. 16:28 | Ps. 102:25 |  |
| **lp;n"**  | fell, fall | Num. 16:4Num. 16:22Num. 16:45 |  | Hos. 10:8 |
|  **!yI[;** | eyes | Num. 16:14 |  | Hos. 10:10 |
| **hl'['**  | come up, go up, shall grow | Num. 16:12Num. 16:13Num. 16:14Num. 16:24Num. 16:27 | Ps. 102:24 | Hos. 10:8 |
| **~[;** | people | Num. 16:41Num. 16:47 |  | Hos. 10:5Hos. 10:10 |
| **dm;['** | stand, stood | Num. 16:9Num. 16:18Num. 16:48 | Ps. 102:26 | Hos. 10:9 |
| **hf'['** | do, did, make, made | Num. 16:6Num. 16:28Num. 16:38Num. 17:11 |  | Hos. 10:3 |
| **hP,** | mouth | Num. 16:30Num. 16:32 |  | Hos. 10:12 |
| **~ynIP'** | before, face | Num. 16:2Num. 16:4Num. 16:7Num. 16:9Num. 16:16Num. 16:17Num. 16:22Num. 16:38Num. 16:40Num. 16:43Num. 16:45Num. 16:46Num. 17:4Num. 17:7Num. 17:9Num. 17:10 | Ps. 102:25Ps. 102:28 | Hos. 10:7 |
| **xr;P'** | blosssom, sprouted, budded | Num. 17:5Num. 17:8 |  | Hos. 10:4 |
| **@c,q,** | wrath | Num. 16:46 |  | Hos. 10:7 |
| **hd,f'** | fields | Num. 16:14 |  | Hos. 10:4 |
| **~yIT;v.**  | twelve | Num. 17:2Num. 17:6 |  | Hos. 10:10 |
| **~m;T'** | die, end | Num. 17:13 | Ps. 102:27 |  |

**Greek:**

| **GREEK** | **ENGLISH** | **Torah Reading****Num. 16:1 – 17:13** | **Psalms****102:24-29** | **Ashlamatah****Hos 10:2-12** | **Peshat****Mishnah of Mark,****1-2 Peter, & Jude****Mk 10:17-22** | **Tosefta of****Luke****Lk 18:18-23** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ἀγαθός** | good |  |  |  | Mk. 10:17Mk. 10:18 | Lk. 18:18Lk. 18:19 |
| **ἀγαπάω** | love, loving |  |  | Hos 10:11  | Mk. 10:21 |  |
| **αἰώνιος** | eternal |  |  |  | Mk. 10:17 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **ἀκολουθέω** | follow |  |  |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **ἀκούω** | hearing, hear | Num 16:4  |  |  |  | Lk. 18:22Lk. 18:23 |
| **ἄρχων** | rulers | Num 16:13 Num 17:2 Num 17:6  |  |  |  | Lk. 18:18 |
| **δεῦρο** | come, came |  |  |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **διδάσκαλος** | teacher |  |  |  | Mk. 10:17Mk. 10:20 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **δίδωμι** | give, gave | Num 16:14 Num 17:6 |  |  | Mk. 10:21 |  |
| **εἴδω** | saw, know | Num 17:9  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **εἷς** | one | Num 16:22 Num 17:3 Num 17:6  |  |  | Mk. 10:17Mk. 10:18Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:19Lk. 18:22 |
| **ἐντολή** | commandments |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **ἐπερωτάω** | ask |  |  |  | Mk. 10:17 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **ἔπω** | said | Num 16:3 Num 16:8 Num 16:12 Num 16:15 Num 16:16 Num 16:22 Num 16:28 Num 16:46 Num 17:10 Num 17:12  |  |  | Mk. 10:18Mk. 10:20Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:19Lk. 18:21Lk. 18:22 |
| **ζωή** | life |  |  | Hos 10:12  | Mk. 10:17 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **θεός** | God | Num 16:5 Num 16:9 Num 16:11 Num 16:22 |  |  | Mk. 10:18 | Lk. 18:19 |
| **θησαυρός** | treasure |  |  |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **κλέπτω** | steal |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **κληρονομέω** | inherit |  |  |  | Mk. 10:17 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **λέγω** | saying | Num 16:5 Num 16:20 Num 16:23 Num 16:24 Num 16:26 Num 16:34 Num 16:36 Num 16:41 Num 16:44 Num 17:1 Num 17:12  |  |  | Mk. 10:18 | Lk. 18:18Lk. 18:19 |
| **λόγος** | words | Num 16:31  |  |  | Mk. 10:22 |  |
| **μήτηρ** | mother |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **μοιχεύω** | commit adultery |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **νεότης** | youth |  |  |  | Mk. 10:20 | Lk. 18:21 |
| **οὐρανός** | heavens |  | Psa 102:25 |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **πατήρ** | father |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **ποιέω** | do, did, done, made, make | Num. 16:6Num. 16:28Num. 16:38Num. 17:11 |  | Hos. 10:3 | Mk. 10:17 | Lk. 18:18 |
| **πτωχός** | poor |  |  |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **πωλέω** | sell, sold |  |  |  | Mk. 10:21 | Lk. 18:22 |
| **σφόδρα** | exceedingly, very | Num 16:15 |  |  |  | Lk. 18:23 |
| **τιμάω** | honor |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **φονεύω** | murder |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |
| **φυλάσσω** | kept |  |  |  | Mk. 10:20 | Lk. 18:21 |
| **ψευδομαρτυρέω** | bear false witness |  |  |  | Mk. 10:19 | Lk. 18:20 |

