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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** | **First Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Av 4, 5783 - July 21/22, 2023** | **First Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

**Roll of Honor:**

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

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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** gkilli@aol.com **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**Blessings Before Torah Study**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**A Prayer for Israel**

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

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

**A Prayer for our Beloved Hakhamim**

We would like to ask for prayers on behalf of our three Hakhamim, Hakham Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai, Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David, and Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham for their health, as well as for this work, that it may prosper, be of great benefit to all, and that it may be well supported, and we all say, Amen ve Amen!

**We pray especially, 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!**

**Shabbat: “HaNimtsá” - “Can we find”**

**Av 4, 5783 – July 21/22, 2023**

**3rd Sabbath of Penitence**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **הֲנִמְצָא** |  |  **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“HaNimtsa”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 41:38-40 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 42:5-6 |
| **“Can we find”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 41:41-43 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 42:7-8 |
| **“¿Podemos hallar … ?”** | Reader 3 – B’resheet 41:44-46 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 42:9-11 |
| B’resheet (Genesis) 41:38 – 42:4 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 41:47-49 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 11:2-10, 16 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 41;53-54 |  **Monday and Thursday Mornings** |
| Special Ashlamatah:Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:1-27 | Reader 6 – B’resheet 41:55-56 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 42:5-6 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 35:19-28 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 41:57-42:2 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 42:7-8 |
|   |  Maftir – B’resheet 42:3-4 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 42:9-11 |
| N.C.: Mk 3:28-30; Luke 12:10 |  Ashlamatah Isaiah 11:2-10,16 |   |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

  Pharaoh put Joseph in charge – Gen. 41:38-49

  Yosef ‘s two sons were born and named – Gen. 41:50-52

  Joseph opens the storehouse – Gen. 41:53-57

  Ya’aqob sends Yosef’s ten brothers to Egypt – Gen 42:1-4

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: B’resheet (Genesis) 41:38-42:4**‎

| **RASHI** | **TARGUM PSEUDO JONATHAN** |
| --- | --- |
| 38. Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can [another] one like this be found, a man who has **G-d's spirit** in him?" | 38. And Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find a man like this, in whom is **the spirit of prophecy from the Lord**? |
| 39. Pharaoh said to Yosef, "After Elohim has informed you of all this, there **is no one so understanding and wise** as you. | 39. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since the Lord has made known all this to you, **there is no one so prudent and wise** as you are. |
| 40. You will be over my house, and by your word will all my people be fed. Only by [virtue of] the throne will I be greater than you." | 40. You will be superintendent over my house, and by the decree of your mouth will all my people be armed only in the throne of the kingdom will I be greater than you. |
| 41. Pharaoh said to Yosef, "Behold, I have placed you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." | 41. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have appointed you prince over the land of Mizraim. |
| 42. Pharaoh then took off his ring from his hand, and he placed it on Yosef's hand. He dressed him in linen garments, and put a gold chain around his neck. | 42. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and set it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in vestments of fine linen, and set a collar of gold upon his neck, |
| 43. He had him [Yosef] ride in his second-ranking carriage, and they proclaimed before him, "Avrech." He thus placed him over the entire land of Egypt. | 43. and made him ride in the second chariot of Pharaoh; and they chanted before him, This is the Father of the king; **Great in wisdom**, few in years. And he appointed him prince over all the land of Mizraim.[Jerusalem And they chanted before him, and said, Live the Father of the king, **Great in wisdom** and few in years.] |
| 44. Pharaoh [then] said to Yosef, "I am Pharaoh, but without you, no man will lift his hand or his foot in the entire land of Egypt." | 44. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh the king, and you art vice-regent, and without your word a man will not lift up his hand to gird on arms, or his foot to mount a horse in all the land of Mizraim. |
| 45. Pharaoh gave Yosef the name Tzafnas Paneiach, and he gave him Asnat, the daughter of Poti Phera, priest of On as a wife. Yosef [then] went out over the land of Egypt. | 45. And Pharaoh called the name of Joseph, The man who reveals mysteries (secrets). And **he gave him Asenath, whom Dinah had borne to Shekem, and the wife of Potiphera that prince (Rabba) of Tanis had brought up, to be his wife.** And Joseph went forth ruler over the land of Mizraim. |
| 46. Yosef was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Yosef left Pharaoh's presence, and traversed throughout the entire land of Egypt. | 46. And Joseph was a son of thirty years when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Mizraim. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh, and passed, a prince and a ruler, through all ,the land of Mizraim. |
| 47. The earth produced during the seven years of abundance by handfuls. | 47. And the earth (so) brought forth, that every blade made two hands-full in the seven years of plenty, until all the granaries were full. |
| 48. He gathered in all the food of the seven years [that was produced] in the land of Egypt, and placed the food in the cities. The food of the fields surrounding each city was placed within [the city]. | 48. And they gathered all the produce of the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Mizraim, and he laid up the produce in the cities; the produce of the fields which were round about a city he laid up therein. |
| 49. Yosef piled up grain like the sand of the sea---in great abundance, until they gave up counting it, for there were no [more] numbers. | 49. |
| 50. Two sons were born to Yosef before the years of famine came. They were born to him by Osnas, the daughter of Poti Phera, Priest of On. | 50. And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine arose, which Asenath who had been brought up in the house of Potipliera prince of Tanis bare to him. |
| 51. Yosef named the first-born, Menasheh, "For G-d has made me forget all my trouble, and all that was in my father's house." | 51. And Joseph called the name of his firstborn Menasheh; because, the Lord has made me forget all my weariness and all the house of my father. |
| 52. He named the second one Ephraim, "Because Elohim has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering." | 52. And the name of the second he called Ephraim; for he said, The Lord has made me mighty in the land of my affliction, as he will make the house of my father mighty here in their afflictions. |
| 53. The seven years of abundance came to an end, [the good years] that were in the land of Egypt. | 53. And the seven years of plenty were completed which were to come in the land of Mizraim; |
| 54. The seven years of famine started to come, just as Yosef had said. There was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. | 54. and the seven years of famine began to be, as Joseph had said. And there was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Mizraim there was bread. |
| 55. When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all of Egypt, "Go to Yosef. Whatever he says to you, do." | 55. And all the land of Mizraim had dearth; because the seed wheat bare no fruit, and the people cried before Pharoh for bread. And Pharoh said to all the Mizraee, Go to Joseph, and what he will tell you do. |
| 56. The famine spread over the entire face of the land. Yosef opened everything that held grain, and sold [grain] to the Egyptians. The famine became severe in the land of Egypt. | 56. And the famine was upon all the face of the land; and Joseph opened all the treasures and sold to the Mizraee. And the famine waxed mighty in the land of Mizraim; |
| 57. All [countries] of the land came to Egypt to buy [grain] from Yosef, for the famine was severe in all the land. | 57. and all the inhabitants of the land came into Mizraim to buy provision of Joseph; for the famine was mighty in all the land. |
| 1. Ya’aqob saw that food was being sold in Egypt. Yaakov said to his sons, "Why would you have everyone gazing at you?" | 1. And Jakob saw that provisions might be bought and that they brought corn from Mizraim; and Jakob said to his sons, Why are you afraid to go down to Mizraim? |
| 2. He said, "Behold, I have heard that there is food for sale in Egypt. Go down there and buy for us from there, so that we will live and not die. | 2. And he said, Behold, I have heard that corn is sold in Mizraim: go down thither and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die. |
| 3. Yosef 's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. | 3. And the ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy corn from Mizraim. |
| 4. But Binyamin, Yosef's brother, Yaakov did not send along with his brothers, for he [Yaakov] said, "Misfortune might befall him." | 4. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jakob sent not down with his brethren; for he said, Behold, he is a youth, and I fear lest death should befall him. |

**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.

 **Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

Thirteen rules compiled by Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha for the elucidation of the Torah and for making halakic deductions from it. They are, strictly speaking, mere amplifications of the seven Rules of Hillel, and are collected in the Baraita of R. Ishmael, forming the introduction to the Sifra and reading as follows:

**1. Ḳal wa-ḥomer**: Identical with the first rule of Hillel.

**2. Gezerah shawah**: Identical with the second rule of Hillel.

**3. Binyan ab**: Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel.

**4. Kelal u-Peraṭ**: The general and the particular.

**5. u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The particular and the general.

**6. Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The general, the particular, and the general.

7. The general which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general.

8. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular.

9. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application.

10. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application.

11. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it.

12. Deduction from the context.

13. When two Biblical passages contradict each other the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage.

Rules seven to eleven are formed by a subdivision of the fifth rule of Hillel; rule twelve corresponds to the seventh rule of Hillel, but is amplified in certain particulars; rule thirteen does not occur in Hillel, while, on the other hand, the sixth rule of Hillel is omitted by Ishmael. With regard to the rules and their application in general. These rules are found also on the morning prayers of any Jewish Orthodox Siddur.

**Reading Assignment:**

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|  **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez** By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh KaplanPublished by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1990) **Vol. 3b – “The Twelve Tribes” pp. 368 - 386** | **Ramban: Genesis Commentary on the Torah**Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc. (New York, 1971) **pp. 501-509** |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎** **B’resheet (Genesis)** ‎‎**41:38 – 42:4**

**38** **Will we find [anyone] like this** Heb. הֲנִמְצָא כָזֶה [Onkelos renders:] will we find such as this? If we go and seek him, will we find [anyone] like him?-[from *Gen. Rabbah* 90:1] הֲנִמְצָא is an interrogative expression, as is every “hey” used as a prefix and vowelized with a “chataf pattach.”

**39** **there is no one as understanding and wise as you** To seek an understanding and wise man as you said, we will not [be able to] find anyone like you.

**40** **will be nourished** Heb. יִשַּׁק [Onkelos renders:] will be nourished, will be sustained. All my people’s necessities will be provided through you, similar to “the steward of my household (בֶן-מֶשֶׁק)” (Gen. 15:2), and “Arm yourselves (נַשְּׁקוּ) with purity” (Ps. 2:12), *garnis(s)*on in Old French, provision.

**only [with] the throne** That I will be called king.

**the throne** A term denoting the kingship, like “and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord, King [David]” (I Kings 1:37).

**41** **I have appointed you** Heb. נָתַתִּי אֹתְךָ. [Onkelos renders:] I have appointed you. It is nevertheless an expression of placing (lit., giving), like “and to place you (לְתִתְּךָ) above” (Deut. 26: 19). Whether for greatness or lowliness.

**41** **And Pharaoh removed his ring** [The] giving [of] the king’s ring is a sign to the one to whom it is given [that he is] to be second to him in greatness [rank].

**raiment of fine linen** This is an item of value in Egypt.

**chain** Heb. רְבִד, a chain, and because it consists of links placed in a row, it is called רְבִד, and similarly, “I have decked (רָבַדְתִּי) my couch” (Prov. 7:16). I have decked my couch with rows of ornaments. In the language of the Mishnah: “surrounded by rows (ROV’DIN) of stone” (Middoth 1:8); “on the row of stones (ROVED) in the forecourt” (*Yoma* 43b), which is the pavement.

**43** **in his chariot of second rank** Heb. מִרְכֶּבֶת הַמִּשְׁנֶה. The one second to his chariot, which goes next to his.

