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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** | **Third Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Tevet 14, 5782 / December 14-15, 2021** | **Seventh 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:

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David and beloved wife HH Giberet Batsheva bat Sarah

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His Excellency Adon Shlomoh ben Abraham

His Excellency Adon Ya’aqob ben David

**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**](mailto: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!**

**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!**

**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 daughter of HE Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David, HE Giberet Rachel Luzzi 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.**

**Special Requests from His 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**

**Mi Shebberach 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 HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah HaRabbanit (the beloved wife of His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham) who has lost 45% of her kidneys’ function 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 for the sake of the Holy One of Yisrael, and we all say with one voice: AMEN ve AMEN!**

**Shabbat: “Sa Et Rosh” – Sabbath: “Take the sum”**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **שָׂא, אֵת רֹאשׁ** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“Sa Et Rosh”** | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 31:25-27 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 32:1-3 |
| **“Take the sum”** | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 31:28-31 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 32:4-6 |
| **“Toma la cuenta”** | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 31:32-35 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 32:7-9 |
| B’Midbar (Num.) 31:25-54 | Reader 4 – B’Midbar 31:36-41 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Is 49:24 – 50:7 | Reader 5 – B’Midbar 31:42-46 | **Monday and Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – B’Midbar 31:47-50 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 32:1-3 |
| Psalms: 106:6-18 | Reader 7 – B’Midbar 31:51-54 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 32:4-6 |
|  | Maftir – B’Midbar 31:51-54 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 32:7-9 |
| Mk 12:35-37a: Luke 20:41-44 | Is 49:24 – 50:7 |  |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

        Apportion of the Spoil – Numbers 31:25-54

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’midbar (Numbers)**‎‎**31:25-54**

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 25. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, | 25. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh saying: |
| 26. "**Take a count of the plunder of the captive** people and animals, you, together with Eleazar the kohen and the paternal leaders of the community. | 26. **Take the sum of the prey** of the captives, both of man and beast, and take their amount, thou and Elazar the priest, and the chiefs of the fathers of the congregation; |
| 27. And you shall divide the plunder equally between the warriors who went out to battle and the entire congregation. | 27. and divide the spoil between the men of war who took the spoil in the conflict of battle, having gone forth with the host, and between all the congregation; |
| 28. And you shall levy a tax for the Lord from the soldiers who went out to battle: one soul out of every five hundred, from the people, from the cattle, from the donkeys, and from the sheep. | 28. and separate that which is to be given up to the Name of the LORD by the men of war who went forth with the host: one woman out of five hundred; so, likewise, of oxen, asses, and sheep. |
| 29. You shall take from their half and give it to Eleazar the kohen as a gift to the Lord. | 29. From their half, the portion of the men of war, will you take them, and give to Elazar the priest, as a separation unto the Name of the LORD; |
| 30. From the half belonging to the children of Israel you shall take one part out of fifty of the people, of the cattle, of the donkeys, of the sheep, and of all animals, and you shall give them to the Levites, the guardians of the Mishkan of the Lord." | 30. but of the half (falling to) the children of Israel you will take one out of fifty of the women, and of the oxen, the asses, and of all the cattle, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the LORD's tabernacle; |
| 31. Moses and Eleazar the kohen did as the Lord had commanded Moses. | 31. and Mosheh and Elazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Mosheh. |
| 32. The plunder, which was in addition to the spoils that the army had spoiled, consisted of six hundred and seventy five thousand sheep. | 32. And the amount of the prey, the rest of the spoil which had been taken by the people who went forth in the host,-the number of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five thousand; |
| 33. Seventy two thousand cattle. | 33. oxen, seventy-two thousand; |
| 34. Sixty one thousand donkeys. | 34. asses, sixty-one thousand; persons, |
| 35. As for the people, of the women who had no experience of intimate relations with a man, all souls were thirty two thousand. | 35. the women who had not known man, all the persons thirty-two thousand. |
| 36. The half that was the portion of those who went out to battle: the number of sheep was three hundred and thirty seven thousand, five hundred. | 36. And the half of the portion for the men who had gone to the war, the number of the sheep was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred; |
| 37. The tax to the Lord from the sheep was six hundred and seventy five. | 37. and the amount of that brought up for the Name of the LORD was of sheep six hundred and seventy-five; |
| 38. Thirty six thousand cattle, of which the tax to the Lord was seventy two. | 38. oxen thirty-six thousand, those for the Name of the LORD seventy-two; |
| 39. Thirty thousand and five hundred donkeys, of which the tax to the Lord was sixty one. | 39. asses thirty thousand five hundred, for the Name of the LORD sixty-one; persons sixteen thousand, for the Name of the LORD \_ |
| 40. Sixteen thousand people, of which the tax to the Lord was thirty two people. | 40. \_ thirty-two. |
| 41. Moses gave the tax which was a gift to the Lord, to Eleazar the kohen, as the Lord had commanded Moses. | 41. And Mosheh gave the number separated to the Name of the LORD unto Elazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Mosheh. |
| 42. And from the half allotted to the children of Israel, which Moses had divided from the men who had gone into the army. | 42. And the half part for the children of Israel which Mosheh divided from the men's who went forth to the war, |
| 43. The community's half [consisted of] three hundred and thirty seven thousand, five hundred sheep. | 43. the amount was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, |
| 44. Thirty six thousand cattle. | 44. thirty-six thousand oxen, |
| 45. Thirty thousand five hundred donkeys. | 45. thirty thousand five hundred asses, |
| 46. And sixteen thousand people. | 46. and sixteen thousand women. |
| 47. Moses took one part out of fifty from the half of the children of Israel, the people and the animals, and gave them to the Levites, the guardians of the Lord's sanctuary. | 47. And Mosheh took from the half part for the children of Israel of that which had been captured, one out of fifty, whether of man or beast, and gave it to the Levites who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Mosheh. |
| 48. The officers appointed over the army's thousands, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, approached Moses. | 48. And the officers who had been appointed over the thousands of the host, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, drew near to Mosheh, |
| 49. They said to Moses, "Your servants counted the soldiers who were in our charge, and not one man was missing from us. | 49. and they said to Mosheh, Your servants have taken the account of the men of war who have been with us, and not any of them are wanting. |
| 50. We therefore wish to bring an offering for the Lord. Any man who found a gold article, be it an anklet, a bracelet, a ring, an earring, or a body ornament, to atone for our souls before the Lord. | 50. And we have brought a gift unto the Name of the LORD, forasmuch as the LORD has delivered the Midianites into our hands, and we have been able to subdue their land and their cities. And we entered into their chambers, and there saw their daughters, fair, tender, and delicate; and every man who found on them jewels of gold, loosened the coronets from their heads, the earrings from their ears, the necklaces from their necks, the bracelets from their arms, the rings from their fingers, and the brooches from their bosoms;-but in all this we abstained from lifting our eyes upon themselves, or gazing on one of them, lest we should sin with any one of them, and die the death which the wicked die in the world to come. **And may this be had in memorial for us in the day of the great judgment, to make propitiation for our souls before the Lord**. |
| 51. Moses and Eleazar the kohen took all the gold articles from them. | 51. And Mosheh and Elazar the priest took the gold from them, every article fabricated; |
| 52. The total of the gift of gold which they dedicated to the Lord [amounted to] sixteen thousand, seven hundred and fifty shekels; this was from the commanders of the thousands and the commanders of the hundreds. | 52. and the sum of all the gold of the separation which they had separated unto the Name of the LORD was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels, from the captains of thousands and of hundreds. |
| 53. The soldiers had seized spoils for themselves. | 53. For the men of the host had taken spoil, every man for himself. |
| 54. Moses and Eleazar the kohen took the gold from the commanders of the thousands and hundreds and brought it to the Tent of Meeting, as a remembrance for the children of Israel before the Lord. | 54. And Mosheh and Elazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of ordinance, **a good memorial of the sons of Israel before the LORD**. |

**Reading Assignment:**

**The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez - Vol 14: Numbers – II – Final Wonderings**

By: Rabbi Yitzchaq Magriso

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

Vol. 14 – “Numbers – II – Final Wonderings,” pp. pp. 360-366.

**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 on: B’midbar (Numbers)**‎‎**31:25-54**

**26 Take a count**of Heb. שָָׂא אֶת־ראשׁ , take the tally.

**27 Divide the plunder equally between the warriors…** Half for these and half for those.

**32 The plunder which was in addition to the spoil…** Because they were not commanded to levy a tax from the movable objects, but only from the [living] plunder, Scripture expresses it in this way: The plunder which was included in the allocation and in the tax—which remained over after the spoils of the movable property were plundered by the soldiers for themselves, and were therefore not included in the allocation—[was as follows:] the number of sheep etc.

**42 And from the half allotted to the children of Israel, which Moses had divided** on behalf of the community, for he took it for them from the men who had gone out to war.

**43 The community’s half** [consisted of] such and such.

**47 Moses took etc.**

**48 The officers**Heb. הַפְּקֻדִים , those appointed.

49 **not...missing**Heb. ולֹא־נִפְקַד , there is not one missing. The Targum [Onkelos] renders לָא שְׁגָא which in Aramaic also means ‘missing,’ as in “I would suffer its loss (אֲחַטֶּנָּה) ” (Gen. 31:39) which the Targum renders, “what was missing (שַׁגְיָא) from the count.” Similarly, “for your seat will be vacant (יִפָּקֵד) ” (I Sam. 20:18)—the place where you sit will be missing, the one who usually sits there. Similarly, וַיִפָּקֵד מְקוֹם דָּוד “David’s place was vacant” (ibid. 25); his place was missing, and no one was sitting there.