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra of B’midbar (Numbers) 16:1 – 17:15**

**“Vayiqach Qorach” “And now Qorach”**

**By: H. Em Rabbi Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hakham Shaul’s School of Tosefta****Luqas (Lk)**  | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat****Mordechai (Mk)** |
| **And a certain authority asked him, saying, “Good Teacher,** Hakhamby **doing what will I enter the Olam HaBa?” And Yeshua said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one** is **good except the one God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not kidnap, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’ ” And he said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” And** when he **heard** this**, Yeshua said to him, “You still lack one thing: Sell all your surplus possessions, and distribute** the proceeds **to the poor (Torah Scholars)—and you will have treasure in heaven—and come, follow me.” But** when he **heard these** things **he became very sad, because he was extremely wealthy.** | **And** as **he set out on the way** (Heb. Derek)**, one ran up** to him **and honored him asking him, "Good Rabbi** Hakham**, what must I do so that I will merit life in the Olam Ha-Ba?" Yeshua answered, You should not be calling me good, God alone[[22]](#footnote-22) is good** and I am not G-d**. You know the mitzvot, "Honor your father and your mother; that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you. You will not murder. You will not commit adultery. You will not kidnap. You will not bear false witness against your neighbor. You will not covet your neighbor’s house, you will not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant,[[23]](#footnote-23) nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is your neighbor’s."[[24]](#footnote-24) And he answered Him, Hakham, I have kept,** guarded carefully Heb. שמר – Shomer **these from my youth. And Yeshua looked at him, being pleased with him said to him, you are missing one thing; sell all the** surplus **that you own and give it to the poor (Torah Scholars), then you will have a treasury in the heavens,** then **come and walk as I walk accepting your responsibility. However, these words saddened him, and he departed in grief for he possessed a great deal of property.** |
|  |
|  |

**Nazarean Codicil to be read in conjunction with the following Torah Seder**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Numbers 16:1 - 17:15** | **Ps 102:24-29** | **Hos 10:2-12**  | **Mordecai 10:17-22** | **1 Luqas 18:18-23** |  |

**Commentary to Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**

As we will see, Hakham Tsefet and Hakham Shaul are in perfect harmony with the Torah Seder.

We must keep in mind that Hakham Tsefet through his amanuensis Mordechai (Mark’s) text is Peshat. Many scholars completely abuse this textual narrative of Mordechai. Their inclusion of thoughts from other accounts only serves to confuse and clutter the real points Hakham Tsefet is trying to make. Let us follow the Peshat through the narrative and allow it to speak for itself.

We see Yeshua and his talmidim leaving the house where they have been staying for a period. As they leave someone, who remains unidentified runs up to Yeshua with a provocative question.