**the king’s patron** Heb. אַבְרֵךְ, as the Targum renders: This is the patron of the king. [The word] רֵךְ in Aramaic means “king.” In [the chapter entitled] “The partners” (*Baba Bathra*4a), he (Herod) is neither a king (REIKHA) nor the son of a king (BAR REIKHA). [Thus, רֵךְ like rex in Latin, means king.] In the Aggadah (*Sifrei Deut.*1), Rabbi Judah expounded: אַבְרֵךְ refers to Joseph, who was a father (אַב) in wisdom, and tender (RAKH) in years. Ben Durmaskith said to him, “How long will you pervert the Scriptures for us? אַבְרֵךְ is only a term denoting knees (BIRKAYIM), for all would enter and exit under his hand, as the matter that is stated: “appointing him, etc.”

**44** **I am Pharaoh** I have the power to enact a decree upon my kingdom, and I decree that no one should raise his hand, etc.

**and besides you** [I.e.,] without your permission. Another interpretation: I shall be the king, and besides you, etc. This is parallel to “only [with] the throne” (verse 40). -[from *Gen. Rabbah* 90:2] [I.e., although I give you the exclusive power to raise your hand and foot, as explained below I am still the supreme ruler over the land.]

**his hand or his foot** As the *Targum*renders [no man will raise his hand to bear arms or his foot to ride a horse.]

**45** **Zaphenath-Pa’neach** He who explains hidden things, and Pa’neach has no parallel in Scripture.-[from *Targum Onkelos*]

**Poti-phera** He is Potiphar, but he was called Poti-phera because he became emasculated since he desired Joseph for homosexual relations.-[from *Sotah* 13b]

**47** **And…[the inhabitants of] the land gathered** Heb. וַתַּעַשׂ הָאָרֶץ, lit., and the land made. [This is to be understood] as the Targum renders: “And…the inhabitants of the land gathered.” The language, however, does not lose its meaning of making.

**by handfuls**Heb. לִקְמָצִים. Handful over handful, hand over hand, they were storing it.

**48** **the food of the field surrounding the city, he put within it** Because each land preserves its own produce, and they would put into the grain some of the soil of the place, and it would preserve the grain [and prevent it] from decaying. -[from *Gen. Rabbah* 90:5]

**49** **until [one] stopped counting** Until the one who counted stopped counting. This is an elliptical verse. [The subject of חָדַל is missing.]

**because there was no number** Heb. כִּי because there was no number, and here כִּי is used as an expression of “because.”

**50** **before the year of the famine set in** From here is derived that a person may not engage in marital relations during years of famine.-[from Ta’anith 11a]

**55** **When the entire land of Egypt hungered** For their grain, which they had stored, had decayed, except that of Joseph.-[from Mid. Tanchuma Mikeitz 7]

**what he tells you, do** Since Joseph had ordered them to circumcise themselves, and when they came to Pharaoh and said, “This is what he said to us,” he (Pharaoh) said to them, “Why didn’t you gather grain? Didn’t he announce to you that years of famine were coming?” They replied, “We gathered much, but it rotted.” He (Pharaoh) replied, “If so, do whatever he tells you. He issued a decree upon the grain, and it rotted. What if he issues a decree upon us and we die?” -[from *Mid. Tanchuma Mikeitz* 7, *Gen. Rabbah*91:5]

**56** **Now the famine spread over all the face of the land** Heb. פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ. Who are the face of the land? These are the rich.-[from Gen. Rabbah 91:5]

**all [the storehouses] in which there was** As the *Targum* renders: in which there was grain.

**and he sold [it] to the Egyptians** Heb. וַיִּשְׁבֹּר לְמִצְרַיִם. The word SHEVER is [sometimes] an expression of selling and [sometimes] an expression of buying. Here it is used as an expression of selling. [In the verse] “Return, buy (שִׁבְרוּ) us a little food” (Gen. 43:2), it is an expression of buying. Do not say that it applies only to grain, for also with wine and milk we find: “and go buy (שִׁבְרוּ) without money and without a price, wine and milk” (Isa. 55:1).

**57** **And all [the inhabitants of] the land came to Egypt**-to Joseph to purchase, but if you interpret it (this verse) according to its sequence, it should have been written: “to purchase from (MIN) Joseph.”

**1** **Jacob saw that there was grain being sold in Egypt** From where did he see it? Is it not true that he did not see it, only that he heard of it, as it is said: “Behold, I have heard, etc.” (verse 2) ? What then is the meaning of “saw”? He saw with the divine “mirror” that he still had hope (שֶׁבֶר) in Egypt, but it was not a real prophecy to explicitly inform him that this was Joseph.-[from *Gen. Rabbah* 91:6]

**Why do you appear satiated?”** Heb. לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ. Why do you show yourselves before the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Esau as if you are satiated? For at that time they still had grain (*Ta’anith* 10b). (And it appears to me that it should be explained according to its simple meaning: לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ-Why should everyone stare at you and wonder at you that you are not seeking food for yourselves before what you have in your hands is depleted.) From others I heard that it (תִּתְרָאוּ) is an expression of emaciation. [Thus:] Why should you become emaciated because of the famine? Similar to this is “And he who emaciates [others] (וּמַרְוֶה)—he too will become emaciated (יוֹרֶא)” (Prov. 11:25)

**2** **Go down there** Heb. רְדוּ. But he did not say, “Go (L’KHU).” He alluded to the 210 years that they were enslaved in Egypt, according to the numerical value of רְדוּ.-[from Gen Rabbah 91:2, Tan. Mikeitz 8]

**3** **So Joseph’s…brothers went down** But Scripture did not write “the sons of Jacob.” This teaches that they regretted selling him and decided to behave toward him in a brotherly manner and to ransom him for whatever amount of money would be demanded of them.-[from *Gen. Rabbah* 91:6, *Tan. Mikeitz* 8]

**ten** Why is this written? Is it not written, (verse 4) “But Joseph’s brother, Benjamin, Jacob did not send”? [It is therefore obvious that they were only ten.] But [this is what it means:] concerning brotherhood, they were divided into ten, for neither the love they all had for him (Joseph) nor the hate they all had for him was equal, [hence, in the attitude of brotherhood, they were divided into ten.] As concerning buying grain, they all were of one accord (lit., one heart). -[from *Gen. Rabbah* 91:2]

**4** **“Lest misfortune befall him.”** And at home, could not misfortune befall him? Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov said: From here [we learn] that Satan accuses [a person] at the time of danger.-[from *Gen. Rabbah* 91: 9]

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms)** ‎‎‎**35:19-28**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| 19. Let them not rejoice over me, those who are my enemies for an unjust cause, neither shall those who hate me for nought wink their eyes. | 19. Let not my enemies rejoice over me with a lie, those who hate me without cause, winking with their eyes. |
| 20. For they do not speak peace, and against the crushed people of the earth they think words of deceit. | 20. For they do not speak peace; and against the righteous/generous of the earth who have rest in this world they plot devious things. |
| 21. And they opened their mouth wide against me and they said, "Aha! Aha! Our eyes have seen [what we desired]." | 21. And they have opened their mouth wide against me and said, "Joy! Joy! Our eye has seen it!" |
| 22. You saw, O Lord, do not be silent; O Lord, do not distance Yourself from me. | 22. You have seen, O LORD, do not be silent; O LORD, be not far from me. |
| 23. Arouse Yourself and awaken to my judgment, my God and my Lord, to my cause. | 23. Wake and be alert to my cause, O my God; the LORD is the victor in my dispute. |
| 24. Judge me according to Your righteousness, O Lord, my God, and let them not rejoice over me. | 24. Judge me by Your generosity, O LORD my God, and they will not rejoice over me. |
| 25. Let them not say in their hearts, "Our soul rejoices." Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up." | 25. Let them not say in their heart, "Our soul is glad"; lest they say, "We have finished him." |
| 26. Let them be ashamed and abashed together, those who rejoice at my misfortune; let them be clothed in shame and disgrace, those who raise themselves haughtily over me. | 26. Let those who rejoice at my harm be ashamed and subdued together; let those who vaunt themselves over me be clothed with shame and disgrace. |
| 27. Let those who desire my vindication sing praises and rejoice, and let them constantly say, "May the Lord, Who desires the peace of His servant, be magnified." | 27. May those who seek my vindication be glad and rejoice and say always, "May the glory of the LORD be great, He who desires the peace of His servant." |
| 28. And my tongue shall utter Your righteousness, Your praise all day long. | 28. And my tongue will sing of Your generosity, all the day of Your praise. |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Tehillim (Psalms)** ‎‎‎‎**35:19-28**

**19 those who are my enemies** for an unjust cause who hate me because of a false matter, that they testify against me what never entered my mind. Let them not rejoice at my downfall.

**who hate me**Let those who hate me not wink their eyes at me, to mock my downfall with their eyes. יקרצו means seynt in Old French, signal.

**20 and against the crushed people of the earth** Heb. רגעי , on the crushed people of the earth, and so (in Jer. 31:34): “Who stirs up (רגע) the sea”; (Job 7:5), “my skin wrinkled (רגע) .” And so did Dunash explain it.

**21 Aha! Aha!** Heb. האח , an expression of joy of one who boasts with the lust of his heart, out of their [sic] great joy, that they see their lust gratified.

**23 Arouse Yourself**and awaken the heavenly retinue to judge my cause from my enemies.

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 35:19-28**

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

For the sake of continuity, I am going to repeat my intro from last week.

The superscription of this psalm attributes authorship to David. David concluded the preceding psalm with the hopeful declaration of his belief that, HaShem redeems the soul of His servants. Now, he requests that this Divine attribute be put into practice, and he pleads with G-d to redeem him from the menace of his many enemies.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Radak comments that David composed this psalm while fleeing from Saul According to Sforno, these verses record David's pleas as he fled from his rebellious son, Absalom.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In our portion of Psalms, there are ten short verses in which there is constant usaeage of words like rejoice, speak, mouth, say, words, sing and tongue. All of these kinds of words hint to *voice* and *speech*. So, I thought it would be worthwhile to explaore the Torah concept of voice and speech. Thus we understand that this chapter of Psalms is relating to two different ways of communicating. There must exist a difference between the sound produced by the *tongue* and the sound produced from the *voice*.