**50 anklet** Heb. אֶצְעָדָה , bangles for the foot.

**bracelet** Heb. וְצָמִיד , [bangles] for the hand.

**earring** Heb. עָגִיל , earrings.

**body ornament** Heb. וְכוּמָז , a form for the female genitalia, to atone for their sinful thoughts concerning the Midianite women.-[Shab. 64a]

**Ketubim: Psalm 106:6-18**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Hallelujah. Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His kindness is forever. | 1. Hallelujah! Give thanks in the presence of the LORD, for He is good, for His goodness is forever. |
| 2. Who can narrate the mighty deeds of the Lord? [Who] can make heard all His praise? | 2. Who is able to utter the might of the LORD? Who is allowed to proclaim all His praises? |
| 3. Fortunate are those who keep justice, who perform righteousness at all times. | 3. Happy are they who observe judgment, those who do righteousness/generosity at every time. |
| 4. Remember me, O Lord, when You favor Your people; be mindful of me with Your salvation. | 4. Remember me, O LORD, with good will toward Your people; call me to mind with Your redemption (Hebrew: **פָּקְדֵנִי, בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ** – **Paq’deni BiShuatekha** – lit. “appoint me to Your Yeshua (salvation)”. |
| 5. To see the goodness of Your chosen ones, to rejoice with the joy of Your nation, to boast with Your inheritance. | 5. To look on the plenty of Your chosen ones; to rejoice in the joy of Your people; to join in praise with Your inheritance. |
| 6. We sinned with our forefathers; we committed iniquity and wickedness. | 6. We have sinned, along with our fathers; we have committed iniquity, acted wickedly. |
| 7. Our forefathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; they did not remember Your manifold deeds of kindness, and they were rebellious by the sea, by the Sea of Reeds. | 7. Our fathers in Egypt paid no heed to Your wonders; they did not call to mind Your great goodness; and they rebelled against Your word by the sea, at the sea of Reeds. |
| 8. And He saved them for His name's sake, to make known His might. | 8. And He redeemed them for His name's sake, to make known His might. |
| 9. And He rebuked the Sea of Reeds, and it dried up, and He led them in the depths as [in] a desert. | 9. And He rebuked the sea of Reeds, and it dried up; and He conducted them through the deeps, as in the wilderness. |
| 10. He saved them from the hand of the enemy, and He redeemed them from the hand of the foe. | 10. And He redeemed them from the power of the foe; and He redeemed them from the power of the enemies. |
| 11. And the water covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. | 11. And the waters covered their oppressors; not one of them was left. |
| 12. And they believed His words; they sang His praise. | 12. And they believed in the name of His word; they sang His praise. |
| 13. **Quickly, they forgot His deeds**; **they did not await His counsel.** | 13. **They quickly forgot His deeds**; **they did not wait for His counsel.** |
| 14. **They craved a lust in the desert**, and they tried God in the wasteland. | 14. **And they made a request and tested God** in the place of desolation. |
| 15. He gave them their request, but He sent emaciation into their soul. | 15. And He gave them their request, and sent leanness into their souls. |
| 16. They angered Moses in the camp, Aaron, the holy man of the Lord. | 16. And they were jealous of Moses in the camp, of Aaron, the holy one of the LORD. |
| 17. The **earth** opened up and swallowed Dathan and covered the congregation of Abiram. | 17. The **earth** opened up and swallowed Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. |
| 18. And **fire** burned in their congregation; a flame burned the wicked. | 18. And **fire** burned in their company; flame will kindle the wicked. |
|  |  |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Psalm 106:6-18**

**7 and they were rebellious by the sea** They had little faith; they said, “Just as we ascend from here, from this side, the Egyptians also are ascending from another side, and they will come after us,” until the Holy One, blessed be He, hinted to the sea, and it vomited them out onto the dry land. Then (Exod. 15:30) “Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.” Therefore (ibid. verse 31) “they believed in the Lord,” but in the beginning, they did not believe. I found this.

**9 and He led them in the depths in the desert** The Sea of Reeds was in the desert, for it is written (Exod. 14:13): “the desert has closed upon them, etc.”; (Exod. 3: 18): “three days’ journey in the desert.”

**13 they did not await His counsel** They did not hope for Him.

**14 They craved a lust** (Num. 11:4) “Who will give us meat to eat?”

**15 but He sent emaciation into their soul**(Num. 11:33) “and the Lord’s wrath was kindled against the people.”

**16 They angered Moses** Heb. ויקנאו . In the desert they angered him, like (Deut. 32:21): “They angered Me (קנאוני) with a no-god.” I found this.

**17 The earth opened up, etc. It appears that [the Psalmist] bestowed honor upon the sons of Korah [by refraining] from mentioning their father. He attributed the sin to Dathan and Abiram.**

**18 And fire burned** (Num. 16:35) **“and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who burnt the incense.”**

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎106:6-18**

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

For continuity I am repeating my intro from last week.

The preceding composition, Psalms 105, described the extensive wonders with which HaShem mercifully redeemed our forefathers from Egypt. This psalm resumes the narrative and relates how HaShem miraculously sustained the Jews as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Then HaShem led the Israelites into the land of Canaan and empowered them to conquer their adversaries despite overwhelming odds. Throughout these great historic periods, HaShem repeatedly performed so many wonders that the Psalmist exclaims:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 106:2***who can express the mighty acts of *HaShem***?** Who can declare all of His praise?*[[1]](#footnote-1)*

However, even while HaShem was displaying unprecedented kindness to Israel, the Israelites were negligent in their duties toward HaShem, and they failed to appreciate His wonders. Indeed, they defied HaShem’s representative, Moses, and rebelled against his commands. This defiance initiated the spiritual and moral decline which eventually led to the Jew’s exile from the Holy Land.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Psalmist completes his description of Israel’s infidelity and exile with a prayer for redemption

***Tehillim (Psalms) 106:47*** Save us HaShem**,** our G-d, and gather us from among the peoples, to thank Your Holy Name and to glory in Your praise!

*This psalm concludes the fourth*Book of Tehillim *with the declaration,**blessed is HaShem, the G-d of Israel,* *from This World to the World to Come, and let the entire nation say, “Amen!” Praise HaShem*![[3]](#footnote-3)

In this section of our psalm we find David[[4]](#footnote-4) indicating that we and our fathers have sinned.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 106:6****We have sinned with our fathers,[[5]](#footnote-5) we have done iniquitously, we have dealt wickedly.*

When we examine the sins of our forefathers, we need to remember that HaShem always deals with us midda keneged midda, measure for measure. This means that we can understand the sin by examining the punishment. This principle always applies.

In this commentary I would like to examine some of the greatest men of the Tanach[[6]](#footnote-6) and their short comings. We need to be careful **not** to impose our notions on the text, but, rather to examine the scripture to determine what HaShem says.

We can not say that the apparent sin is the actual sin. We can not do this because sin has so corrupted us that we no longer have the exalted spiritual level of our forefathers. This corruption causes us to apply our lifestyle to them, when they should not be applied.

I am presenting the traditional Jewish views of these events. I am not trying to minimize any sin. I am merely trying to present what is taught by Torah. Let’s start by examining the sin of Aharon the High Priest.

**Aharon and the Sin of the Golden Calf**

Did Aharon participate in the sin of the golden calf? If he sinned, why was he made High Priest? If he sinned, why wasn’t he killed along with the rest of the 3000 idolaters?

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:25-29*** *And when Moses saw that the people [were] naked; (for Aharon had made them naked unto [their] shame among their enemies :) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who [is] on HaShem’s side? [let him come] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith HaShem G-d of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, [and] go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to HaShem, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.*

The fact that Aharon “never” received punishment and in fact received the reward of the High Priesthood may indicate that he did not sin. Again, it is important to look at the results of an incident in order to determine what, if any, the sin was. Let us begin by looking at the story of the golden calf:

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:1-2*** *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aharon, and said unto him, Up, make us G-ds, which shall go before us; for [as for] this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aharon said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which [are] in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring [them] unto me.*

Notice in Exodus 32:1 that the people gathered themselves onto Aharon. Why did they gather unto Aharon? Why not gather into some of the other tribal leaders? The Torah tells us the answer:

***Shemot (Exodus) 24:13-14*** *And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of HaShem. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aharon and Hur [are] with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.*

Moses leaves clear instructions: Aharon and Hur are in charge. If you have any matters to be dealt with, they will handle it. So, why don’t the people gather unto Aharon and Hur? Why do they gather only unto Aharon? The Midrash tells us:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XLI:7*** *AND WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THAT MOSES DELAYED (BOSHESH) TO COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNT. etc.[[7]](#footnote-7) What does BOSHESH mean? That six hours [of the day] had come[[8]](#footnote-8) (bau shesh) and he had not yet descended, whereas Moses had promised them, ‘After the expiration of forty days I will bring you the Torah’; and now that six hours had elapsed[[9]](#footnote-9) and Moses had not yet come down, the people immediately GATHERED THEMSELVES TOGETHER UNTO AHARON. The Sages said: Satan then found his opportunity; for Moses appeared suspended between heaven and earth[[10]](#footnote-10) and they pointed at him the finger, saying, FOR AS FOR THIS MOSES,[[11]](#footnote-11) etc. Hur arose and rebuked them: ‘Ye brainless fools![[12]](#footnote-12) Have you forgotten the miracles HaShem performed for you?’ Whereupon they rose against him and slew him. They then came to Aharon, as it says, AND THE PEOPLE GATHERED THEMSELVES TOGETHER UNTO AHARON, and said to him: We will do to you what we have done to this man.’ When Aharon saw the state of affairs, he was afraid, for it says, And Aharon was afraid, and he built an altar (Mitzbeach) before it.[[13]](#footnote-13)*

So, the people first gathered themselves unto Hur and then after he denounced them for their wickedness, he was slain. Thus, when the people gather themselves unto Aharon he decided to comply with their wishes rather than be slain and to cause the people to sin further.