Hakham Tsefet through his amanuensis Mordechai (Mark) looks at the “one who runs to Yeshua” very simply. We have no real qualifying data from Mordechai. Mordechai simply concludes that he “owned much property.” Hakham Tsefet’s narrative does NOT say that he is a RICH YOUNG RULER! The text as we will see simply concluded that he owned much property. Furthermore, we have no identity. Therefore, we cannot draw any specific conclusions as to his identity. Other sources may “hint” to his identity, as they should. Likewise, we have no indication as to the age of the individual. Therefore, we cannot ascertain age to determine if he was young or old. To bring other accounts of this story into Peshat is to reverse the hermeneutic process, which is impossible.

Looking at the narrative, we can draw some of this person’s characteristics.

1. He understands the appropriate way to address a Hakham.
2. His is educated in the protocols on how to conduct himself in the presence of Wisdom
3. He is concerned about his spirituality and wants to partake in the Olam HaBa.
4. He is most likely of Pharisaic persuasion (he believes in the afterlife and is approaching Yeshua, a Pharisee)

The individual honored Yeshua. We noted that he is acquainted with the appropriate protocols of wisdom. He addresses Yeshua as “Good Rabbi” [*Hakham*]. Another possibility to this translation is “Kind Rabbi” or Rabbi of Chesed, i.e. merciful Rabbi. Scholars point out that this is uncommon in Jewish literature.[[25]](#footnote-25) We must deduce that it was used in some measure since it is used here. Yeshua does not rebuke the individual for his speech. Yeshua uses this opportunity to launch his discussion on relevant issues related to the question. Nevertheless, the individual seems to refer to goodness and kindness in his address.

**One G-d**

Our translation in English is a bit ambiguous. The Greek phrase (text) “οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός” can be translated “no one is good except the ONE God.” εἷς ὁ θεός literally means “the One God.” Therefore, the thought that we derive from this is multifaceted.

1. Only the One God is merciful and compassionate.
2. There is ONLY ONE God!
3. There are not two Gods!
4. There are not three Gods!

**D’barim** (De) 6:4 **"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”**

The text mandates the above translation. Yeshua’s words “no one is good except the ONE God” mandate our understanding that he is NOT equating himself with G-d in any way. How it is that Scholars muddle these words to fit their own meaning is beyond our understanding. Peshat DEMANDS our understanding that Yeshua does not claim Deity for himself here.

The Greek word μὴ (*me*) is an expression, which establishes contrast. The established contrast is between Yeshua and the ONE G-d of Israel! Yeshua shows and says that he is not G-d. As we will see below he is G-d’s agent, but not “G-d.”

The Mitzvoth cited by Yeshua are understood as a “pars pro toto.” Yeshua is not singling out a few of his favorite mitzvoth. However, we can now see that Yeshua first refers to the Shema and the Unity of G-d and then proceeds with his list of other mitzvoth. What we find of interest is the fact that Hakham Tsefet cites the mitzvoth that directly connect with the present Torah Seder.

**Shomer**

ἐφυλαξάμην – *ephulaxamen* from φυλάσσω – *phulasso* is parallel to the Hebrew word Shomer. I find it so very interesting that **שׁמר** shomer is first found in the language of Gan Eden.

**וַיִּקַּ֛ח יְהוָ֥ה אֱלֹהִ֖ים אֶת־הָֽאָדָ֑ם וַיַּנִּחֵ֣הוּ בְגַן־עֵ֔דֶן לְעָבְדָ֖הּ וּלְשָׁמְרָֽהּ׃**

B’resheet (Gen) 2:1515 And LORD G-d took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to work it **and keep it** (Guard it).

Adam was placed in the Garden to serve and "to exercise great care over." We noticed two things here.

1. Adam is to exercise great care in protection of Gan Eden

2. Shomer then means to take great care over

**Abot 2:2** Rabban Gamaliel, son of R. Judah the Patriarch, says, “Fitting is learning in Torah along with a craft, for the labor put into the two of them makes one forget sin. “And all learning of Torah which is not joined with labor is destined to be null and cause sin. “And all who work with the community— let them work with them for the sake of Heaven. “For the merit of their fathers strengthens them, and their [fathers’] righteousness stands forever. “And as for you, I credit you with a great reward, as if you had done [all of the work required by the community on your own merit alone].”