In the physical structure of the body, there is a manifestation of the idea of connection which is inherent in the power of speech. It is no accident that the *voice* is produced in the neck. Voice, kol, is the root of speech, the power of connecting worlds; the neck is that part of the human form which connects head and body, the higher and lower domains. The body always reflects its spiritual roots.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This parallel goes further. If we look more closely, we note that the voice is produced in the throat, which is at the front of the neck. The deeper tradition states that the front of a structure represents its positive power; the back represents its lower, or fallen, aspect. The front of the body in general represents positivity, the face is a feature of the front, not the back. Human relationship is possible when people face each other and difficult when they turn their backs. The back is blind, impersonal, and it is the location of offensive excretion. These things are all exquisitely specific features of the human pattern.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Now we note that the front of the neck contains the organ of voice production; the back of the neck is silent. In fact, the deeper wisdom states that the front of the neck, or throat, is identified with Moshe Rabbenu, after all, Moshe is the voice of Torah; HaShem speaks through Moshe’s throat. ”The Divine Presence speaks from Moshe’s throat.” The same sources state that Moshe’s arch-enemy, Pharaoh, is represented by the back of the neck,[[5]](#footnote-5) he is the one who strives for the opposite of that which Moshe Rabbenu wishes to achieve; Pharaoh’s goal is to keep the Divine voice out of the world, to silence the voice of the spiritual.[[6]](#footnote-6) Moshe Rabbenu’s task is to achieve connection, the ultimate connection of spiritual and physical worlds; Pharaoh’s work is to separate those worlds. Arch-enemies indeed. And the letters of the word Pharaoh”, when reversed, spell “ha’oref”, the back of the neck![[7]](#footnote-7)

Just as a voice travels up the throat and out the lips, so also does a ladder reach up to the heights and bring what is low, high. With this description, it is worth noting that the numerical value of the word “sulam - סולם” (ladder) is the same as that of the word “kol - קול”, meaning voice or sound. Hence, in the Kabbalah, the pasuk:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 27:22*** *And Yaaqob went near unto Yitzchak his father; and he felt him, and said: ‘The voice* (HaKol - הקול) *is the voice* (Kol - קול) *of Yaaqob, but the hands are the hands of Esav’.*

This means that the voice or sound of Yaaqob is the ladder of Yaaqob.[[8]](#footnote-8) The means of ascent, the ladder, is a progression of sounds, which lead up to, and are absorbed into, the total unity of Chakmah - חכמה.[[9]](#footnote-9) The ladder connects the lower to the higher, just as the voice connects[[10]](#footnote-10) the lower and higher worlds.

It is clear that the voice, whether the tone, the tenor, or the volume, communicates what is in the lower body, specifically what is in the heart. The voice contains the soul of the person, that part which is unspoken and ethereal. Note well how the emotions, the soul, are carried in the kol, in the following excerpt from a shiur by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss:

*Plato[[11]](#footnote-11) and other philosophers questioned and indeed attacked the written word as inadequate. They hypothesized that when one reads something from a written text they might misinterpret the meaning and intent of the author. Conversely, when giving over a thought verbally, one has the ability to create a dialogue with the presenter and elucidate those areas of concerns and questions.*

*Throughout the Torah and the prophets there are references to this special kol that was transmitted, and each time it appears, one can feel the sensitivities and anguish, the majesty and omnipotence that is represented by this word.*

A few examples*; When Almighty G-d first appeared to Adam after he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam, with terrible fright and trepidation, said to G-d, “I heard your kol in the garden, and I was frightened, for I am naked and so I hid”.[[12]](#footnote-12) In the voice of Adam one can feel the terror and the panic of the kol of Almighty G-d.*

*When Cain killed Abel, G-d said the kol of the blood of your brother are calling out to me from the earth”.[[13]](#footnote-13) One can only imagine this sound, a sound of foreboding and sadness, of Abel’s wailing.*

*When Yitzchak bestowed his blessings on Yaaqob and not on Esav, he uttered the words “the kol is the kol of Yaaqob but the hands are those of Esav”.[[14]](#footnote-14) Yaaqob’s kol was soothing and sensitive, caring and compassionate; not so the harsh kol of Esav his brother.*

*Finally, after the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments, the Torah states, “And the entire nation saw the kolot.[[15]](#footnote-15) They felt through this sound the majesty and power and the omnipotence of Almighty G-d.*

*The mention of kol is referenced in dozens of places in the Torah, and each time it appears, one is filled with wonder and amazement in its powerful and profound implication and meaning. One thing is for sure; this kol is a key element that sustained the Jewish people throughout the ages and has enabled us to survive the travails of our history and glorify in the triumphs of our victories.*

*One is reminded of the “the still voice” of our prayers ascending to heaven on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippurim, and the words of King David:[[16]](#footnote-16) “There is no speech or words that their kol goes unheard”.*

*G-d endowed us with the unwritten Torah, because he knew that this kol, our kol, was vitally important for our survival. Our Rabbis emphasize that when one is studying Torah it is not sufficient to read only with one’s eyes; there must also be a kol, the same kol that was heard repeatedly in our history, the same kol that parents have sung for generations to their children in time of pain and times of promise.*

*Every day we must sensitize ourselves to continue to say and hear this kol and commit ourselves to G-d’s calling, that this same kol that has strengthened us during our centuries of dispersion will continue to support our people in hastening the coming of our Messiah in our days.*

Kol is the essential voice or sound that the listener hears (rather than the specific words that the caller may be utilizing). One example of Kol is someone calling my name. I don’t know what the specific message (dibur) is going to be, but when I’m called, I honor the caller by responding. In responding, I am reacting to the caller as a person, not to the words being spoken. Kol is primal. In utilizing kol I am making all of myself available to the other person. Another example of kol might be a certain kind of whisper. The whisper itself can express a depth of relationship more profoundly than the words chosen for articulation. The shofar is a kol, it is all sound and no words.

Kol is unfettered by the specifics of the message. It is a degree of expression that requires no words because it is the projection of the essence of the caller. The message is the person, pure G-dliness without filtering or manipulation. Dibur[[17]](#footnote-17) (we will explore this in a bit) conveys the thoughts of the person’s mind, but kol projects the very person himself.

Vayikra (lit. *And He called*) means the caller is utilizing kol and projecting all of his selfhood, his most essential and G-dly part, onto the listener. As a result, the kol itself creates a communion between the caller and the listener.

As an aside, the above idea is part of Moshe’s life: *Moses was the greatest prophet who ever lived. No prophet who lived or will live could comprehend G-d more than Moses.*[[18]](#footnote-18) To understand this, let’s briefly look at:

***Shemot (Exodus) 6:28 – 7:2 28*** *And it came to pass on the day when HaShem spoke* (Dibur) *unto Moses in the land of Egypt,* ***29*** *that HaShem spoke* (Dibur) *unto Moses, saying: ‘I am HaShem; speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak unto thee.’* ***30*** *And Moses said before HaShem: ‘Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?’* ***1*** *And HaShem said unto Moses: ‘See, I have set thee in God’s stead to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.* ***2*** *Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.*

Notice, in the above pasuk, that Moshe is commanded twice to speak unto Paro. The first time he protests, because he has uncircumcised lips. The second time he goes without complaint.

So, what made Moshe change his mind?

Our Sages indicate that between the first and the second command, HaShem told Moshe that Aharon would be his prophet; despite the fact that Torah law forbids one prophet from saying the message given to another prophet! HaShem, then, tells Moshe that Aharon will not speak the message HaShem gives to Moshe, but rather, Moshe will BECOME THE MESSAGE that Aharon will speak out!!! That is the meaning of the words: ‘See, I have set thee in G-d’s stead to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet’.

Now we know why Mainmonides made Principle number 7 a unique principle:[[19]](#footnote-19) Moshe’s prophecy was *qualitatively* different from all other prophets because he became the message that Aharon, his prophet, spoke out into the world, so much for this aside.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The essence of korbanot is direct communication with HaShem on a primal level, unfettered and unmanipulated; with korbanot we give all of ourselves to HaShem. For this reason, the Sefer which contains the mitzvot[[21]](#footnote-21) of korbanot, signifying the relationship between HaShem and Klal Israel at its most essential, *kol*, aspect, is appropriately named Vayikra, “And He called”.

The most primal kol is that of the shofar. *Shofrot* (*shofar-*blowing) indicates, along the lines we have been discussing, reaching for the heart, reaching for the root of the *soul* and the personality. The essence of the *shofar* is that it has a voice, a kol – קול, but no words, no dibur - דיבור. The mystics explain that the voice is the root of speech and contains far more than the individual finite words. Words may convey information, but the voice conveys the person. This is why prophecy is referred to as “voice”, not words. When HaShem tells Avraham to listen to Sarah’s prophetic advice the verse says *“Shema b’kola* - Listen to her *voice”*, not “Listen to her words”.

***Bereshit (Genesis 21:12)*** *Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her* ***voice****.*

The word *voice* seems extraneous here. The verse could also have read, “Whatever Sarah tells you, heed her”. Why is the word “voice” added? The Torah commentator Rashi[[22]](#footnote-22) states that the word *voice* refers to prophecy and that this verse, “teaches us that Avraham was secondary to Sarah in prophecy”.

In his commentary on this verse, Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch suggested that G-d was really telling Abraham, “Don’t only listen to her words, her demands; listen to your wife’s anguish, her fear, the tone of pleading the voice of the woman you have been married to for so many years”. In other words, the emotion in our voice is as important as the words which emerge from our mouths.

G-d in effect tells Abraham to trust the “voice” of his wife. This trust provides a tikkun for the mistrust left by Adam and Chava.

HaShem tells the prophet *“Kra b’garon, al tachsoch -* Cry out in your *throat,* do not hold back”;[[23]](#footnote-23) prophecy is not from the mouth, the origin of words, but from the throat, the origin of raw sound, which is why the Prophet compares the voice to a shofar. The blessing we pronounce on hearing the *shofar* is *“lishmo’a kol shofar”,* to “hear the *voice* of the *shofar”.* The *shofar* is raw sound, a raw cry, and that is why it has the power to open the *neshama, the soul.* All the words in the world cannot convey the emotion of a scream of a child in the night. The *shofar* is that scream.

The Zohar distinguishes between *kol* (voice), which we just looked at, and *dibur* (speech). *Kol* is the cry behind the speech, *dibur* is the expression of that impulse through words. Keep this in mind as we begin examining speech.

**Speech**

In the Torah, there is no conception of intellect or imagination separate from physical speech,[[24]](#footnote-24) even reflective thought is called “speaking to one’s heart”. The midrash[[25]](#footnote-25) and the targumim,[[26]](#footnote-26) from the earliest texts on, understand the power of language or speech to be a major part of what distinguishes humanity from other species.[[27]](#footnote-27) In a similar vein, Targum Onkelos[[28]](#footnote-28) translates “nefesh chayah” in Genesis 2:7 as, “And He blew in his nostrils life’s breath and it became in Adam the spirit (i.e., power) of speaking”.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Speech is the world of connection.[[30]](#footnote-30) Understood simply, speech connects the speaker[[31]](#footnote-31) and the listener. A relationship can develop, can flourish, because deep communication is possible by means of speech. In Torah, “speaking” is sometimes used as a euphemism for intimacy (“They saw her speaking with one…”) *This is not a usage borrowed from a distance*; the parallel is intrinsic.

At a deeper level, speech represents the connection between higher and lower worlds. Speech is the mechanism by which an abstract idea which exists only in the higher dimension of thought can be brought down into the material world: when I speak, I transform ideas into the physical medium of sound, which is tangible enough for you to hear with the physical tools of hearing. Of course, you immediately transform my words back into their abstract state of ideas in your own mind. We have used the physical medium of speech to transmit non-physical ideas; we have connected the abstract with the material. We have brought the higher world into the lower world.

Prophecy is a higher form of speech. When a prophet speaks, a direct connection is formed between higher and lower worlds. Human *speech* reveals the thoughts and intentions of the speaker (based on the chakmah, the wisdom from HaShem), while *prophecy* reveals the thoughts and intentions of the Divine.