**A Diversion**

Before we look at Aharon’s involvement with the golden calf, let us look at Hur. Who was Hur? What was his sin that he should die? Did he receive a reward for sanctifying the name of HaShem? The Torah reveals some fascinating details:

***1 Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 2:50*** *These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrata; Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim, …*

Now we know that Hur is Caleb’s son, but who was his mother? The Midrash gives us some great insight:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus I:17*** *AND IT CAME TO PASS, BECAUSE THE MIDWIVES FEARED HASHEM, THAT HE BUILT THEM HOUSES.[[14]](#footnote-14) Rab and Levi discussed this. One says: It means that they established priestly and Levitical families; and the other, that they were founders of a royal family.[[15]](#footnote-15) Priestly and Levitical families-from Moses and Aharon; a royal family from Miriam, because David descended from Miriam, as it is written: And Caleb the son of Hezron begot Azubah his wife-and of Jerioth-and these were her sons: Jasher, and Shobab and Ardon.[[16]](#footnote-16) ‘****Azubah’ is Miriam****[[17]](#footnote-17); and why was she so called? Because all had forsaken her.[[18]](#footnote-18) He begot’? But she was his wife! This is to teach you, said R. Johanan, that if one marries a woman for the sake of heaven,[[19]](#footnote-19) he is regarded as if he had given birth to her. ‘Jerioth’-because her face was like the curtains of (yeri’oth) the tabernacle.[[20]](#footnote-20) And these are her sons’-do not pronounce it banehah (her sons) but bonehah (her builders).[[21]](#footnote-21) ‘Yasher’ is Caleb, because he rectified (yashir) his ways. Shobab,’ because he disciplined (shibbeb) himself. ‘Ardon,’ because he chastised (ridah) his soul. ‘And Azubah died’-to teach us that she was ill and was treated as if already dead, Caleb too forsaking her. ‘****And Caleb took unto him Ephrath,’ this is Miriam****.[[22]](#footnote-22) And why was she called Ephrath? Because Israel were fruitful (paru) and increased, thanks to her. What is meant by ‘and he took unto him’?[[23]](#footnote-23) When she was healed, he treated her as though he were now marrying her, placing her in the litter,[[24]](#footnote-24) on account of his great joy in her. Similarly, you will find in another place that Miriam is called by two names on account of the incident that happened to her. Thus it says: And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Nelah and Naarah.[[25]](#footnote-25) ‘Ashur’ is Caleb, because ‘Ashur’ was the son of Hezron.[[26]](#footnote-26) Why was he called Ashur? Because he made his face black (hishhiru)*

Thus we know that Hur is the son of Caleb and Miriam, the sister of Moses.

So, Why does Hur have to die? What was his sin that he should be punished midda kneged midda, measure for measure? The answer is found in the Midrash:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XLI:7*** *… Hur arose and rebuked them: ‘Ye brainless fools![[27]](#footnote-27) Have you forgotten the miracles HaShem performed for you?’*

Hur’s sin was a railing rebuke against HaShem’s chosen people. His words were addressed to everyone, though only 3000 of the mixed multitude actually participated in the sin. For his Lashon HaRa, evil speech, against the Jewish people, Hur was given a death sentence by the heavenly court.

At the same time, Hur gave his life for the sake of Heaven:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XLVIII:3*** *Another explanation of SEE, THE LORD HATH CALLED BY NAME BEZALEL, THE SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. Why is Hur mentioned here? Because when Israel were about to serve idols, he jeopardized his life on HaShem’s behalf and would not allow them to do so, with the result that they slew him. Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said: ‘I assure thee that I will repay thee for this.’ It is like the case of a king whose legions rebelled against him, whereupon his field- marshal rose and fought with them, saying, ‘What! You dare rebel against the king?’ In the end they slew him, and the king thereupon said: ‘ If he had given me money, would not I have had to repay him? Then how much more is this the case now that he has given his very life on my behalf? How can I reward him? Surely, by ordaining that all his male offspring shall become generals and officers?’ Similarly, when Israel made the Calf, Hur gave his life for the glory of HaShem; whereupon HaShem assured him: ‘By thy life, I shall give all thy children that will descend from thee a great name in the world,’ as it says, SEE, THE LORD HATH CALLED BY NAME BETZALEL, etc. AND HE HATH FILLED HIM WITH THE SPIRIT OF HASHEM, etc.1 Not him alone, but HaShem endowed with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge all those who engaged in the construction of the Tabernacle, as it says, And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary.[[28]](#footnote-28) Not only to the men [who engaged in this work], but even to the cattle and beast, for it says, In whom (bahemah) the Lord hath put wisdom and understanding:[[29]](#footnote-29) this is written behemah[[30]](#footnote-30), and it implies that wisdom was given to man and beast, but Bezalel alone was selected for special mention. This is why it says, SEE, THE LORD HATH CALLED BY NAME BETZALEL.*

Hur’s reward for giving glory to HaShem was that his grandson[[31]](#footnote-31) should merit to build the furniture in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle in the wilderness.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Let us now return to Aharon. Lets see how the Midrash depicts Aharon’s reaction to the death of Hur:

***Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus X:3****. R. Berekiah, in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana, expounded the verse as referring to Aharon. When the Israelites were about to commit that act,1 they went first to Hur, and said to him: ‘Arise, make us a G-d.’ As he did not hearken to them, they rose against him and slew him. This is [indicated by] what is written, Also in thy assemblies[[33]](#footnote-33) is found the blood of the souls of the innocent poor, which refers to the blood of Hur. Did I not find them breaking in?[[34]](#footnote-34) Yea [I punished them] for all these (Jer. II, 34), for having said: These be thy G-ds, O Israel. Afterwards they went to Aharon, and said to him: Up, make us a G-d. As soon as Aharon heard of it [i.e. Hur’s death] he became frightened, as it is said, And Aharon was affrighted when he considered the slaughtering,[[35]](#footnote-35) [meaning], ‘ he was frightened when he saw the slaughtered man before him.’ Aharon said [to himself]: What shall I do? They have already killed Hur who was a prophet; if they kill also me whom am a priest, there will instantly be fulfilled against them the verse saying, Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord (Lam. II, 20), Israel will immediately be liable to exile.*

So, a frightened, concerned Aharon must act quickly to prevent the people from committing an even graver sin. And, his actions must be convincing enough that the people will not kill him. We know that Aharon does not want to engage or encourage idolatry, so what is he doing building a golden calf? The Midrash explains:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XLI:7 …*** *Another explanation of AND HE BUILT AN ALTAR. They were desirous of building an altar with him, but he would not allow them, saying: ‘Allow me to build it by myself, for it is not befitting the respect due to the altar that another should build it.’ Aharon’s intention in this was to* ***delay*** *matters; he said to himself: ‘By the time I build it all by myself Moses will come down.’*

The Midrash, here, indicates that Aharon was attempting to delay the people from performing an act of idolatry. The key word here is “delay”. Aharon knew that Moses was not overdue. Aharon knew that the people had counted Moses’ first partial day, as the first day. They therefore expected Moses to return at sundown, thirty-nine days later. Aharon knew that Moses would return at the time he left, exactly forty days later. So, it is sundown on the thirty-ninth day when the people demand a calf. Aharon decides to try a delaying tactic that will delay the idolatry until the afternoon of the following day, when Moses will return.

The Torah confirms this in Shemot (Exodus) 32:2, where Aharon said unto them break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters. When Aharon asked them to take the earrings from their wives ears, and from their sons ears, and from their daughter’s ears he knew it would take the men, for only the men were involved in this act of idolatry, longer to accomplish this task because these earrings were more likely to be prized, that is why they were in their loved ones’ ears in the first place. When the people acted more quickly then he expected, Aharon decided to try another delaying tactic:

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:3-4*** *And all the people brake off the golden earrings which [were] in their ears, and brought [them] unto Aharon. And he received [them] at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These [be] thy G-ds, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

Here we see Aharon engraving the calf. Instead of making a mold and casting the golden calf, Aharon gets out a hammer and a chisel and begins carving the calf from a solid hunk of gold. This action should have delayed the people a great bit. Unfortunately, the forces of evil did not want a delay:

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:24*** *And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break [it] off. So they gave [it] me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.*

Aharon throws the gold into the fire and out jumps a calf! Aharon has failed. He had desperately tried to prevent the people from sinning, but, his tactics failed and the people committed a grave sin.

If Aharon sinned by participating in idolatry, he should have been killed along with the other idolaters:

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:25-28*** *And when Moses saw that the people [were] naked; (for Aharon had made them naked unto [their] shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who [is] on HaShem’s side? [let him come] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith HaShem G-d of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, [and] go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*

But Aharon is not slain, on the contrary, he is given an exalted position before HaShem:

***Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus X:3 …*** *Another interpretation: ‘And Aharon saw this,’ etc. What did he see? He saw [the situation thus]: If they build it the sin will attach to them; better that the sin should attach to me and not to Israel. R. Abba b. Judan said in the name of Rabba: This may be compared to the case of a king’s son who became very overbearing and took a sword to cut his father. Said the son’s tutor to him: ‘Do not trouble yourself, leave it to me and I shall cut him.’ The king glanced at the tutor, and said to him: ‘ I know what your intention was, namely [that you thought it] better that the sin should attach to you rather than to my son. As you live, you shall not leave my palace, and that which remains over from my table you shall eat, twenty-four perquisites will you receive.’ So [too with Aharon], ‘ You shall not leave my palace ‘ [is paralleled by], He shall not go out of the sanctuary;[[36]](#footnote-36) ‘And that which remains over from my table you shall eat’ [is paralleled by], That which is left of the meal-offering shall be Aharon’s and his sons’; ‘ Twenty-four perquisites you will receive ‘ [is represented by] the twenty-four gifts of the priesthood[[37]](#footnote-37) assigned to Aharon and his sons. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Aharon: ‘“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness,” Thou hast loved to keep My children guiltless, and hast hated letting them be condemned as guilty, “Therefore HaShem, thy HaShem, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”‘ He said to him: ‘As thou livest, out of the whole of the tribe of Levi, none is chosen for the High Priesthood but thee.’ [Thus Scripture says], TAKE AHARON AND HIS SONS WITH HIM.*

Aharon was a mighty man of G-d. Because of his exalted position, he was judged very severely for what small wrong he did in the incident of the golden calf. **The Midrash infers that for a very minor infraction, he was subjected to the sorrow of the death of his two sons**:

***Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus X:4 …*** *Another interpretation: ‘ Wilt thou forbear from delivering them that are being taken unto death, and them that are ready to be slain,’ refers to Aharon’s sons, since they were always side by side with death[[38]](#footnote-38). R. Hanan said: It is written, And he took it from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf.[[39]](#footnote-39) Let the ‘taking’ spoken of here[[40]](#footnote-40) constitute atonement for the ‘taking’ spoken of in the other instance.[[41]](#footnote-41) Two [of Aharon’s sons] died and two remained alive.[[42]](#footnote-42) [With reference to the latter, HaShem said]: TAKE AHARON AND HIS SONS, etc.[[43]](#footnote-43)*

So, how many people participated in the sin of the golden calf? We can get a hint by how many were killed because of it:

***Shemot (Exodus) 32:25-31*** *And when Moses saw that the people [were] naked; (for Aharon had made them naked unto [their] shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who [is] on HaShem’s side? [let him come] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith HaShem G-d of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, [and] go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about* ***three thousand men****. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to HaShem, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto HaShem; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto HaShem, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them G-ds of gold.*

So three-thousand folks directly participated in the sin of the golden calf, and died that day. The Sages understand that the three-thousand were part of the mixed multitude, and not the Sons of Israel. Notice that Aharon did NOT die. Also notice that all the rest of the people also sinned in the incident, yet they did not directly participate. The Bne Israel, while possibly in the majority, did not stop the mixed multitude from sinning. For this, they are held guilty of sin.