The Sages saw **it befitting men to labor to earn his living and study Torah** and maintain **balance** between the both. The two occupations go hand in hand. Gan Eden is a picture of the Olam HaBa. Consequently, the vocabulary of the text is like a weaver’s rug, woven in and out of its varied nuances. Of course, we can read the book of Mark in a matter of minutes due to its overwhelming simplicity. **One cannot be an active part of a community without having a balance between these two matters.**

We derive something interesting here, building on last week’s thoughts and comments, the individual here concerned is beyond “bar mitzvah” age. The individual not only has been “Shomer Shabbat,” he has been so since his “Bar Mitzvah.” Again, we note his overwhelming concern for his spirituality. His spirituality is carefully guarded, and he wishes to know if he is in any way lacking anything that would make him a true Tsaddiq. The Master presents a challenge to us all in saying, **come and walk as I walk accepting your load and responsibility!**

 **Next Shabbat:**

**Shabbat “V’qach Meitam Mateh” – “And get from them a rod”**

**&**

**7th Shabbat of Consolation (Nachamu VII)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וְקַח מֵאִתָּם מַטֶּה** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“****V’qach Meitam Mateh”** | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 17:16-24 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 19:1-3 |
| **“And get from them a rod”** | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 17:25-28 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 19:4-6 |
| **“Y toma de ellos una vara”**  | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 18:1-7 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 19:7-10 |
| B’Midbar (Num.) 17:16 – 18:32 | Reader 4 – B’Midbar 18:8-10 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Is 11:1-10 | Reader 5 – B’Midbar 18:11-16 | **Monday & Thursday****Mornings** |
| Special Ashlamatah: Is 61:10-63:9 | Reader 6 – B’Midbar 18:17-20 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 19:1-3 |
| Psalms 103:1-9 | Reader 7 – B’Midbar 18:21-24 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 19:4-6 |
|  |  Maftir – B’Midbar 18:21-24 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 19:7-10 |
| N.C.: Mk. 10:23-34; Lk. 18:24-34; |  Yeshayahu 11:1-10 |   |

**Some Questions to Ponder:**

1. From all the readings for this week, which particular verse or passage caught your attention and fired your heart and imagination?
2. In your opinion, and taking into consideration all of the above readings for this Sabbath, what is the prophetic message (the idea that encapsulates all the Scripture passages read) for this week

**Blessing After Torah Study**

**Barúch Atáh Adonai, Elohénu Meléch HaOlám,**

**Ashér Natán Lánu Torát Emét, V'Chayéi Olám Natá B'Tochénu.**

**Barúch Atáh Adonái, Notén HaToráh. Amen!**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem our GOD, King of the universe,**

**Who has given us a teaching of truth, implanting within us eternal life.**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**“Now unto Him who is able to preserve you faultless, and spotless, and to establish you without a blemish,**

**before His majesty, with joy, [namely,] the only one GOD, our Deliverer, by means of Yeshua the Messiah our Master, be praise, and dominion, and honor, and majesty, both now and in all ages. Amen!”**

****

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Edited by Adon Ovadyah ben Abraham and Adon Aviner ben Abraham