Divine speech is ultimately potent in its creativity. The expression used for speech is, “fruit of the lips”. The prophet states that HaShem’s word always bears fruit, “For as the rain… descends from the Heavens and shall not return there until it has caused the land to flourish and it has given birth and caused to sprout, and given seed to the sower… *So shall be My word*…”

Speech is also the act of taking something which lives in potential, i.e. thoughts, and bringing them down into the world and making them tangible; they are brought into the world of action. Speech is the connection between the higher and lower worlds.

One of the first obstacles to understanding the fourth book of the Chumash,[[32]](#footnote-32) Bamidbar,[[33]](#footnote-33) is thinking of it as a book. Bamidbar literally means “in the desert”.[[34]](#footnote-34) But, the root of *midbar*, desert, is “MiDibur - מדיבור”[[35]](#footnote-35) which means literally means “from speech”, but used with the prefix bet, means a “place of speech or speaking”,[[36]](#footnote-36) a place where thought is translated into action. Dibur is speaking to someone with articulate, verbal communication.

When the Jewish People left Egypt, they went straight into the desert. There’s something special about the desert. It’s very difficult to give directions there. “Turn left at the third cactus” will not get you very far. In Hebrew, the word for desert is “midbar”, which is from the root mi’dibur, “from speech”. The desert is the place that is removed from speech. Since the desert is the maximum place of non-speech, of non-direction, it is the ideal place to rebuild the power of speech from the ground up.

And that’s what the Jewish People were to do in the desert. When the Jewish People left Egypt, they had to rebuild this power of speech that had been in exile with them. The  Zohar[[37]](#footnote-37) says that the Divine Word (*dibur*) went into exile during the period of Egyptian slavery and was not totally liberated until the Giving of the Torah when G-d spoke directly to every Jew.

To help us rebuild the power of speech, after the exile, HaShem gave us the mitzvot of the Pesach seder.

The fifth stage of the sedar is called *maggid* (storytelling) and it is one of two Torah-level mitzvot that are fulfilled by the evening’s ritual. (The second is eating matzah.) And *maggid* is further distinguished as one of the two mitzvot *(*out of 613) that are fulfilled by reciting a story. (The second being the tithe of bikkurim). The *maggid* portion of the Haggada actually combines both of these “speaking” mitzvot. It begins with several short passages that are directed toward the children who might not stay awake for the whole Seder. And then it segues into a Torah portion that was to be spoken aloud when we offered our first fruits to the kohanim (Temple priests).[[38]](#footnote-38) The *maggid* is a brief narrative of our exile in Egypt, our redemption, and the source of our obligation to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim*. In the Passover haggada, every word of this script is unpacked and elaborated.[[39]](#footnote-39) This is true dibur, true speech.

The whole point of the telling is to take dibur us, and speech, out of exile and use us in HaShem’s service.

The Zohar tells us that one of the first reforms inaugurated by the newly emergent conscience was to institute freedom of speech. Actually, it was more organic than that. As soon as the balance of power inverted, the gates of inspiration opened and speech emerged from exile.

*As an aside*, Each book of the Torah deals with particular millennium, thousand-year periods. They prophecy to that millennium as follows:

The story of Creation in Sefer *Bereshit* represents the **first millennium** of the world’s existence;

the rest of *Bereshit* refers to the **second millennium**;

Sefer *Shemot* tells of the **third millennium**;

Sefer *Vayikra*, the **fourth millennium**;

Sefer *Bamidbar*, the **fifth millennium** and

Sefer *Debarim*, the **sixth millennium**. Each of the ten parshiyot in Debarim (with Netzavim[[40]](#footnote-40) and Vayelech[[41]](#footnote-41) counted as one) represents one century of the sixth millennium.

Now lets return to our discussion of speech.

The ultimate liberation of *dibur*, called Oral Torah, is when a person speaks personal truth with such authenticity that it also conveys precisely what HaShem sought to reveal through them.  The Talmud declares: “HaShem’s seal is truth”[[42]](#footnote-42) meaning that “Where you find truth, [you find HaShem, and] there you find Torah”.[[43]](#footnote-43) Now let’s return to that time just after dibur, and us slaves, were freed. Let’s see the desert experience and the effects it had on dipur, speech.

If we look back over the Book of Bamidbar, the book of “In the desert”, we will notice all of the events dealt with speech. Let me say that again: *Every event is Sefer Bamidbar deals with speech, for the most part it deals with the misuse of speech*. Consider the following examples:

**Chapter 1: The first census where the eleven tribes were counted** (the Levites were NOT counted, which is a story unto itself). It is well known that a “teller” counts money and one who retells a story is said to “recount” it. Thus, we understand that counting is another way of telling a story.

**Chapter 2: The camping order**. We all understand that there is non-verbal speech that has no sound. The order of the tribes in the desert was one such speech. Note that each tribe had a place and each tribe had its own banner. The story of chapter one continued with a precise count for each of the eleven tribes.

**Chapter 3 & 4: HaShem’s speech and plans** regarding the tribe of Levi and their service. The Levites count is now included as part of their speech. As part of this census, money is used to give a silent speech about the redemption of the remainder of the firstborn Levites.

**Chapter 5: Speaks of leprosy**, the mis-use of speech for lashon HaRa, evil speech. This pasuk also contains the speech of a sinner when he confesses his sin, and the testimony of the woman suspected of adultery (sota).

**Chapter 6: Speaks of the nazirite vow**, another form of speech. This pasuk also details the aaronic blessing given to the Bne Israel, another form of speech.

**Chapter 7: Speaks of the dedication of the offerings** of the tribes. These non-verbal speeches each spoke to the uniqueness of their tribe (despite the fact that they were all the same). This pasuk concludes with HaShem speaking with Moshe.

**Chapter 8: Details the lighting of the menorah, the purification of the Levites,** with their offerings. This chapter contains HaShem’s speech in the form of instructions.

**Chapter 9: Continues HaShem’s speech regards Pesach observance**. This pasuk also details the marching instruction speech that HaShem gave to Moshe. These detailed instructions also told their own story.

**Chapter 10: Finds the Bne Israel making two silver trumpets** to be used to instruct the Bne Israel on marching and camping. Unlike a plain blast, or a crying blast, these blasts were instructive and carried a specific message. This pasuk also details the marching order, another non-verbal speech that was spoken with all of the bodies of every man, woman, and child.

**Chapter 11: Murmuring, speaking evil**. HaShem’s fire devoured the evil-speakers. This pasuk also speaks of the lust for meat and its murmuring. This murmuring was complaining about manna. This pasuk also speaks of the 70 elders becoming prophets.

**Chapter 12: Miriam speaking negatively** about Moshe because of the Cushite. Miriam is afflicted with Tzaraat, leprosy.

**Chapter 13: The spies speaking against the Land of Israel**.

**Chapter 14: The people all crying and maligning the land**. The people are all murmuring.

**Chapter 15: Offerings and atonement**. Man collecting firewood on the Sabbath is stoned. This pasuk also contains the command of tzitzit.

**Chapter 16 & 17: The rebellion of Korach** (a rebellion about who should lead the Jewish People; who should be its “speaker”).

**Chapter 18: Aharon and his sons get the priesthood**. This soliloquy is by HaShem.

**Chapter 19: The red heifer**. She, too, has a non-verbal message.

**Chapter 20: Murmuring over the lack of water** because Miriam’s well has disappeared. Edom denied passage. Moshe striking the rock instead of speaking to it. Aharon dies and the people wail for him for 30 days.

**Chapter 21: The Bne Israel make a vow to destroy their enemy**. The people murmured against HaShem regarding the manna. They also complained that there was no water. HaShem will send fiery serpents with a pole serpent for the cure. Sihon and Og are defeated.

**Chapter 22, 23, & 24: Bilaam and Balak to curse the Jewish people**. Here we see a donkey’s speech, a Gentile prophet’s speech, and the evil speech of Balak.

**Chapter 25: False worship of Peor**. Phineas kills Zimri and Cosbi.

**Chapter 26: A second census**. Thus we understand that counting is another way of telling a story. Nadab and Abihu die after offering strange fire.

**Chapter 27: The daughters of Tzelafchad want land**. Women always have a greater love for the land.[[44]](#footnote-44) Yehoshua is anointed as the future leader of the Bne Israel.

**Chapter 28 & 29: Offerings made by fire**, and festivals.

**Chapter 30: Vows**. Here we see the proper and the improper use of vows.

**Chapter 31: Midianites are avenged**. All the men and married women are killed. Spoil is divided, part for HaShem (Levites).

**Chapter 32: Reuben and Gad want the land east of the Jordan**. There is a back and forth between them and Moshe. Reuben and Gad put animals before the children, in priority. Moshe, rearranges the order to put the children first.

**Chapter 33: The story of the journey**. Frome Egypt to the Promised land and all the stops in-between.

**Chapter 34: HaShem defines the borders of the land**.

**Chapter 35: The cities of refuge**.

**Chapter 36: Moshe allots the daughters of Tzelafchad their inheritance in the land**.

Even if we might otherwise have missed the centrality of this notion, the book’s ‘*orality’* is brought to our attention right from the start: “These are the words that Moshe spoke.” The text clues us in to the fact that, as opposed to the other four books, Bamidbar, to its very core, is an oral work.

The fourth of the five layers upon which the world is built, is the layer of speech. The fourth part of any structure is where all of the action is taking place. Consider the Chumash, the five books of the Torah.

**Bereshit** – something from nothing. – Ratzon (desire). This is the point of origin. This is a male process. This sefer represents the maximal male process.

**Shemot** – machshavah, a thought with no form. by which the soul is revealed inwardly. It will be revealed externally in Bamidbar as “speech” (*dibur*) and “deed”. A flash of inspiration.

**Vayikra** – Hirhur – imagination. The thoughts become explicit. The plan becomes complete. The Mishna teaches that Hirhur (thought) is k'dibur (like speech). If not, there would be no reason to have Hirhur! Hirhur is not like Dibur. If it were, he should say the words![[45]](#footnote-45)

**Bamidbar** – dibur also means a place of speaking, a thought translated into action – Speech - Any translation of plan into action. This is where the potential is turned into the actual.

The whole book speaks to speech and the misuse of speech, every incident.

And where do we go after the rebuilding, the tikkun, of the power of speech? To the “Book of Devarim”, literally, “The Book of Words”.

**Devarim** – The words that were spoken. Maser – action – kol and dibur (voice and speech). All of this sefer’s duplicated commands are the commands needed in eretz Israel.

The recipient, this sefer, gives back what she has received from the male (Bereshit). Debarim represents the maximal female level. That is why the words are repeated, or doubled, the job of a woman. This is the root of the oral law.

Conclusion:

There is a lot to comprehend when we examine voice and speech through Torah eyes. We have just scratched the surface.