**Yehudah and Tamar**

In the evening meeting between Ruth and Boaz,[[44]](#footnote-44) the story alludes to two similar situations, Lot’s daughters,[[45]](#footnote-45) and Tamar, Yehuda’s daughter-in-law.[[46]](#footnote-46) The three situations have common features, most notably, that there are women who have little prospect of having further children who take actions to insure their own offspring. Additionally, each of the cases has the death of two husbands.

Most folks see the encounter between Tamar and Yehudah, in Genesis 38, as a sin of immorality. Torah, on the other hand, sees this encounter as a very great mitzva. It is a mitzva because Tamar was a childless widow that her dead husband’s family was commanded to correct. The family was required to raise up seed for the deceased on his land. When Yehudah failed to give his son, Shelah, to fulfill this mitzva, Tamar enticed Yehudah himself to fulfill it. The Midrash records that HaShem sent an angel to “force” Yehudah, against his will, to turn in to Tamar’s tent. The angel asked Yehudah, “If you fail to turn to Tamar; from where will the Mashiach come?”

When Yehuda finally understood what Tamar had done by enticing him to fulfill the mitzva of yibum, he showed his own greatness:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 38:26****And Judah acknowledged them, and said: 'She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son.' And he knew her again no more.*

Yehuda’s sin in not giving his son Shelah, the first in line for this mitzva, was corrected when Boaz, in Megillat Ruth, gave way to Ploni Almoni, for the same mitzva, because he was first in line. This tikkun, this rectification, required enormous strength.

**Lot and His Eldest Daughter**

In the same way, many folks see the encounter between Lot and his eldest daughter, in Bereshit (Genesis) 19:30-38, as incest. The Torah, however, records this encounter as a GREAT mitzva. The eldest daughter truly believed that the only way to fulfill the mitzva of filling the earth,[[47]](#footnote-47) was through her father. So, as repulsive as the act was, she endured it in order to sanctify the name of HaShem. So great was the effort that she was rewarded with offspring who become a part of the Messianic line. For this reason the Midrash states:

***Bereshit Rabbah 41:4*** *“R. Yitzhak says: I have found David my servant - where did I find him? In Sodom”*

The sin of the eldest daughter was not incest. **Her sin was in not consulting Lot so that He could bring his wisdom to bear on this situation**. This sin had its tikkun, its rectification, on the threshing floor, when Ruth deferred to Boaz to tell her what to do. She did this even though it resulted in great disappointment and a potential loss of Boaz.

**The Usurper = Yaaqob vs. Esav**

In Bereshit chapter 27 Torah relates the giving of the blessing of the firstborn to Yaaqob. Many people, who read the Torah casually, believe that Yaaqob stole the blessing from his brother Esav. Nothing could be further from the truth! In order to understand that Yaaqob merely received what HaShem had promised his mother, it is necessary that we go back in time to the place where the Torah relates the selling of the rights of the firstborn. Esav sold his birthright to Yaaqob, including the right for the blessing:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:29*** *And Yaaqob sod pottage: and Esav came from the field, and he was faint: 30 And Esav said to Yaaqob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Yaaqob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esav said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Yaaqob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Yaaqob. 34 Then Yaaqob gave Esav bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esav despised his birthright.*

So Yaaqob was only trying to get something which actually belonged to him. Viewed this way, it was in fact Esav who was trying to steal the blessing.

How does a tzaddik’s blessing work? It is a prophecy that informs the recipient that a certain future awaits him. Since that is the case, it would make no sense for Yitzchak to say to Esav:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 27:35*** *“Your brother came with cleverness and took your blessing.”*

Either Yitzchak prophesied about Yaaqob or about Esav; there is no way Yaaqob could have “stolen” a prophecy about Esav! A prophet is never blind!

R’ Levi ben Gershon z”l[[48]](#footnote-48) explains: There is an element of prophecy at work when a tzaddik gives a blessing. Specifically, a tzaddik cannot give a person any blessing the tzaddik chooses; rather, he gives a blessing that is appropriate for the recipient. This is stated explicitly in the episode of Yaaqob and his grandsons, Menashe and Ephraim,[[49]](#footnote-49) when Yaaqob explained why he had put his right hand on the younger son: “I know, my son, I know; he [the older son, Menashe] also will become a people, and he too will become great; yet his younger brother shall become greater than he.” Yaaqob said, “Do not be upset, for I only gave each brother the blessing that was appropriate to him”. This is why Yitzchak could not undo Yaaqob’s blessing.

It is also worth noting that Torah law says that we may keep any stolen item, including a blessing. Thus if Yaaqob did not gain the blessing rightfully and by prophesy, then there was no blessing at all. How so we know that the blessing was obtained rightfully? Because at the point that Yitzchak realized that he had blessed Yaaqob, he did NOT take the blessing back and curse Yaaqob for deceiving a blind old man. Instead, AFTER Yitzchak realized what had happened, he said:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 27:33*** *And Yitzchak trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him?* ***yea, and he shall be blessed.***

Thus we see that **after** Yitzchak was fully cognizant of what had transpired, he confirmed the blessing rather than deny the blessing. The Midrash goes on to confirm the understanding:

***Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LXVII:1****. AND YITZCHAK TREMBLED VERY EXCEEDINGLY (XXVII, 33). It is written, The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set up on high.[[50]](#footnote-50) The fear which Ruth caused Boaz, as it is written, The man was affrighted and turned himself (Ruth III, 8), ‘bringeth a snare’: for in strict justice he might have cursed her, save that, ‘But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set up on high ‘; He [HaShem] prompted him and he blessed her, as it says, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, etc. (ib. 10). Again, the trembling that Yaaqob caused Yitzchak, as it says, AND YITZCHAK TREMBLED VERY EXCEEDINGLY. ‘ bringeth a snare, for in strict justice he might have cursed him, save that, ‘But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set up on high’; He [HaShem] prompted him, so that he blessed him, as it says, YEA, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED (XXVII, 33).*

***Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LXVII:2*** *R. Levi said: Our father Yitzchak felt misgivings, thinking, ‘Perhaps I did not act rightly in making him the firstborn who is not so’; but when he [Esav] said: He took away my birthright (ib. 36), he exclaimed: ‘Rightly did I bless him’. R. Eleazar said: The validity of a document is established by its signatories; thus, lest you say, Had not Yaaqob deceived his father he would not have received the blessings, Scripture adds, YEA, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED.*

**His Majesty King David**

In II Samuel chapters 11 and 12, we find the story I wish to examine. In this story, many folks see King David lusting after BatSheva, the wife of Uriyya the Hittite. Uriyya is a soldier in King David’s army. He is fighting the King’s battle when King David takes his wife in an adulterous relationship. After she becomes pregnant, King David has Uriyya recalled from the battle and orders him to sleep with his wife, in order to cover up his sin. Afterwards, when Uriyya refuses to sleep with BatSheva, King David Has Uriyya killed in battle. After Uriyya’s death, King David marries BatSheva.

Most folks understand that King David committed adultery and murder. These are the sins that they see King David committing.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

In fact, Chazal say:

***Shabbat 56a*** *Anyone who says that David sinned is mistaken.*

This does not mean that King David was completely blameless, but it means that, technically, he did not commit any transgressions; he did not breach the Torah’s laws in any way. The reason he was punished so severely is that HaShem judges the righteous very strictly, and David’s actions were not proper for someone of his spiritual stature.

If we apply the principle of midda keneged midda, measure for measure, we get an entirely different picture. Further, if we examine the Sages, we see that there is more to this story than first meets the eye.

Was King David committing adultery? The Tanakh says no.

Did King David commit murder? The Tanakh says no. How can this be?

The Sages record that King David required that all of his soldiers were required to give their wives a “get”, a divorce, before they went off to battle. This was done so that if the soldier failed to return from the battle, and his body was not found, then the wife would not become an “aguna”, a woman who could not remarry. If she was legally divorced, then she could remarry if her husband did not return after a reasonable amount of time.

***Kethuboth 9b*** *Everyone who goes out into the war of the House of David writes for his wife a deed of divorce , for it is written, And to thy brethren shalt thou bring greetings, and take their pledge . What [is the meaning of], ‘and take their pledge’? R. Joseph learnt: Things which are pledged between him and her .*

We know that Uriyya had given his wife a “get” and was legally divorced. Chazal ask whether it was a permanent or a conditional get. David required a conditional get. The get is automatically revoked if the soldier returns from battle. In Uriah’s case, we see that Uriah did not give a conditional get. Uriah gave a permanent get. The fact that Uriah was a rebel might explain why Batsheba demanded a permanent get. At any rate, the permanent get meant that Uriah could NOT obey the King’s order to go home and sleep with his wife. The fact that he refused the King’s orders – twice, suggests that King David wanted to show the world that Uriah had given a permanent get and could never go back to Batsheba. This shows that the xtian perspective, that King David was trying to cover up his illicit affair, is a lie.

Therefore, we know that King David did not commit adultery. We can know that King David did not commit adultery because the Torah prescribes that the one who commits adultery is to be stoned to death:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 20:10*** *And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man’s wife, [even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*

Since HaShem did not cause this to happen, we can know that King David did not commit adultery.

Did King David lust, sexually, after Batsheva? No! King David did NOT lust after Batsheva. He had entirely conquered that evil inclination. The story makes it sound like Batsheva was taking a bath on her roof without any covering. Nothing could be further from the truth. Batsheva was coming out from the mikveh, the ritual immersion that women must must perform every month. As she exited the mikveh house, her exalted spiritual state attracted King David. He prophetically saw that he was to father Solomon with this women. That is why he took her.