Please e-mail any comments to chozenppl@gmail.com

1. Radak; Ibn Ezra Maharam Armaah [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Maggid of Koznitz [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eicha (Lamentations) 3:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Berachot 32b; Alshich [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Tehillim (Psalms) 102:29; These opening remarks are excerpted, and edited, from: *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. One must always go back to the point of origin to understand a matter. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This is the Pshat. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I learned many of these things from Rabbi Akiva Tatz. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Chagigah 12b-13a [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The word *shamayim* literally spells out the plural of destination, *“shamim”,* that is, the composite of all “theres” that are possible, the culmination of all journeys, final essence. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The root of the word “name” in Hebrew, *“shem”*, is also *“sham”*, “there”, because “there” is the final stage of any movement or process, its *tachlit* or ultimate purpose. While there is movement towards the goal it is always “there”, the focus and target of that movement. The root *“sham”* is also the basis of the word *“shamayim”* which means Heaven, the spiritual world, which is the *tachlit* of all the movement of this world, its ultimate “there”. The final destination of everything in the world is its name, its original designation of essence. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tachlit comes from the root כלה - “cease” - and in the Bible meant “end” or “limit” (Iyov 26:10, 28:3, Nechemiah 3:21), “completeness” (Tehillim 139:22), and “purpose” (Iyov 11:7). The last meaning became the primary meaning in post-biblical Hebrew, with the additional connotations of “aim” and “intention”. However, we do see the meaning of end used in poetry, such as the prayer Adon Olam, where God is described as being בלי תכלית bli tachlit. Clearly that doesn’t mean that God is without purpose, but rather He is without an end or a limit. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Micah 7:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The word Shema means *hear*, but it can also mean “to gather.” It is only used in this context on rare occasions, but it is one of the word’s alternate meanings. [See: I Shmuel (Samuel) 15:4 And Saul gathered <08085> the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And I Shmuel (Samuel) 23:8 And Saul called <08085> <00> all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.] [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Chazal (Hebrew: חז”ל), an acronym for the Hebrew “Ḥakhameinu Zikhram Liv’rakha” (חכמינו זכרונם לברכה, “Our Sages, may their memory be blessed”), refers to all Jewish sages of the Mishna, Tosefta and Talmud eras. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The term *Shema* (“Hear”) implies gathering and assembly. The essence is that one must link and unify the branches to the root. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. “They saw the sounds” – they saw that which should be heard – something which is impossible to see. (Rashi, ad loc*.*) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. We must say that the “sound” associated with the Written Law cannot be uttered or heard, but only seen. This is a deeply profound idea. The *Sefat Emet* establishes here that any statement made about the Written Law turns into the Oral Law. This is not merely because it passes from written to oral form, but because it passes from the seen to the heard, that is, from objectivity to subjectivity. Every statement, asserts the *Sefat Emet*, involves interpretation, and every interpretation is subjective. According to the *Sefat Emet*, hearing is subjective, because it involves interpretation and an attempt to absorb the sounds as they are heard by me, with my own capacities, and not as they are in their external and objective dimension. According to this, it turns out that the moment that the Torah was given and told to Israel, it turned from a Written Law to an Oral Law, because Israel’s hearing of it involved subjective assimilation. Now, however, explains the *Sefat Emet*, we can understand the significance of the great miracle implied by the expression, “And all the people saw the sounds.” Each and every generation that studies the Torah and receives it from its teachers belongs to the world of the Oral Law, because its reception of the Torah reflects the subjective standards of that generation. This is not true of the generation that stood at the foot of Mount Sinai. That generation merited the miracle that the initial reception of the Torah bore the impossible and illogical combination of internal reception and assimilation, on the one hand, and preservation of the eternal, objective dimension, on the other. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This is the advantage of seeing over hearing – greater objectivity – but corresponding to this advantage, there is a certain disadvantage. Seeing, argues the *Sefat Emet*, is external, or as he puts it, “from the outside.” When the Torah wishes to describe seeing, it writes: “And he lifted up his eyes, and he saw.” The eyes are lifted up outwards. The eyes which cast their look meet the object located in its own place. Hearing, on the other hand, is not external, but internal. The sound reaches a person’s ears, is received by them, and then is assimilated within him. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The main function of our ears is hearing and balance. In law, a hearing is a proceeding before a court which uses a set of balances as its symbol. The Hebrew word *Moznayim* represents “the scales”, which is the Mazzalot for the Hebrew month of Tishrei. Moznayim(מאזנים), from the word *oznayim* (ears), implies equilibrium and balance (the inner and outer sense of the ears). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Note the translation in Luqas (Lk). This is a word play alluding to the Shema. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Here we should notice the thematic tally to our Torah Seder. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. Shemot 20:12-14. The citations of these few mitzvoth are “pars pro toto,” meaning this man had kept “all” of the mitzvoth from his youth. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Vincent Taylor, The Gospel according to Mark, The Greek Text with Introduction Notes, and Indexes, MacMillan & Co, 1955 p.425 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)