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) ‎‎‎‎11:2-10 + 16‎**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 33. ¶ Behold the Master, the Lord of Hosts lops off the branches with a saw, and those of lofty height are hewn down, and the tall one shall be humbled. | 33. ¶ Behold, the Master of the world, the LORD of hosts casts slaughter amongst his armies as grapes trodden in the press; and the great stature will be hewn down and the strong will be humbled. |
| 34. And the thickets of the forests shall be cut off with iron, and the Lebanon shall fall through a mighty one.   **{S}** | 34. And He will slay the mighty men of his armies who make themselves mighty with iron, and his warriors will be cast on the land of Israel.  **{S}** |
|   |   |
| 1, **And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse, and a twig shall sprout from his roots.** | 1. **And a king will come forth from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah will be exalted from the sons of his sons.** |
| 2. And **the spirit of the Lord** shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and heroism, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. | 2. And **a spirit before the ‎LORD** will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ‎‎ |
| 3. And he shall be animated by the fear of the Lord, and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge, nor with the hearing of his ears shall he chastise. | 3. And the LORD will bring him near to His fear. And he will not judge by the sight of his eyes, and he will not reprove by the hearing ‎of his ears; |
| 4. And he shall judge the poor justly, and he shall chastise with equity the humble of the earth, **and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall put the wicked to death.** | 4. but in truth [of the Torah] he will judge the poor, and reprove with faithfulness for the needy of the [Jewish] people; **and he will strike the sinners ‎of the land with the commandments of his mouth, and with the speaking of his lips the wicked will die.** |
| 5. **And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faith the girdle of his loins.** | 5. **And the righteous/generous will be all around ‎him, and the faithfully obedient will be brought near him.** |
| 6. And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid; and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling [shall lie] together, and a small child shall lead them. | 6. In the days of the Messiah of Israel will peace increase in the land, and the wolf ‎will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little suckling ‎child will lead them. |
| 7. And a cow and a bear shall graze together, their children shall lie; and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw. | 7. The cow and the bear will feed; their young will lie down together; and the lion will eat straw like the ox. |
| 8. And an infant shall play over the hole of an old snake and over the eyeball of an adder, a weaned child shall stretch forth his hand. | 8. And the suckling child will play over the hole of an asp, and the weaned child will put his hands on the adder's eyeballs. |
| 9. They shall neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mount, for the land shall be full of knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea bed. **{S}** | 9. They will not ‎hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the fear of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.**{S}** |
| 10. **And it shall come to pass on that day, that the root of Jesse, which stands as a banner for peoples, to him shall the nations inquire, and his peace shall be [with] honor.**   **{P}** | 10. **And it will come to pass in that time that to the son of the son of Jesse who is about to stand as an ensign to the [Gentile] peoples, to him will kingdoms ‎be obedient, and his resting place will be glorious. {P}** |
| 11. And it shall come to pass that on that day, the Lord shall continue to apply His hand a second time to acquire the rest of His people, that will remain from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros and from Cush and from Elam and from Sumeria and from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. | 11. And it will come to pass in that time that the LORD will extend His might yet a second ‎time to deliver the remnant of His people which is left, from Assyria, and from Egypt and from Pathros, and from India, and from Elarn, and ‎from Babylon, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. |
| 12. And He shall raise a banner to the nations, and He shall gather the lost of Israel, and the scattered ones of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the earth. | 12. And He will raise an ensign for the Gentile peoples, and will assemble the ‎outcasts of Israel, and bring near the exile of Judah from the four winds of the earth. |
| 13. **And the envy of Ephraim shall cease, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off**; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor shall Judah vex Ephraim. | 13. **And jealousy will pass from those of the house ‎of Ephraim, and ‎ those who distress from those of the house of Judah will be destroyed.** Those of the house of Ephraim will not be jealous of those of the ‎house of Judah, and those of the house of Judah will not distress those of the house of Ephraim. |
| 14. And they shall fly of one accord against the Philistines in the west, together they shall plunder the children of the East; upon Edom and Moab shall they stretch forth their hand, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. | 14. And they will ally themselves, ‎shoulder to shoulder, to strike the Philistines who are in the west, together they will plunder the sons of the east. They will put forth their hand‎against Edom and Moab, and the sons of Ammon will be obedient to them. |
| 15. And the Lord shall dry up the tongue of the Egyptian Sea, and He shall lift His hand over the river with the strength of His wind, and He shall beat it into seven streams, and He shall lead [the exiles] with shoes. | 15. And the LORD will dry up the tongue of the sea of Egypt, ‎and will lift up the stroke of His might against the Euphrates by His prophets' command, and strike it into seven streams, and they will walk ‎in it with sandals. |
| 16. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people who remain from Assyria, as there was for Israel on the day they went up from the land of Egypt. | 16. And there will be a highway for the remnant of His people which is left from the Assyrian, as there was for Israel in ‎the day they came up from the land of Egypt. ‎ |

 **Rashi’s Commentary for: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 11:2-10, +16‎‎‎‎‎ ‎**

**33 Behold the Master** on that night.

**lops off the branches with a saw** Shall lop off its branches, the root of the branches of his trees. ([Mss. read:] Uproots the branches of his trees.) ([Other mss. read:] Cuts off the branches of his trees.)

**with a saw** Heb. בְּמַעֲרָצָה , with a saw that cuts the boughs. This [word פֻּארָה ] is not an expression denoting a winepress, for it is not spelled with a ‘vav,’ like (infra 63:3) “A winepress (פּוּרָה) I trod,” and like (Haggai 2:16) “To draw off fifty measures from the winepress (פּוּרָה) ,” but with an ‘aleph,’ like (Ezekiel 31:5) “And its boughs became long (פּֽארֽתָיו) .” מְסָעֵף is an expression of cutting off branches [esbranchier in O.F.], like (infra 27:10) “And he will destroy its branches (סְעִיפֶיהָ) , and (infra 17:6) “On its branches (בִּסְעִיפֶיהָ) the fruitful one.”

**with a saw** Heb. בְּמַעֲרָצָה , with an implement of destruction, which breaks them.

**and those of lofty height** [This alludes to] the heroes.

**are hewn down** The expression of hewing is apropos only to trees and hard things.

**34 And...shall be cut off** Heb. וְנִקַּף . This, too, is an expression of cutting, as (ibid.) “Like one who cuts off olives (כְּנֽקֶף) .” ואךדרְנִקַּף is in the passive voice.

**the thickets of the forests**The prominent branches, symbolizing the heroes.

**and the Lebanon** The thickness of his forest and his stately forest. They are the multitudes of his armies.

**shall fall through a mighty one** Through an angel they shall fall. Alternatively, through a mighty one, in the merit of Hezekiah who is the mighty one and the rulers of Israel, as it is said (Jer. 30:21): “And their leader shall be of themselves.”

**Chapter 11**

**1 And a shoot shall spring forth from the stem of Jesse** And if you say, ‘Here are consolations for Hezekiah and his people, that they shall not fall into his hands. Now what will be with the exile that was exiled to Halah and Habor, is their hope lost?’ It is not lost! Eventually, the King Messiah shall come and redeem them.

**a shoot** [This is symbolic of] the royal scepter.

**and a twig** an expression of a sapling.

**and a twig shall sprout from its roots** and the entire section, and at the end (v. 11), “And it shall come to pass, that on that day, the Lord shall apply His hand again...[from Assyria]...Hence, [it is obvious] that this prophecy was said to console those exiled to Assyria.

**3 And he shall be animated by the fear of the Lord** He shall be filled with the fear of the Lord. [ed enos mera il luy in O. F., and He shall be enlivened.]

**and neither with the sight of his eyes shall he judge** For, with the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, which is within him, will he know and understand who is innocent and who is guilty.

**4 with equity** This is an expression of mildness and tenderness.

**and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth** As the Targum states: And he shall smite the sinful of the earth.

**and with the breath of his lips** Jonathan [renders:] And with the speech of his lips.

**5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins** Jonathan [renders:] And the righteous shall surround him; i.e., they will cleave to him like a girdle.

**6 and a fatling a fattened ox** [following Jonathan].

**8 shall play** Heb. וְשִׁעֲשַׁע , shall play.

**over the hole of an old snake** over a hole in the ground in which the snake makes its nest [krot in O.F.], a cave.

**an old snake** פֶּתֶן . A snake, when it ages, becomes deaf and is called פֶּתֶן . From then on, it cannot be charmed; as it is said (Psalms 58:6): “Who will not hearken to the voice of charmers.”

**and over the eyeball of a venomous snake** Jonathan renders: the eyeballs of venomous snakes [ מְאוּרַת from אוֹר , light]. Menahem (Machbereth Menachem p. 32) interpreted it as an expression of a hole, namely holes in the ground. Comp. (Gen. 11:28) “The valley of the Chaldees (אוּר) ”; (infra 24:15) “In the valleys (בָּאוּרִים) honor the Lord.”

**a weaned child** a child weaned from his mother’s breasts.

**shall stretch forth his hand** Heb. הָדָה . Jonathan renders: shall stretch forth his hands (sic). Comp. (Ezekiel 7:7) “The joyful call (הֵד) of the mountains, also (infra 16: 9) “The cry (הֵידָד) ,” which is an expression of raising the voice. This, too, is an expression of raising, and the final [letter] ‘heh’ appears in it as a radical which sometimes falls out, like עָשָׂה (made), בָּנָה (built), קָנָה (acquired).

**9 knowledge of the Lord** [lit.] to know the Lord.

**10 as a banner for peoples** that peoples should raise a banner to gather to him.

**11 a second time**Just as he acquired them from Egypt, when their redemption was absolute, without subjugation, but the redemption preceding the building of the Second Temple is not counted, since they were subjugated to Cyrus.

**and from the islands of the sea** the islands of the Kittim, the Romans, the descendants of Esau.

**12 And he shall raise a banner** Perka, perche in O.F. [i.e., the verse is literally referring to the pole upon which the banner is attached.] And it shall be for a sign to gather to him and to bring the exiles of Israel to Him as a present.

**13 Ephraim shall not envy Judah** The Messiah, the son of David, and the Messiah, the son of Joseph, shall not envy each other.

**14 And they shall fly of one accord against the Philistines in the west** Heb. בְכָתֵף . Israel will fly and run of one accord against the Philistines who are in the west of Eretz Israel and conquer their land. [ כָּתֵף , lit. a shoulder, is used in this case to denote unity. The word שֶׁכֶם , also lit. a shoulder, is used in a similar sense.] Comp. (Hoshea 6:9) “They murder on the way in unison (שֶׁכְמָה) ”; (Zeph. 3:9) “One accord (שְׁכֶם אֶחָד) .” And so did Jonathan render it: And they shall join in one accord to smite the Philistines who are in the west.

**and the children of Ammon shall obey them** As the Targum states: Will hearken to them. They will accept their commandments over them.

**15 And...shall dry up** [lit. shall cut off] to dry it, so that the exiles of Israel will pass through it from Egypt.

**over the river**The Euphrates River, for the exiles from Assyria to cross.

**with the strength of His wind** Heb. בַּעְיָם . This is hapax legomenon in Scripture, and according to the context it can be interpreted as “with the strength of His wind.”

**into seven streams**into seven segments, for the aforementioned seven exiles: from Assyria and from Egypt, etc. Those from the islands of the sea are not from that side.