***Soncino Zohar, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 73b*** *R. Simeon further discoursed, beginning with the verse: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me (Ps. LI, 5). He said: ‘How much must a man be on his guard against sinning before the Holy One, blessed be He, for each sin committed by man is recorded on high, and is not blotted out save by much repentance, as it is said, “For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me” (Jer. II, 22). For when a man commits a sin once before God, it leaves a mark, and when he repeats the same sin that mark is deepened, and after a third time it becomes a stain spreading from one side to the other, as expressed in the words, “thine iniquity is become a stain before me” (Ibid.). When David committed his great sin in taking Bath-Sheba, he thought that it would leave its mark forever, but the message came to him, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die” (II Sam. XII, 13); i.e. the stain has been removed.’ R. Abba put this question to R. Simeon: ‘Since we have been taught that Bath-Sheba was destined for King David from the day of the creation, how comes it that the Holy One, blessed be He, first gave her to Uriah the Hittite?’ R. Simeon replied: ‘Such is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He; although a woman is destined for a certain man, He first allows her to be the wife of another man until his time arrives. As soon as that time arrives, he departs from the world to make way for the other, although the Holy One, blessed be He, is loth to remove him from the world to make way for the other man before his time arrives. This is the inner reason why Bath-Sheba was given to Uriah first. Now reflect and you will find the reason for the Holy Land having been given to Canaan before Israel came there. You will find that the inner reason underlying the two is the same. Observe, further, that David, although he confessed his sin and repented, could not obliterate from his heart and mind the memory of the sins that he had committed, especially of that concerning Bath-Sheba, and was always apprehensive lest one of them would prove a stumbling-block to him in the hour of danger. Hence he never removed them from his thoughts. According to another interpretation, the words “For I know my transgressions” indicate his knowledge of the diverse grades to which the various sins of men are to be referred, while the words “and my sin“ (hatathi=my failing) refer to the defect of the moon, which did not emerge from her impurity until the time of Solomon, when her light once more became whole, so that the world became firmly established and Israel dwelt secure, as it is written: “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree” (I Kings V, 5). Nevertheless, as David said, “My deficiency is ever before me”, and that will not be obliterated from the world until the Messiah will come, as it is said: “And the unclean spirit I will cause to pass out from the earth” (Zech. XIII, 2).’*

In fact, the Sages teach that King David had asked HaShem for a test in this area because he had completely conquered this inclination.

***Soncino Zohar, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 82a*** *David further said to God: “Sovereign of the Universe, wherefore do not the Israelites conclude one of their blessings with my name as they do with the name of Abraham, [Tr. note: The first blessing of the Amidah.] of whom it is written ‘I am thy shield’ (Gen. XV, 1)?” God replied: “Abraham I have already tried and tested and found to be wholly stedfast.” Said David: “If so, ‘examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart‘ (Ps. XXVI, 2).” When he sinned in the matter of Batsheva, David remembered what he had said, and he exclaimed “ ‘Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me and hast not found, my thoughts should not have passed my mouth‘ (Ps. XVII, 3). I said, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and thou hast proved my heart; I said, Try my reins, and thou hast tried me; but thou hast not found me as I should be; would that what was in my mind had not passed my lips.” (And with all this the Israelites do conclude a blessing with his name. [Tr. note: The third blessing after the Haftorah.]) Therefore David said: “‘Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory and the lifter up of my head‘: this grade assuredly is my glory with which I am crowned.”‘*

Did David cause the murder of Uriyya the Hittite? The Tanakh says no. How can this be? To understand this part, we must look carefully at the text to understand what is going on:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:8-9*** *And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king’s house, and there followed him a mess [of meat] from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.*

Notice that Uriyya disobeyed a DIRECT ORDER of the King. So, King David gives him a second chance:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:10-12*** *And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from [thy] journey? why [then] didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? [as] thou livest, and [as] thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.*

At this point King David has no choice. Uriah has disobeyed a direct order of the king. The penalty for this offense is death.

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:14-17*** *And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent [it] by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men [were]. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell [some] of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.*

King David knows that Uriah has an evil heart, never the less, one MUST obey the King no matter what. Not wishing to publicly shame Uriah, King David has him killed in battle in an honorable manner. Notice that Joab does not protest in the least. Joab knew that the order of the King, as the chief justice, must be obeyed.

Ok, so now we know that King David did NOT commit adultery with Bath-Sheba and that he did not cause Uriah to be murdered. What we need to know is: What was King David’s sin?

HaShem‘s punishments are always just. To determine the sin, we should look at the punishment:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:26*** *And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased HaShem. And HaShem sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich [man] had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor [man] had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, [As] HaShem liveth, the man that hath done this [thing] shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.*

King David was also the chief Hakham, the chief Judge. Nathan the prophet naturally came to the King for a judgment.

David, being a great Torah scholar and Sage, renders a judgment in keeping with Torah. HaShem agreed to this judgment, EXCEPT for the death penalty:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 12:13*** *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against HaShem. And Nathan said unto David, HaShem also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

The bottom line is this: HaShem has accused King David of stealing a ewe, a female sheep. The penalty is, therefore, in keeping with the sin:

***Shemot (Exodus) 22:1*** *If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox,* and four sheep for a sheep.

Therefore, King David’s sin was: Theft of a sheep.

Now that we have seen the picture, we can begin to understand why HaShem said that David was a man after His own heart:

***II Luqas (Acts) 13:22*** *And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the [son] of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.*

HaShem would never say this about an adulterous murderer. Further, we must understand that Uriah was an evil man:

***Shabbath 56a*** *R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in R. Jonathan’s name: Whoever says that David sinned is merely erring, for it is said, And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways: and the Lord was with him. Is it possible that sin came to his hand, yet the Divine Presence was with him? Then how do I interpret, Wherefore hast thou despised the word of the Lord, to do that which is evil in his sight? He wished to do [evil], but did not. Rab observed: Rabbi, who is descended from David, seeks to defend him, and expounds [the verse] in David’s favour. [Thus:] The ‘evil’ [mentioned] here is unlike every other ‘evil’ [mentioned] elsewhere in the Torah. For of every other evil [mentioned] in the Torah it is written, ‘and he did,’ whereas here it is written, .’to do’: [this means] that he desired to do, but did not. Thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword: thou shouldst have had him tried by the Sanhedrin, but didst not. And hast taken his wife to be thy wife: thou hast marriage rights in her. For R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in R. Jonathan’s name: Every one who went out in the wars of the house of David wrote a bill of divorcement for his wife, for it is said, and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge [‘arubatham]. What is meant by ‘arubatham? R. Joseph learned: The things which pledge man and woman [to one another]. And thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon: just as thou art not [to be] punished for the sword of the Ammonites, so art thou not [to be] punished for [the death of] Uriah the Hittite. What is the reason? He was rebellious against royal authority, saying to him, and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field [etc].*

***Yoma 22b*** *R. Huna said: How little does he whom the Lord supports need to grieve or trouble himself! Saul sinned once and it brought [calamity] upon him, David sinned twice and it did not bring evil upon him — What was the one sin of Saul? The affair with Agag. But there was also the matter with Nob, the city of the priests? — [Still] it was because of what happened with Agag that Scripture says: It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king. What were the two sins of David? — The sin against Uriah and that [of counting the people to which] he was enticed. But there was also the matter of Batsheva? — For that he was punished, as it is written, And he shall restore the lamb fourfold: the child, Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. But for the other sin he was also punished as it is written: So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed? — There his own body was not punished — But in the former case, too, his own body was not punished either? Not indeed? He was punished on his own body, for Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: For six months David was smitten with leprosy, the Sanhedrin removed from him, and the Shechinah departed from him, as it is written: Let those that fear Thee return unto me, and they that know Thy testimonies, and it is also written: Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. But Rab said that David also listened to evil talk? — We hold like Samuel [who says] that David did not do so. And even according to Rab, who says that David listened to calumny, was he not punished for it? For Rab Judah said in the name of Rab. At the time when David said to Mephibosheth: I say: Thou and Ziba divide the land, a heavenly voice came forth to say to him: Rehoboam and Jeroboam will divide the Kingdom.*

Never the less, King David did sin grievously for a man in his exalted position with his exalted spiritual status. The Torah is quite blunt regarding the seriousness of King David’s sin:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 12:7-13*** *And Nathan said to David, Thou [art] the man. Thus saith HaShem God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if [that had been] too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of HaShem, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife [to be] thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith HaShem, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give [them] unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst [it] secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against HaShem. And Nathan said unto David, HaShem also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

We must be very careful not to read into the scriptures more than what should be there.

It is also instructive to note that the union of King David with Batsheva produced Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.

2 Shmuel (Samuel) 12:24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and HaShem loved him.

It is apparent that King David was destined to marry Batsheva. It seems that his timing was off a bit.

OK, so let’s assume that you have read this far and still think that King David committed adultery and murder, consider the following: Why did the Prophet, Nathan, say that David stole a sheep? What was the point of the Prophet’s story?

Now, because of David’s greatness, his crime is dealt with in a VERY severe way. It is dealt with as though he committed a murder. In the same way, Moses lost entry to the promised land simply by hitting a rock.

Also note that the PROPER punishment for murder, in death. David must die IF he committed murder. The Torah is quite clear. Why didn’t David die?

The PROPER punishment for committing adultery is DEATH. Why wasn’t David stoned?

Since when does HaShem kill my children when I have committed a capital crime? Not even men would do that.

***Sanhedrin 107a*** *Rab Judah said in Rab’s name: One should never [intentionally] bring himself to the test, since David king of Israel did so, and fell. He said unto Him, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Why do we say [in prayer] “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” but not the God of David?’ He replied, ‘They were tried by me, but thou wast not.’ Then, replied he, ‘Sovereign of the Universe, examine and try me’ — as it is written, Examine me, O Lord, and try me. He answered ‘I will test thee, and yet grant thee a special privilege; for I did not inform them [of the nature of their trial beforehand], yet, I inform thee that I will try thee in a matter of adultery.’ Straightway, And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed etc. R. Johanan said: He changed his night couch to a day couch, but he forgot the halachah: there is a small organ in man which satisfies him in his hunger but makes him hunger when satisfied. And he walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. Now Bath Sheba was cleansing her hair behind a screen, when Satan came to him, appearing in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him, which broke the screen, thus she stood revealed, and he saw her. Immediately, And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath Sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her, and she came unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanliness: and she returned unto her house. Thus it is written, Thou host proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou host tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. He said thus: ‘Would that a bridle had fallen into the mouth of mine enemy [i.e., himself], that I had not spoken thus.’*

Raba expounded: What is meant by the verse, To the Chief Musician, A Psalm of David. In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? David pleaded before the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Forgive me that sin, that men may not say, “Your mountain [sc. the king] has been put to flight by a bird.”‘

Raba expounded: What is meant by the verse, Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest? David pleaded before the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘Thou knowest full well that had I wished to suppress my lust, I could have done so, but, thought I, let them [the people] not say, “The servant triumphed against his Master.”‘

Raba expounded: What is meant by the verse, For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me? Bath Sheba, the daughter of Eliam, was predestined for David from the six days of Creation, but that she came to him with sorrow. And the school of R. Ishmael taught likewise: She was worthy [i.e., predestined] for David from the six days of Creation, but that he enjoyed her before she was ripe.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 51:2-5*** *Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin [is] ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Watch the punishment to see the sin.