**and He shall lead the exiles** within it.

**with shoes** on dry land.

**16 And there shall be a highway in the midst of the water** for the remnant of His people.

**Special Ashlamatah: Isaiah (Yashayahu) 1:1-27**

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Yonatan** |
| --- | --- |
| **1** The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah. | **1** The Prophecy Of Isaiah, The Son Of Amoz, Which Is Prophesied Concerning The Men Of Judah And The Inhabitants Of JeruSalem, In The Days Of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, And Hezekiah, The Kings Of The House Of JUDAH |
| **2** Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken; Children I have raised and exalted, yet they have rebelled against Me. | **2** Hear, O heavens, which trembled when I gave my law to my people, and give ear, O earth, which was agitated on account of my words, for the Lord has spoken. My people, the house of Israel, whom I called sons, I loved them, I made them glorious; but they have rebelled against my Word. |
| **3** An ox knows his owner and a donkey his master's crib; Israel does not know, my people does not consider. | **3** The ox knoweth his purchaser, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel has not learned to know my fear, my people doth not consider to return to my law. |
| **4** Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked the Holy One of Israel; they drew backwards. | **4** Woe to those who are called a holy people, because they have sinned; a chosen congregation, but they have multiplied sins; they are surnamed a beloved seed, but they have done evil; they are called beloved sons, but they have corrupted their paths; they have forsaken the worship of the Lord; they abhorred the fear of the Holy One of Israel, and because their works are evil they are turned away, and they are turned back. |
| **5** Why are you beaten when you still continue to rebel? Every head is [afflicted] with illness and every heart with malaise. | **5** They do not consider so as to say, Wherefore has He smitten us? They continue in sin;' they do not say, Why is all the head sick, and the whole heart faint? |
| **6** From the sole of the foot until the head there is no soundness-wounds and contusions and lacerated sores; they have not sprinkled, neither have they been bandaged, nor was it softened with oil. | **6** From the lowest of my people even unto the chief of them, there is not one amongst them who is perfect in my fear: all of them are disobedient and rebellious; they are polluted with sins, they are like an ulcerous wound; they have not forsaken their pride, neither long for repentance; they have also no righteousness to protect them. |
| **7** Your land is desolate; your cities burnt with fire. Your land-in your presence, strangers devour it; and it is desolate as that turned over to strangers. | **7** Your land is desolate, your cities each burnt with fire; in your presence the nations possess it. On account of their sins it is laid desolate: from you it is transferred, and it belongs to aliens. |
| **8** And the daughter of Zion shall be left like a hut in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. | **8** The congregation of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard after they have gathered the grapes; as a lodge for passing the night in, in a garden of cucumbers after they have gleaned it; as a city against which they lay siege. |
| **9** "Had not the Lord of Hosts left us a remnant, we would soon be like Sodom; we would resemble Gomorrah." | **9** Except the exceeding goodness of the Lord of hosts had caused to remain unto us in His mercy a deliverance, we had sins, on account of which we certainly had perished as the men of Sodom, and as the inhabitants of Gomorrah we would have been consumed. |
| **10** Hear the word of the Lord, O rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, O people of Gomorrah! | **10** Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye rulers, whose works are evil, as of the rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, O people, whose works are evil like those of the people of Gomorrah. |
| **11** Of what use are your many sacrifices to Me? says the Lord. I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle; and the blood of bulls and sheep and hegoats I do not want. | **11** I'll have no pleasure in the multitude of your holy sacrifices, saith the Lord: I am full with the abundance of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of he-goats; for in such I have no pleasure. |
| **12** When you come to appear before Me, who requested this of you, to trample My courts? | **12** When ye come to appear before me, who has required this at your hand, and that ye should come? Tread not my courts; |
| **13** You shall no longer bring vain meal-offerings, it is smoke of abomination to Me; New Moons and Sabbaths, calling convocations, I cannot [bear] iniquity with assembly. | **13** Bring no more the oblation obtained by oppression; sacrifice is an abomination before me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the assembly ye are congregating, your sins shall not be forgiven, nor shall I hear your prayer at the time of your congregating yourselves together. |
| **14** Your New Moons and your appointed seasons My soul hates, they are a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing [them]. | **14** Your new moons and your appointed feasts my Word hates; they are an abomination before me. I have often forgiven you. |
| **15** And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you, even when you pray at length, I do not hear; your hands are full of blood. | **15** When your priests are spreading out their hands to pray for you, I shall make to ascend the presence of my Shekinah from you; and when you are multiplying prayer, it is not my pleasure to accept your prayer at your hands, they being full of the blood of the innocent. |
| **16** Wash, cleanse yourselves, remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes, cease to do evil. | **16** Return to the law; make you clean from your sins; put away the evil of your doings from before the presence of my Word; cease to do evil; |
| **17** Learn to do good, seek justice, strengthen the robbed, perform justice for the orphan, plead the case of the widow. | **17** Learn to do well; seek judgment; judge ye justice for him who is suffering violence; do justice to the orphan; hear ye the cry of the widow. |
| **18** Come now, let us debate, says the Lord. If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow; if they prove to be as red as crimson dye, they shall become as wool. | **18** Then, when ye return to the law, ye shall pray before me, and I will grant your petition, saith the Lord. Though your sins be stained as with dye, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be pure as wool. |
| **19** If you be willing and obey, you shall eat the best of the land. | **19** If ye be willing and obedient to my Word, ye shall eat the good of the land. |
| **20** But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord spoke. | **20** But if ye refuse, and will not be obedient to my Word, ye shall be slain with the sword of the enemy; for the Word of the Lord has decreed it thus. |
| **21** How has she become a harlot, a faithful city; full of justice, in which righteousness would lodge, but now murderers. | **21** How are the works of the faithful city become like those of an harlot! she was full of those who did judgment, truth was wrought in her; but now they are murderers! |
| **22** Your silver has become dross; your wine is diluted with water. | **22** Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. |
| **23** Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes and runs after payments; the orphan they do not judge, and the quarrel of the widow does not come to them. | **23** Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: all of them love gifts. One saith to the other, Show me kindness in my cause, and I will repay thee in thy cause. The fatherless they judge not, and the cry of the widow does not come before them. |
| **24** "Therefore," says the Master, the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, "Oh, I will console Myself from My adversaries, and I will avenge Myself of My foes. | **24** Therefore saith the Lord of the world, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, The city of Jerusalem, I will comfort her; but woe to the wicked, when I shall reveal myself, to render just recompense to the enemies of my people, and render vengeance to my enemies. |
| **25** And I will return My hand upon you and purge away your dross as with lye, and remove all your tin. | **25** And I will turn the blow of my might upon thee; and I will scour away all the wicked, as he that is scouring with soap, and take away all thy sin. |
| **26** And I will restore your judges as at first and your counsellors as in the beginning; afterwards yo | **26** And I will appoint in thee judges of truth, upright ones, as at the first, and thy counsellors, as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called the holy city, the faithful city. |
| **27** Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitent through righteousness. | **27** As for Zion, when justice shall be practised in her, she shall be redeemed; and those that do the law shall return to her in righteousness. |
| **28** And destruction shall come over rebels and sinners together, and those who forsake the Lord shall perish. | **28** The rebels and the sinners shall be broken together; and those that forsake the law of the Lord shall be destroyed. |
| **29** For they shall be ashamed of the elms that you desired, and you shall be humiliated because of the gardens that you chose. | **29** For ye shall be confounded of the oaks of idolatry which ye have desired; and ye shall be ashamed of the gardens of idolatry in which ye were seeking help. |
| **30** For you shall be like an elm whose leaves are wilting, and like a garden that has no water. | **30** For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a watered garden that hath no water. |
| **31** And the[ir] strength shall become as tow, and its perpetrator as a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with no one to extinguish [the fire]. | **31** The strength of the wicked shall be as tow of flax, and the work of their hand as a spark of fire, when one approaches to the side of the other, both are burning together: thus the wicked shall be consumed, they and their evil works, and none shall have pity upon them. |

**Rashi’s commentary to Isaiah (Yashayahu) 1:1-27**

**1** **the vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz:**Said Rabbi Levi: We have a tradition from our ancestors that Amoz and Amaziah, king of Judah, were brothers.

**which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:**Now, did he not prophesy concerning many nations, viz. the prophecy of Babylonia (ch. 13), the prophecy of Moab (ch. 15)? Thus you learn that this is not the beginning of the Book, and that the Book is not given its name for this prophecy. So we learned in the Baraitha of the Mechilta (Exod. 15:9,10): “In the year of King Uzziah’s death” (6:1) is the beginning of the Book, but there is no early and late in the order [i.e., the order of the chapters is no indication of the chronological order. (Others read: There is no early and late in the Book Parshandatha.) The context proves this point, for, on the day of the earthquake (see Zech. 14:5), the day Uzziah became a metzora (see 2 Chron. 26:19), it was said: “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here I am; send me” (6:8). We learn that this was the beginning of his mission, and this prophecy was said afterwards. And concerning this alone, it is stated: which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, just as Scripture says concerning each nation, “the prophecy of such and such a nation.” Here too, Scripture writes: “which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” Since they are harsh reproofs, he calls them “chazon,” which is the harshest of the ten expressions by which prophecy is called, as is stated in Gen. Rabbah (44:7), and proof of this is the verse (infra 21:2), “A harsh prophecy (חָזוּת) was told to me.”

**in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah.:**These four kings he buried, [i.e. he outlived,] in his lifetime. On the day Uzziah became a metzora, the Shechinah rested upon him, and he prophesied all the days of these kings, until Manasseh arose and killed him. (And this prophecy was said in the days of Hezekiah after the ten tribes were exiled.)

**2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth:**And Moses said, “Give ear, O heavens,… and may the earth hear” (Deut. 32:1). Why did Isaiah change the wording? Our masters taught concerning this matter, [and] many midrashim [are] in the section entitled “Ha’azinu” in Sifrei, but the Sages disagreed with them and said: A matter is not so unless witnesses come and testify. If their words coincide, their testimony is fulfilled; if not, their testimony is not fulfilled. Had Isaiah not addressed the heavens with giving ear and the earth with hearing, the heavens would testify and say, ‘When we were called to this testimony in Moses’ time, when he said, (Deut. 30:19) “I call heaven and earth to witness against you,” we heard with an expression of giving ear,’ and the earth would testify, ‘I was called with an expression of hearing,’ hence their testimony would not coincide. [Therefore,] Isaiah came and reversed the matter. Consequently, both are found to testify with an expression of giving ear and with an expression of hearing.

**for the Lord has spoken:**That you should be witnesses in this matter, when I warned them in Moses’ time. Therefore, come and hear what I reason with them, for they transgressed the warning, I did not sin against them, but I raised them and exalted them, yet they rebelled against me. [Another version reads:] That you should be witnesses in this matter. Now, where did He speak? “Give ear, O heavens and I will speak” (ibid. 32:1). [So this was taught] in Mechilta (Bo 12).