Please try to understand that I am not trying to whitewash sin. I am trying to present the clear teaching of Torah. The sins of our forefathers were different than most assume, never the less, for people of their exalted spiritual status, their culpability was great. What David said about our fathers was true, even though they did not always have the sins that we ascribe to them.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 106:6****We have sinned with our fathers,[[51]](#footnote-51) we have done iniquitously, we have dealt wickedly.*

As wicked as the generation of the wilderness was, they were still spiritual giants compared to those who stand today. Our Torah portion recounts the blessings that HaShem bestowed on this generation, despite their shortcomings.

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:24 – 50:7**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 24. Shall **prey** be taken from a mighty warrior, or shall the **captives** of the righteous escape?" **{S}** | 24. Is it possible that **booty** can be taken from the mighty, or that which virtuous men **capture** be rescued? |
| 25. For so said the Lord, "Even the **captives** of a mighty warrior can be taken and the prey of a tyrant shall escape, and with your contender will I contend, and your **sons** I will save. | 25. Surely, thus says the LORD: "Even that which mighty men **capture** I will restore, and that which strong men take away I will rescue, for I will avenge your retribution and save your **sons.** |
| 26. And those who taunt you - I will feed **their flesh**, and as with sweet wine they shall become drunk [from] their blood; and all flesh shall know that I am the Lord Who saves you, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.**{S}** | 26. I will make **the flesh** of those who are your oppressors food for every bird of the heavens, and just as they are drunk from sweet wine, so shall beasts of the field be drunk from their blood. Then all the sons of flesh will know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Strong One of Jacob." |
|  |  |
| 1. So said the Lord, "Where is your mother's bill of divorce that I sent her away? Or, who is it of My creditors to whom I **sold** you? Behold for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. | 1. Thus says the LORD: "Where is the bill of divorce which I gave your congrega­tion, that it is rejected? Or who had a debt against Me, to whom I have **sold** you? Behold, for your sins you were sold, and for your apostasies your congregation was rejected. |
| 2. Why have I come and there is no man? [Why] have I called and no one answers? Is My hand too short to redeem, or do I have no strength to save? Behold, with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make rivers into a desert; their fish become foul because there is no water and die because of thirst. | 2. Why, when I sent My prophets, did they not repent? When they prophe­sied, did they not listen? Is My might shrunk, that it cannot redeem? Or is there before Me no power to deliver? Behold, by My rebuke I will dry up the sea, I will make rivers a desert; their fish will stink for lack of water, and die of thirst. |
| 3. I clothe the heavens with darkness, and I make sackcloth their raiment. **{P}** | 3. I will cover the heavens as with darkness, and make as sackcloth their covering." |
| 4. **The Lord God gave me a tongue for teaching, to know to establish times for the faint [for His] word; He awakens me every morning, He awakens My ear, to hear according to the teachings.** | 4. **The LORD God has given me the tongue of those who teach, to make [me] know [how] to teach with wisdom the righteous/generous who faint for the words of His law. Therefore morning by morning He rises early to send His prophets so perhaps the sinners’ ears might be opened and they might listen to teaching.** |
| 5. **The Lord God opened my ear, and I did not rebel; I did not turn away backwards.** | 5. **The LORD God has sent me to prophesy, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward.** |
| 6. **I gave my back to smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I did not hide my face from embarrassments and spitting.** | 6. **I gave my back to smiters, and my cheeks to them that pluck out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.** |
| 7. **But the Lord God helps me, therefore, I was not embarrassed; therefore, I made my face like flint, and I knew that I would not be ashamed.** | 7. **For the LORD God helps me; therefore I have not been confounded; therefore I have set my face strong like rock, and I know that I shall not be put to shame;** |
| 8. He Who vindicates me is near, whoever wishes to quarrel with me-let us stand together; whoever is my contender shall approach me. | 8. my innocence is near. Who will go to judgment with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my enemy? Let him come near to me. |
| 9. **Behold, the Lord God shall help he that will condemn me, behold all of them shall wear out like a garment, a moth shall consume them.{S}** | 9. **Behold, the LORD God helps me; who will declare me a sinner? Behold, all of them are like the garment that wears out, that the moth eats.** |
|  |  |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:24 – 50:7**

**24** **Shall prey be taken from a mighty warrior** **You think that it is impossible to take from Esau those captured from Jacob the righteous one.**

**25** **and with your contender** Heb. יְרִיבֵךְ. And with your contender I will contend.

**26** **And those who taunt you I will feed** their flesh to the beasts of the field. The word מוֹנַיִךְ is an expression akin to (Lev. 25:14) “You shall not taunt (אַל תּוֹנוּ).” This denotes taunting with words, those who anger you with their revilings.

**and as with sweet wine** Heb. וְכֶעָסִיס. The sweetness of wine.

**they shall become drunk [from] their blood** So shall those accustomed to drink blood become drunk from their blood. Now who are they? These are the fowl of the heavens. So did Jonathan render this.

**Chapter 50**

**2** **Why have I come** to draw near to you, and none of you turns to Me?

**3** **I clothe the heavens** **The host of the heavens, the princes of the heathens (nations [Mss. and K’li Paz]), when I come to mete out retribution upon the nations.**

**4** **gave me a tongue for teaching** **Isaiah was saying, The Lord sent me and gave me a tongue fit to teach, in order to know to establish a time for the faint and thirsty to hear the words of the Holy One, blessed be He.**

**to establish times** **Heb. לָעוּת. Menahem classified it in the group of (Ps. 119: 126) “It is time (עֵת) to do for the Lord.” To establish times for them.**

**He awakens my ear** **He awakens my ear with His Holy Spirit.**

**to hear according to the teachings** **According to the custom of the teachings, the truth and that which is proper.**

**5** **opened my ear** and let me hear (supra 6:8), “Whom shall I send?” I sent Amos, and they called him ‘pesilus.’ I sent Micah, etc., as is stated in Pesikta of ‘Nachamu nachamu.’

**and I did not rebel** **going on His mission, neither did I turn away backwards, but I said, “Here I am; send me” (ibid.).**

**6** **I gave my back to smiters** **He said to me, Isaiah, My children are obstinate; My children are bothersome. [You may go] on the condition that you do not become angry with them. I said to Him, On that condition.**

**7** **But the Lord God helps me** **if they rise up against me.**

**Verbal Tallies**

**By: Hem Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

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

**B’midbar (Numbers) 31:25-54**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 106:6-18**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:24 – 50:7**

**Mk 13:14-20, Lk 21:20-24**

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

Father - אב, Strong’s number 01.

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

LORD - יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

Spake / Saith / Saying - אמר, Strong’s number 0559.

Prey - מלקוח, Strong’s number 04455.

Taken / Captive - שבי, Strong’s number 07628.

**Bamidbar (Numbers) 31:25** And the **LORD <03068>** **spake <0559> (8799)** unto Moses, **saying <0559> (8800)**, 26 Take the sum of the **prey <04455>** that was **taken <07628>**, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief **fathers <01>** of the congregation:

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:24** Shall the **prey <04455>** be taken from the mighty, or the lawful **captive <07628>** delivered?

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:25** But thus **saith <0559> (8804)** the **LORD <03068>**, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

**Tehillim (Psalms) 106:6** We have sinned with our **fathers <01>**, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

**Hebrew:**

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Reading**  **Num. 31:25-54** | **Psalms**  **106:6-18** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is 49:24 – 50:7** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ba'** | fathers | Num. 31:26 | Ps. 106:6 Ps. 106:7 |  |
| **dx'a,** | one | Num. 31:28 Num. 31:30 Num. 31:34 Num. 31:39 Num. 31:47 | Ps. 106:11 |  |
| **vyai** | man | Num. 31:49 Num. 31:50 Num. 31:53 |  | Isa. 50:2 |
| **rm;a'** | spoke, speak | Num. 31:25 Num. 31:49 |  | Isa. 49:25 Isa. 50:1 |
| **aAB** | brought, came | Num. 31:54 |  | Isa. 50:2 |
| **!Be** | children, son | Num. 31:30 Num. 31:42 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:54 |  | Isa. 49:25 |
| **la;G'** | redeemed |  | Ps. 106:10 | Isa. 49:26 |
| **rb'D'** | words |  | Ps. 106:12 | Isa. 50:4 |
| **br;x'** | dried up, dry up |  | Ps. 106:9 | Isa. 50:2 |
| **dy"** | under our command, hand | Num. 31:49 | Ps. 106:10 | Isa. 50:2 |
| **[dy** | known, know, knew | Num. 31:35 | Ps. 106:8 | Isa. 49:26 Isa. 50:4 Isa. 50:7 |
| **hw"hoy>** | LORD | Num. 31:25 Num. 31:28 Num. 31:29 Num. 31:30 Num. 31:31 Num. 31:37 Num. 31:38 Num. 31:39 Num. 31:40 Num. 31:41 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:50 Num. 31:52 Num. 31:54 | Ps. 106:16 | Isa. 49:25 Isa. 49:26 Isa. 50:1 |
| **~y"** | sea |  | Ps. 106:7 Ps. 106:9 | Isa. 50:2 |
| **[v;y"** | saved |  | Ps. 106:8 Ps. 106:10 | Isa. 49:25 Isa. 49:26 |
| **xq;l'** | took, take | Num. 31:29 Num. 31:30 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:51 Num. 31:54 |  | Isa. 49:24 Isa. 49:25 |
| **rB'd>mi** | wilderness |  | Ps. 106:9 Ps. 106:14 | Isa. 50:2 |
| **~yIm;** | waters |  | Ps. 106:11 | Isa. 50:2 |
| **x;Aql.m;** | plunder, prey | Num. 31:26 Num. 31:27 Num. 31:32 |  | Isa. 49:24 Isa. 49:25 |
| **hf,[]m;** | fashioned, His works | Num. 31:51 | Ps. 106:13 |  |
| **hr'm'** | rebelled, rebellious |  | Ps. 106:7 | Isa. 50:5 |
| **hv,mo** | Moses | Num. 31:25 Num. 31:31 Num. 31:41 Num. 31:42 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:48 Num. 31:49 Num. 31:51 Num. 31:54 | Ps. 106:16 |  |
| **vp,n<** | one, persons,  ourselves, soul | Num. 31:28 Num. 31:35 Num. 31:40 Num. 31:46 Num. 31:50 | Ps. 106:15 |  |
| **!t;n"** | give, given | Num. 31:29 Num. 31:30 Num. 31:41 Num. 31:47 | Ps. 106:15 | Isa. 50:4 Isa. 50:6 |
| **hd'[e** | congregation | Num. 31:26 Num. 31:27 Num. 31:43 | Ps. 106:17 Ps. 106:18 |  |
| **~ynIP'** | before, face | Num. 31:50 Num. 31:54 |  | Isa. 50:6 Isa. 50:7 |
| **xt;P'** | opened |  | Ps. 106:17 | Isa. 50:5 |
| **ybiv.** | taken, captives | Num. 31:26 |  | Isa. 49:24 Isa. 49:25 |
| **xl;v'** | sent |  | Ps. 106:15 | Isa. 50:1 |