**3** **his owner:**Heb. קֹנֵהוּ [is] like מְתַקְּנוֹ, the one who affixes him to the plowshare for plowing by day, and since he has accustomed him to this, he knows him. The dull donkey, however, does not recognize his master until he feeds him. Israel was not intelligent like the ox, to know, when I called him and said, “Israel will be your name” (Gen. 35:10), and I informed them of several of My statutes, yet they deserted Me, as is related in Ezekiel (20:39): “Let each one go and worship his idols.” Even after I took them out of Egypt and fed them the manna and called them, “My people, the children of Israel,” they did not consider even as a donkey. Another explanation is **An ox knows its owner** An ox recognizes his owner so that his fear is upon him. He did not deviate from what I decreed upon him, by saying, I will not plow today. Neither did a donkey say to his owner, I will not bear burdens today. Now, these [creatures,] who were created to serve you, and are not destined to receive reward if they merit, or to be punished if they sin, did not change their manner, which I decreed upon them. Israel, however, who, if they merit receive reward, and if they sin are punished.

**does not know:**i.e., did not want to know; they knew but trod with their heels, and my people did not take heart to consider.

**4 Woe:**Every instance of הוֹי in Scripture is an expression of complaining and lamenting, like a person who sighs from his heart and cries, “Alas!” There are, however, several, which are an expression of a cry, the vocative voice, e.g., “Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north” (Zech. 2:10), which the Targum renders, אַכְלוּ, an expression of announcing.

**Woe:**There is a reason to cry about a holy nation that turned into a sinful nation, and a people referred to by the expression, “for you are a holy people” (Deut. 7:6), turned into a people with iniquity.

**a people heavy with iniquity:**The heaviness of iniquity. The word denotes a person who is heavy, pesant in French, ponderous. The word כֶבֶד is a substantive of heaviness, pesantoma in French, and is in the construct state, and is connected with the word עָוֹן, iniquity.

**evildoing seed:**And they were seed whom the Lord blessed (Isa. 61:9). Similarly, they were children of the Holy One, blessed be He, and they became corrupt.

**they provoked:**Heb. נִאֲצוּ, they angered.

**they drew backwards:**[The root נְזִירָה,] wherever it appears, is only an expression of separation. Similarly, Scripture states: “And they shall separate (וְיִנָּזְרוּ) from the holy things of the children of Israel” (Lev. 22:2), “the one separated (נְזִיר) from his brothers” (Gen. 49:26). Here too, they drew away from being near the Omnipresent.

**5** **Why are you beaten…:**A person who was punished (lit. beaten) and repeats his sin his friend admonishes him and says to him, For this you have been punished, yet you do not take heart to say, ‘For this I have been punished. I will not repeat it again.’ Here too, why are you beaten since you continue disobedience, to turn away from following the Omnipresent? Is not every head afflicted with illness and every heart with malaise? Why then do you not understand?

**6** **soundness:**An expression of perfection, sound without pain.

**wounds:**Heb. פֶּצַע, i.e., a wound of a sword.

**contusions:**Heb. חַבּוּרָה, an expression of a bruise. [Some editions read:] Other bruises.

**and lacerated sores:**Jonathan renders: מְרַסְסָא, lacerated and crushed.

**and lacerated sores:**demarcejjre, in O.F., and in the language of the Talmud, we find, “he bumped (טַרְיֵה) his head” (Chullin 45b). Menahem explained it as an expression of moisture, i.e., moist and wet, always oozing [muyte in O.F.].

**they have not been sprinkled:**These lesions were not sprinkled with medicinal powders by physicians. This is an expression of: (Job 18:15) “Sulphur shall be sprinkled (יְזֹרֶה) on his dwelling.” Menahem explained it as an expression of healing, as in (Jeremiah 30:13): “No one pronounced your judgment for healing (לְמָזוֹר).”

**neither was it softened with oil:**Their wound was not softened with oil, as is customary with other wounds. It would be inappropriate to say here, “They were not softened with oil,” for they soften only the place of the sore, not the wound and the contusion but the sprinkling and the bandaging applies to all three, [i.e., the wound, the contusion, and the lacerated sore.] Therefore, the plural number applies to them; the lesions were not sprinkled and not bandaged. Jonathan interprets the entire verse figuratively, referring to the fact that they were soiled and afflicted with iniquity. Accordingly, he rendered, “From the sole of the foot until the head,” from the smallest to the greatest, there is no soundness. There is none good among them, wounds and contusions, rebellious deeds, iniquities, and inadvertent sins.

**they have not been sprinkled…:**i.e., they have not been healed by repenting wholeheartedly, nor has it been softened with oil, not even a trace of repentant thought has entered their heart.

**7** **in your presence, strangers devour it:**Before your eyes, your enemies will devour it.

**and desolate:**of you as a heritage turned over to strangers, which is desolate of its owners. Jonathan renders in this manner.

**8** **And the daughter of Zion shall be left:**devoid of its inhabitants, for they will be exiled from its midst, as a hut in a vineyard, made by a watchman, and when the produce of the vineyard is gathered, he leaves his hut and goes away, after they gather it.

**like a lodge in a cucumber field:**As the lodge, which the watchman made at the end of a cucumber field, to watch its cucumber, is left, for after it is gathered, he leaves it and goes away; the one in the vineyard is called a hut since he lives in it day and night; by day, he guards it from the birds and by night from the thieves, but cucumbers are hard, and there is no fear of the birds, and one need not watch them by day. It is, therefore, called a lodge since it is a place of lodging at night. Jonathan renders: Like a bed in a lodge (again repeated in Hebrew), [in] a cucumber field, in a cucumber field after it has been picked (בָּתַר דְאַבְעָיוּהִי), after it has been picked. [This is the expression of the Mishnah] (Peah 4: 5): “There are three gatherings (אַבְעָיוֹת) a day.”

**like a besieged city:**Like a city which was besieged, and they make huts around it to hide the troops, and when they give up the siege [lit., when they go away from it], they leave them and go away. All this is Jonathan’s translation.

**9 Had not the Lord of Hosts left us a remnant:**by His own volition and with His mercy, not because of our merits.

**we would soon be like Sodom:**All of us would be destroyed.

**10** **rulers of Sodom:**Princes whose deeds are like those of Sodom. From here, [the Rabbis] deduced that a person should not open his mouth to Satan.

**11 I am sated with the burnt-offerings of rams:**This is similar to: “Lest he have too much of you and hate you,” (Proverbs 25:18).

**fattened cattle:**Fattened cattle and sheep.

**I do not want:**Since you transgress My Torah, the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination [from Prov. 21:27].

**12** **who requested this of you, to trample My courts:**to trample [the preposition is absent in the Hebrew] My courts, since your heart is not whole with Me.

**13** **You shall bring no more vain meal-offerings:**I warn you, you shall not bring Me your vain meal-offering, for the smoke that rises from it is smoke of abomination to Me, and not for My satisfaction.

**New moons and Sabbaths, calling, convocations, I cannot…:**and [sic, does not appear in Parshandatha] to call convocations, i.e., New Moons and Sabbaths when you gather to call a convocation and an assembly on them, I cannot bear the iniquity in your hearts that is inclined to paganism, and the convocation with it, for these two things are incompatible: to call a convocation to gather before Me, and the iniquity that is in your hearts for paganism, and you do not take it out of your hearts.

**15** **And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you:**because your hands are full of blood.

**blood:**Murder.

**16** **Wash, cleanse yourselves:**Voweled with a ‘patach,’ the imperative form, since it is derived from רְחַץ, but רָחֲצוּ, [in the past tense, is voweled with a ‘kamatz’ because it is derived from רָחַץ].

**Wash, cleanse yourselves, remove, learn, seek, strengthen, perform justice, plead, go:**Ten exhortations of the expression of repentance are [listed] here, corresponding to the Ten Days of Penitence and to the ten verses of Kingship, Remembrances, and Shofaroth [in the musaf service of Rosh Hashanah].

**cease to do evil:**Desist from your evil deeds.

**to do evil:**Heb. הרע, like לְהָרֵעַ, to do evil. [Rashi explains this because the preposition is absent in Hebrew.] Scripture does not have to write מֵהָרֵעַ, desist from doing evil, for so does the Biblical language treat the expression of חֲדָלָה, stopping, [e.g.,] “and he failed to make (לַעֲשׂוֹת) the Pesach” (Num. 9:13); “until he stopped counting (לִסְפֹּר)” (Gen. 41:49). That is to say, the counting stopped, the making failed, here too, stop the evildoing.

**17** **Learn:**It is punctuated ‘raphe,’ weak, without a dagesh. This is from the form לָמֹד, learn to do good. One who teaches himself is of the ‘kal’ form. Therefore, its imperative plural is voweled with a ‘chirik’ like אִמְרוּ, שִׁמְעוּ, but one who teaches others is of the form of the ‘heavy conjugation’ (pi’el) with a ‘dagesh,’ and if one comes to command a number of people, the word is voweled לַמְּדוּ. And so, דִּרְשׁוּ, from the form דְרשׁ, but אַשְּׁרוּ in which the ‘shin’ has a ‘dagesh,’ is from the ‘heavy conjugation,’ and from the form אַשֵּׁר; therefore, the imperative plural is voweled with a ‘patach’ like בַּשְּׂרוּ, סַפְּרוּ, דַּבְּרוּ.

**strengthen the robbed:**Heb. אַשְּׁרוּ חָמוֹץ. This is a Mishnaic term, אֲשַׁרְנוּהִי, “we have verified it” (Ketuboth 21a); “if I had strength (אֲיַשֵּׁר)” (Gittin 30b); “May your strength be strengthened (יִישַׁר)” (Shabbath 87a). Another explanation is: Lead him in the path of truth to acquire what rightfully belongs to him. An expression of: (Job 23:11) “My foot held its path (בֲּאֲשׁוּרוֹ);” (Prov. 23:19) “And go (וְאַשֵׁר) in the way of your heart.”

**perform justice:**So-and-so is innocent and so-and-so is guilty.

**plead the case of the widow:**Endeavor in their quarrel to plead for her, for she cannot go out to pursue her opponents.)

**the robbed:**Heb. חָמוֹץ, similar to (Ps. 71:4) “from the hand of the unrighteous and the robber (וּמְחַמֵּץ).”

**18 Come now, let us debate:**together, I and you, and we will know who offended whom, and if you offended Me, I still give you hope to repent.

**If your sins prove to be like crimson:**Stained before Me like crimson red, I will make them as white as snow.

**says the Lord:**[The verb is in the future form to denote that] He always says this to you, like: (Num. 9: 20) “By the word of the Lord they would camp (יַחֲנוּ),” also a future form. Another explanation is: Come now, let us debate. What is written above this? “Cease to do evil; learn to do good.” And after you return to Me, come now, and let us debate together, to notify Me, “We have done what is incumbent upon us; You do what is incumbent upon You;” and I say, “If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow…”

**as crimson dye:**Heb. תּוֹלָע, lit. a worm. Dye with which they dye fabrics red. They are kernels, each one of which has a worm inside it. Hence the name תּוֹלָע.

**20** **for the mouth of the Lord spoke:**Where did He speak? (Lev. 26:25) “And I will bring upon you a sword.”

**21** **a harlot:**Astray from her God.

**city:**which was faithful and full of justice, and righteousness would lodge therein, but now murderers.

**full of justice:**Heb. מְלֵאֲתִי מִשְׁפָּט [equivalent to מְלֵאַתמִשְׁפָּט, the ‘yud’ being superfluous,] as in (Lamentations 1: 1) רַבָּתִי עָם, “great in population” [equivalent to רַבַּתעָם].