**Greek:**

| **GREEK** | **ENGLISH** | **Torah Reading**  **Num. 31:25-54** | **Psalms**  **106:6-18** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is 49:24 – 50:7** | **Peshat**  **Mishnah of Mark,**  **1-2 Peter, & Jude**  **Mk 12:35-37a** | **Tosefta of**  **Luke**  **Lk 20:41-44** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ἅγιον** | holy |  | Ps 106:16 |  | Mar 12:36 |  |
| **ἄν** | till |  |  |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:43 |
| **ἄνθρωπος** | man |  |  |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:43 |
| **γινώσκω** | known, know, knew | Num. 31:35 |  | Isa. 49:26 Isa. 50:4 Isa. 50:7 |  |  |
| **δεξιός** | right |  |  |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:42 |
| **ἔπω** | said, speak | Num 31:48 |  | Isa 50:4 | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:41 Lk. 20:42 |
| **ἐχθρός** | enemies |  | Ps 106:10 |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:43 |
| **θεός** | God | Num 31:41 | Psa 106:14 |  |  |  |
| **κάθημαι** | sit |  |  |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:42 |
| **καλέω** | called |  |  | Isa 50:2 |  | Lk. 20:44 |
| **κύριος** | LORD | Num. 31:25 Num. 31:28 Num. 31:29 Num. 31:30 Num. 31:31 Num. 31:37 Num. 31:38 Num. 31:39 Num. 31:40 Num. 31:41 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:50 Num. 31:52 Num. 31:54 | Ps. 106:16 | Isa. 49:25 Isa. 49:26 Isa. 50:1 | Mk. 12:36 Mk. 12:37 | Lk. 20:42 Lk. 20:44 |
| **λέγω** | saying, says | Num 31:25 |  | Isa 49:25 Isa 50:1 | Mk. 12:35 Mk. 12:37 | Lk. 20:41 Lk. 20:42 |
| **τίθημι** | make, set |  |  | Isa 50:1 Isa 50:2 Isa 50:3 | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:43 |
| **υἱός** | children, son | Num. 31:30 Num. 31:42 Num. 31:47 Num. 31:54 |  | Isa. 49:25 | Mk. 12:35 Mk. 12:37 | Lk. 20:41 Lk. 20:44 |
| **ὑποπόδιον** | footstool |  |  |  | Mk. 12:36 | Lk. 20:43 |
| **Χριστός** | Messiah,  Anointed one |  |  |  | Mk. 12:35 | Lk. 20:41 |

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra of “B’Midbar” (Num.) 31:25-54**

**“Sa Et Rosh” “Take the sum”**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School of Hakham Shaul’s Tosefta Luqas (LK)** | **School of Hakham Tsefet’s Peshat**  **Mordechai (Mk)** |
| **¶ But he said to them, "How can they say that the Messiah is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, “This is the word of the LORD to my master: Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”** (MT-Psa. 110:1; LXX-Psa. 109:1)**"' David thus calls him master, so how is he his son?"** | **And** while **Yeshua was teaching in the Bet HaMikdash** (Temple), **he responded** to [Ye’lammedenu] (May our teacher teach us – concerning the Messenger of the covenant**) by saying, How do the Soferim say that Messiah is the son of David? For David himself said by the Ruach HaKodesh** (spirit of prophecy), **“This is the word of the LORD to my master: Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."** (MT-Psa. 110:1; LXX-Psa. 109:1) **Then David calls himself “master”** (i.e. Messiah) because the LORD said to him sit at My right hand. |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Num. 31:25-54 | Ps. 106:6-18 | Is. 49:24 – 50:7 | Mk. 12:35-37a | Lk. 20:41-44 |

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

The opening remarks of the pericope demanded some sort of explanatory translation due to the textual anomalies. These anomalies may be for a number of reasons, such as tampering with the text etc. Many so-called scholars would like to make verse 34 of our previous pericope some sort of end to ANY further questions made by Soferim, from both the Tz’dukim and P’rushim. The Peshat explanation to verse 34 is that no one asked him (Yeshua) any further questions AT THAT TIME. This leads us to the present pericope, where someone undoubtedly presents some sort of question to Yeshua.

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament and Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature (BDAG) have presented definitions of the Greek word ἀποκρίνομαι *apokrinomai* that suggest that Yeshua responded or replied to a query. Because the previous pericope was initiated by a session of teaching using the Socratic Method, we have deduced that the Hebrew concept of “Yelammedenu Rabbenu (May our master teach us)” was the most appropriate translation. The insight presented in understanding that we have a Yelammedenu sermon bridges the gap to the missing material, offering an explanation to the identity of the “Messenger of the Covenant.”

**The Messenger**

Malachi repeatedly mentions the “messenger.”[[52]](#footnote-52) The Targum reports that Pin’chas is the “messenger of the covenant” with a special message. That message is “to announce the **redemption at the end of the days**.”

Prayerfully we should not have to elaborate on the understanding that the idea of an “angel” (Heb. Malak) is that of a “Messenger.” This is true of both Hebrew and Greek.

Therefore, the Yelammedenu is accurate, solid and faithful to the understanding of our Sages.

While Rashi fails to make this connection, His Eminence Rabbi Yitzchaq Magriso, like the Targum notices the connection of the “messenger of the covenant” in our Torah Seder. Consequently, between the Targum and His Eminence Yitzchaq Magiriso we have a solid connection between Pin’chas and the “messenger of the covenant.”[[53]](#footnote-53) His Eminence Yitzchaq Magiriso connects Pin’chas with Eliyahu haNavi.

**Will the Real Sofer please Stand**

***How do the Soferim say that Messiah is the son of David?***

We first draw attention to the Socratic method of teaching illuminated by the text. This we have already mentioned briefly in the last pericope, so we will not try to elaborate here in any detail. What is of interest, is that Yeshua begins his teaching with interrogation. “How do the soferim say that Messiah is the son of David?” Hakham Tsefet builds on the materials of last week’s pericope by his reference to the idea of hermeneutic. We might reword our translation a bit to reflect the hermeneutic of the soferim. How is it that the soferim have hermeneutically deduced that Messiah is the Son of David (Mashiach ben David)? This demonstrates that Yeshua was…

1. Familiar with Rabbinic exegesis and hermeneutic
2. Yeshua used Scribal hermeneutics to determine teaching subjects and materials
3. Yeshua’s teaching style is mirrored in the Mishnaic interrogative[[54]](#footnote-54)
4. Yeshua’s teachings followed the Triennial Torah reading cycle
5. Yeshua, through hermeneutic applications understood and taught the Messianic role

To bridge the gap between last week’s soferim and the soferim of the present pericope we need to look at a statement made by Marie Sabin. Marie Sabin notes that Yeshua acted as a sofer himself.

By interweaving these three parts, Mark shows Jesus speaking as a scribe himself, that is, as a teacher of Scripture. Mark shows Jesus using a method typical of Jewish Scripture scholars and Wisdom teachers of the first century. The effect of this interweaving is to suggest that love of God implies love of neighbour and that both together are what constitute true worship.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Again, this comment is based on last week’s pericope. Nevertheless, this comment has applicable information for our present discussion. Yeshua followed these “scribal hermeneutics” consistent with the hermeneutics of Hillel. Why is it important to know that Yeshua followed the hermeneutics of the School of Hillel? Before we can accurately decode the message of Yeshua, we must be able to understand his exegetical method of hermeneutic.

Sabin also notes that Yeshua is intent on presenting questions.[[56]](#footnote-56) This Mishnaic system engages the student rather than using the homily method of teachings. The Greek term συζητούντων *suzetounton* used for “drash” in last week’s pericope is redundantly used by Hakham Tsefet. Hakham Tsefet and his sofer Mordechai use this nomenclature six times[[57]](#footnote-57) throughout Mordechai’s Mesorah. The only other writer in the Nazarean Codicil to use the Greek συζητούντων *suzetounton* is Hakham Shaul who uses this nomenclature four times in 1st and 2nd Luqas[[58]](#footnote-58).

Mordechai 9:10 – “And they kept (guarded and held) his saying to themselves, and they discussed (*drash*) with one another what the rising from the dead would mean. 11 And they inquired (*drash*) of Him, saying, Why do the scribes (*most likely the “scribes of the Prushim*)[[59]](#footnote-59) say it is necessary for Eliyahu to come first?”

This demonstrates that Yeshua is not simply “teaching” his talmidim. Yeshua was making his talmidim “stand.”[[60]](#footnote-60) The sofer of last week’s pericope proved to be a Hakham form the School of Hillel. The soferim of the previous Pericope (Mordechai 9:10ff) may well be soferim from the Hillelite school as well. This week’s soferim are most likely also from the same school. One further bit of logic would indicate that the soferim spoken about by Yeshua were from the School of Hillel in that his teachings, hermeneutics and ministry all aligned themselves with the School of Hillel. It would therefore, be most reasonable to note that Yeshua would cite the soferim of the School he attended unless he was making a polemic.

**How do the Soferim say that Messiah is the son of David?**

The Soferim from the School of Hillel have concluded that Messiah is the Son of David or “Ben David.” Here Yeshua refers to Mashiach ben David rather than Mashiach ben Yosef. The concept of “Mashiach ben Yosef” in and of itself is an indicator that Mashiach ben David would come later.

B’resheet 30:24 And she called his name Joseph;﻿[[61]](#footnote-61)g and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

By implication, the title “Mashiach ben Yoseph” means that another Messiah will come, or we might say that another aspect of Messiah would be added in the future. This additional aspect of Messiah was labelled “Mashiach ben David.” Here we do not want to mislead the reader. The concept of Messiah is “partially” developed out of the Davidic prototype. We use “partially” here because the first mention of Messiah according to rabbinic thought is Beresheet 1:2. Christian scholars note that B’resheet 3:15 is a mention of Messiah. Subsequently, the Messianic concept is a collage of images from the Tanakh.

Marie Sabin notes that Yeshua juxtaposes Psalm 110 against 2 Samuel 7:12b—14, 16[[62]](#footnote-62)

2Sa 7:12b—14, 16 I will set up your seed after you, who will come out of your bowels. And I will make his kingdom sure. 13 He will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he will be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men.

16 And your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.

The question presented by Yeshua needs to be restated for clarity. How is David able to say that he would be the progenitor of the Messiah? In addition, how are the soferim able to deduce that Messiah would be the son of David?

David makes this deduction by the Ruach HaKodesh (spirit of prophecy). The Soferim of the School of Hillel are able to deduce hermeneutically from the above-cited Psalm that HaShem was speaking to David prophetically of the Davidic Messiah. The 2nd Samuel passage is only one of a number of passages that could be cited to substantiate that the Messiah would be the son of David.

**Sit at my Right Hand**

The Hebrew word “*y’shv*” means, “to sit.” However, this is only an elementary definition of the word. The Hebrew word “Yeshiva” also means, “to sit.” Its uses developed into the idea of study, which in turn became the academy and court sessions. It is noteworthy to examine the similarity between the “sitting” of the Judges in the Sanhedrin and the “sittings” of the Hakhamim in the Yeshivot or academies. Their office (the Sanhedrin) is educational as well as judicial.

Rashi translated the opening words of this Psalm “wait at my right hand.” The rationale behind Rashi’s translation is that of waiting for HaShem to resolve difficulties for David who was already anointed King of Yisrael while Shaul (Saul) was still the acting king. Rashi’s translation indicates static waiting and patience. The difficulty with this is that the verb “*y’shv*” is active. This creates a question. How does one “sit” actively? Because the Hebrew word “Yeshiva” also means, “to sit” we can logically understand that HaShem is telling David, who is already anointed (Mashiach) King that he needs to study and prepare for the day when he will ascend the throne. Exactly when, where and how David fell in love with the Torah is unknown. Likewise, when, where and how David attended Yeshiva is unknown. Nonetheless, Psalm 119 makes it evident that David had an overwhelming love for knowledge of the Torah.

Psalm 122:1 A Song of Ascents, of David. I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

David possessed an overwhelming desire to be in the “House of the LORD.” Contextually we must understand that David is not referring to the Mishkan or subsequent Temple. How can we make such a deduction?

Psalm 122:2 Our feet are standing **Within your gates, O Jerusalem**, 3 Jerusalem, that is built as a city that is compact together; 4 To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD-- An ordinance for Israel-- To give thanks to the name of the LORD. 5 For their thrones were set (*y’shv*) for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

David never saw the physical Temple stand in Yerushalayim. Therefore, David had to have something else in mind. Here we would venture that David loved to go to the Esnoga[[63]](#footnote-63) to study Torah. David’s waiting was not static “waiting” for G-d to make his enemies his footstool. David’s “waiting” was “siting,” dynamic – i.e., active study of Torah preparing himself to be King of Yisrael.

We can cite a Targum to Psalm 110 that sheds light on this thought.

The LORD *spoke by his decree* ***to give me the dominion in exchange for sitting in study of Torah****. "Wait* at my right hand until I make your enemies a prop for your feet." ANOTHER TARGUM: The LORD *said in His decree to appoint me ruler over Israel, but the LORD said to me, "Wait for Saul of the tribe of Benjamin to pass away from the world; and afterwards you will inherit the kingship, and* I will make your enemies a prop for your feet."

What did David study while he was in Yeshiva? Perhaps the question is better stated by asking it a bit differently. What would a soon to be King of Yisrael study in Yeshiva? David would most likely have been interested in the halakhot and midrash, which applied to Kings and kingly rule over Yisrael. His deep love for Torah demonstrated that he wanted to be the best King he could be. Consequently, David proved to be the best King Yisrael ever knew. This earned David the title “Messiah” (anointed King).

**Some Questions to Understanding and Reflection:**

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!”**

**Next Sabbath:**

**Shabbat: “UMiq’neh Rav” – Sabbath: “And cattle much”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וּמִקְנֶה רַב** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“****UMiq’neh Rav”** | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 32:1-4 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 33:1-4 |
| **“****And cattle much”** | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 32:5-15 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 33:5-7 |
| **“Y muchísimo ganado”** | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 32:16-19 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 33:8-10 |
| B’Midbar (Num.) 32:1-42 | Reader 4 – B’Midbar 32:20-24 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Josh 22:8-12, 21-24,  26-27, 29 | Reader 5 – B’Midbar 32:25-27 | **Monday and Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – B’Midbar 32:28-32 | Reader 1 – B’Midbar 33:1-4 |
| Psalms: 106:19-27 | Reader 7 – B’Midbar 32:33-42 | Reader 2 – B’Midbar 33:5-7 |
|  | Maftir – B’Midbar 32:40-42 | Reader 3 – B’Midbar 33:8-10 |
| Mk 12:37b-40: Luke 20:45-47; | Josh 22:8-12, 21-24,  26-27, 29 |  |

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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](mailto:chozenppl@gmail.com)

1. Radak [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sforno [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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-3)
4. David is ascribed as the author of Psalms chapter 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Father - אב, is our verbal tally with our Torah portion. It is Strong’s number 01. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tanach is an acronym for: Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim. These are the Hebrew words for the Law, Prophets, and the Writings. These books compose what some people call the *Old Testament*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Shemot (Exodus) 32:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Six hours is midday, the day being counted from dawn to sunset. Six hours of the fortieth day had arrived, and Moses had still not returned. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. After midday of the fortieth day. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This was an optical illusion engineered by Satan. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The word zeh (this) indicates that they were pointing to Moses; cf. supra, 15:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Lit. ‘Ye whose heads have been cut off from the neck ‘. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Shemot (Exodus) 32:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Shemot (Exodus) 1:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. HOUSES being understood in that sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 2:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Y.T.: the Rabbis must have had a tradition to this effect. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Because she had been an ailing woman (Rashi on Sota 11b). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For no ulterior motive except that of giving birth to G-dly children. Since Caleb was attracted by her two brothers Moses and Aharon, he merited to have descendants of the same rank. According to the Talmud, children often resemble the maternal uncle. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Beautifully colored. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. They built up a royal family for her. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. On the present interpretation Azubah and Ephrath are identical. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Since they are identical, how could he marry her, seeing that she was already married to him? [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. I.e. arranging a wedding-procession for her; Sota 12a. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. I Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 6:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. V. ib. II, 24: And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-ephrath, then Abiah, Hezron’s wife, bore him Ashur the father of Tekoa. This verse is interpreted infra, XL, 4, as meaning that after Hezron was dead Caleb married Ephrath, who is identified with Miriam. Thus Caleb and Ashur married Miriam, and since she could not marry two brothers, Caleb and Ashur must have been one. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Lit. ‘Ye whose heads have been cut off from the neck ‘. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Shemot (Exodus) 36:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Shemot (Exodus) 36:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. A play on the word behemah ‘in whom’, which is read as if it were behemah ‘cattle’. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Betzalel was thirteen years old when given the task. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Shemot (Exodus) 35:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. A Midrashic rendering of a Hebrew word meaning wing, corner, hem of garment (E.V. ‘skirts’). In Rabbinic Hebrew the root is used for ‘ gather ‘, ‘ assemble ‘. The allusion here is evidently to Exodus 32:1, And the people gathered themselves together unto Aharon. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. E.V.: ‘Thou didst not find them breaking in’. In connection with the Golden Calf the Israelites were like the thief breaking in (the same word is used as in Exodus 22:1) since they did it in the absence of Moses. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. This is a Midrashic rendering which presupposes reading wa-yar (and he saw) as if vocalized wa-yira’ (‘and he feared’), and taking the noun Mizbeach (altar, lit. ‘a slaughtering place’) as ‘the slaughtering’ (abstract noun) or as ‘the slaughtered one’. Shemot (Exodus) 32:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Enumerated in B.K. 110b. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. I.e. near to death in view of the penalties to which they were liable in the event of transgressing the priestly regulations. The death of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10) is an instance of the priests’ proximity to death. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Shemot (Exodus) 32:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Vayikra (Leviticus) 8:2. Tanchuma refers to Bamidbar (Numbers) 17:11 f. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Sc. the Golden Calf: alternatively, Nadab and Abihu. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The atonement and forgiveness were thus incomplete. --The immediate cause of their death was the taking of strange fire into the Sanctuary. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. In Warsaw ed. TAKE, etc., is omitted here and commences the next section. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ruth chapter 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Bereshit (Genesis) 19:31ff [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Bereshit (Genesis) chapter 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Bereshit (Genesis) :28. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ralbag; 1288-1344 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Bereshit (Genesis) 48:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Mishlei (Proverbs) 29:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Father - אב, is our verbal tally with our Torah portion. It is Strong’s number 01. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cf. 2:7; 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Magiriso, Rabbi Yitzchak, The Torah Anthology: Vol. 14 - First Journeys (Me'am Lo'ez Series), p. 226 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. m. Ber.1:1 From what time may they recite the ﻿Shema﻿ in the evening? m. Ber. 1:2 From what time do they recite the ﻿Shema﻿ in the morning? [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Sabin, Marie Noonan, The Gospel According to Mark, Liturgical Press 2006 p.110 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid. p 112 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Cf. Mark 1:27, 11; 9:10, 14, 16; 12:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Cf. Luke 22:23, 24:15; Acts 6:9; 9:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Some versions read ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Cf. m. Abot 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. g Joseph: that is, Adding [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Sabin, Marie Noonan, The Gospel According to Mark, Liturgical Press 2006 p.111 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Synagogue [↑](#footnote-ref-63)