**in which righteousness would lodge:**The daily dawn sacrifice would atone for the sins [committed] at night, and the daily afternoon [sacrifice] would atone for those of the day. Another explanation is that they would allow capital cases to rest overnight when they could find no merit for him, [i.e., for the defendant;] they would not conclude his verdict until the morrow, perhaps they would find a merit for him, and now they have become murderers. [We find in] Pesikta [d’Rav Kahana p. 121a]: Rabbi Menahem bar Oshia [according to Parshandatha,] Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Oshia said: Four hundred eighty-one synagogues were in Jerusalem, corresponding to the numerical value of מְלֵאֲתִי.

**and now murderers:**They killed Uriah; they killed Zechariah.

**22 Your silver has become dross:**They would make copper coins and plate them with silver, in order to cheat with them.

**your wine is diluted with water:**Your drinks are mixed with water, as is stated in Pesikta (122b). [The word] means ‘mixed,’ although there is no similar word in Scripture to prove it, but the Midrash Aggadah explains (Ecc. 2:2): “Of laughter I said, it makes one mad (מְהוֹלָל)” to mean that it is confused, or mixed up.

**23 rebellious:**Deviating from the straight path.

**and runs after payments:**This word is similar to the Talmudic תַּשְׁלוּמִין. Jonathan paraphrases: One man says to another, Do me a favor in my case, and I will repay you in your case. This refers to a judge who was a robber, and the robbery victim complains about him before another judge. This one says to him, Declare me innocent today, and I will repay you when they complain about you before me. This is the meaning of running after payments.

**and the quarrel of the widow does not come to them:**The widow comes to complain, and the orphan is coming out, when this one meets him and asks him, What did you accomplish in your case? He replies, All day long I toiled at work, but I did not accomplish anything. And this one turns around and says, If this one, who is a man, did not accomplish anything, surely I will not. This is the meaning of, “the orphan they do not judge, and the quarrel of the widow does not come to them” at all.

**24** **says the Master:**Who possesses everything, and in Whose power it is to uproot you from your land and to settle others in it.

**the Mighty One of Israel:**the strength of Israel.

**Oh:**Heb. הוי. An expression of preparation and announcement, and similar to this is (Zech. 2: 10): “Ho, ho, (הוי הוי) flee from the land of the north.” And let all know that I will console Myself of My adversaries, who angered Me with their deeds.

**25** **And I will return My hand upon you:**One blow after another, until the transgressors have been completely destroyed.

**as with lye:**This is an expression meaning soap [sbon in O.F., savon (in modern French)]. Its deviation is an expression of cleanliness, similar to (Ps. 24:4): “and pure (בַּר) of heart,” since it cleanses the garment of its stains.

**your dross:**mentioned above, as: “Your silver has become dross”; a mixture of silver with copper is called dross. Here too, a mixture of the wicked with the righteous. I will destroy the transgressors, who are all dross.

**all your tin:**The tin mixed with silver, that is to say, the wicked among you. בְדִיל is called estejjn [etain] in O.F. [tin].

**26** **as at first:**I will appoint for you pious judges.

**City of Righteousness:**As in the beginning, righteousness will lodge therein.

**27 shall be redeemed through justice:**Since there will be in it people who practice justice.

**shall be redeemed:**from her iniquities.

**and her penitent:**those penitent among them. (through righteousness through those who make themselves righteous through justice and through righteousness that are in her midst [or,] among them.)

**PIRQE ABOT**

**Pereq Vav**

**Mishnah 6:12**

Hakham Yitschaq (ben Moshe) Magriso

**Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia said: God wanted to give Israel merit; He therefore gave them a large amount of Torah and commandments. It is thus written: “*God desired to make [Israel] righteous, He made the Torah great and potent.*” (Isaiah 42:21)**

This Mishnah is not part of *Aboth,* but rather, the last Mishnah in the tract of *Makkoth.* It is the custom to rewrite it at the end of each chapter of *Aboth* because it teaches an important and beautiful lesson. Furthermore, the *Kaddish* can only be recited after a lesson is learned from the *aggadat*, the non-legalistic parts of the Talmud). Since this Mishnah is obviously part of the *aggadah,* it is recited after each chapter, so that the *Kaddish* can then be said.

The commandments are divided into three categories.

The first category are the logical commandments *(sikhlJoth),* Even if God had not given these commandments, they would be logical and morally imperative. A good example of such a commandment is the injunction to honor one's parents. It is logical that one give his parents respect, because they brought him into the world, nursed him, gave him clothes and shoes, and nourished and sustained him with much pain and suffering. Moral logic requires that no matter how much honor one gives his parents, he cannot repay even a small fraction of all that they have done for him.

Even though this is morally logical, God still gave it as a command­ment. He also gave many other commandment which would be logically kept even if they had not been given.

The second category of commandments are the legal ones *(mishpatioth).* These are the laws involving *the* business world and tort. Although these laws are also logical. they are not morally imperative like the first.

The third category of commandments are those which are “heard” *(shimioth*). These are kept only because we *heard* that Cod com­manded us to do them. Otherwise. we never would have thought of keeping them. We do not know the reasons for such commandments. but only keep them because Cod commanded us to, realizing that He did so with good reason. Included among such commandments are the Red Heifer *(Parar: Adumah)* Numbers 19. and the prohibitions against eating milk and meat. or wearing a garment made of linen and wool *(shuatnez)*. Leviticus 19:19.

The master now teaches us that Cod even gave us the morally imperative commandments. even though it may seem unnecessary, and would have been kept even without a specific commandment on the part of God. He gave them as *commandments,* however. to increase our reward.

The Talmud teaches that “one who is commanded and does is greater than one who is not commanded and does.” If a person does something that he is com­manded to do. he has greater reward than a person who does something which he is not commanded to do.

The reason for this is that the more the Evil Urge tries to prevent him from doing the good deed, the greater his reward should be. When a person is commanded to do something. the Evil Urge does everything in its power to prevent him doing it; therefore. if he overcome the Evil Urge. his reward is all the greater. When a person is not commanded to do something. the Evil Urge does not try to prevent it, and the person's reward is correspondingly less.

Because of the great love that Cod has for Israel, He wanted to increase their reward. He therefore gave them even the morally imperative rules as commandments. Since a person who is commanded to do something has a greater reward. by giving these rules as com­mandments, God increased the reward due His people.

Some authorities explain Rabbi Chanania ben Akahia's statement somewhat differently. A person may keep just one of the 613 commandments a it should be done. completely, with a good heart. for the sake of Heaven and out of love for Cod. without any ulterior motive. For that alone. he will be worthy of the World to Come.

Rabbi Hanania ben Akashia thus said that God wanted to grant Israel merit, so He gave His people a Torah with many commandments. Since there are so many commandments. it is impossible that a person not keep at least one as it should be done. Through this. he is worthy of life in the World to Come!

According to other authorities. Rabbi Chanania ben Akashia is giving a reason why there are more negative commandments than positive commandments in the Torah. The Torah contains 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments. [In the case of positive commandments, one must actually do something to receive reward. In the case of negative commandments, on the other hand. one receives reward merely for refraining from violating them.] God gave a larger number of negative commandments because He wanted His people to have reward even while they sit down and do nothing. Even though they are not actively keeping any positive commandment. they are still passively refraining from violating negative commandments. and they are rewarded accordingly.

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra Of B’resheet (Gen.) 41:38-42:4**

**“HaNimtsa”- “Can we find”**

By: Hakham Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham &

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School of Hakham Shaul****Tosefta****(Lk 12:10)****Mishnah א:א** | **School of Hakham Tsefet****Peshat****(Mk 3:28-30)****Mishnah א:א** |
| **And whosoever will speak an** evil **word against the son of man, it will be forgiven him: but to him that speaks evil of the Ruach HaQodesh** tabernacling in a Hakham or Paqid, **it will not be forgiven.** | **“Amen! I say to you, that all the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, including speaking evil** (lashon HaRa)[[46]](#footnote-46) **with which they might speak evil. But, God will never forgive a man who speaks evil of the Ruach HaQodesh[[47]](#footnote-47)** tabernacling in a Hakham or Paqid, **but is in danger of eternal judgment;”** This he taught **because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **\*Gen 41:38-42:4** | **Psa. 35:19-28** | **Is 2-10, 16** | **Mk 3:28-30** | **Lk 12:10** |

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

**And whosoever will speak an** evil **word against the son of man, it will be forgiven him: but to him that speaks evil of the Ruach HaQodesh** tabernacling in a Hakham or Paqid, **it will not be forgiven.**

**Ruach HaQodesh**

We have made it clear in the past how the term Ruach HaQodesh (holy spirit) was used in the first century.

1. The power of God with no emphasis on a “spirit” as a special separate entity
2. **The Divine (tabernacling) Presence – Shekhinah i.e. HaShem**
3. The spirit (breath i.e. Oral Torah) which produces holiness
4. The spirit of prophecy
5. The “Jewish soul/spirit” from the heavens i.e. **Nefesh Yehudi.**
6. It is noteworthy that the first century Sages never understood the “holy spirit” to be a separate entity to G-d.

Looking at the second use of Ruach HaQodesh we see that it refers to the “Spirit of G-d” or His Divine presence with no emphasis on a “spirit” as a special separate entity.

Sabin[[48]](#footnote-48) accurately notes the correct sense of the terms use…

What Jesus mean by “the sin against the holy spirit” has been puzzled over for centuries. The problem probably arose from capitalizing “holy spirit” and then assuming that “the sin against the Holy Spirit” was a special offense. But Mark would not have been thinking in terms of a Trinitarian formula. He would have been using “holy spirit” to mean simply G-d’s spirit, as it appears in Psalm 51:11 –

*Cast me not out from Your presence,*

*And Your holy spirit take not from me.*

The clue to Jesus’ meaning here lies in the final explanation Mark gives: **“For they had said, ‘He has an unclean spirit’”** (3:30). By means of this explanation, Mark stresses the **opposition between an “unclean spirit” and G-d’s holy spirit.”** **As Psalm 51 attests, it was common Jewish belief that every human being naturally possesses G-d’s holy spirit.** Jesus is teaching that the opposite of this state, that is, possession by an “unclean spirit,” is thus unnatural and pathological. The “blasphemy against the holy spirit” is the denial of the fact that possession of G-d’s holy spirit is every person’s natural state. There is therefore no clear-cut division such as the scribes have implied, between good and evil persons; there are only people in varying states of pathology or wellness. So Jesus by driving out the unclean spirits, can restore people to their original wholeness. Sinners are invaded and bound by Satan; Jesus sets them free.”

Now this explanation surely accords with Jewish teaching, and the Judaic environment in which the Master operated. For, when Jews say that “so and so is an evil person” they surely are not saying that such a person is bereft of the spirit of holiness, what they mean is simply that such a person is in an advanced pathological state. In other words, and “evil person” is a “mentally ill person,” for no human being is entirely evil, as the nature of man forbids this to be so. Calling someone an “evil person” denies the truth of the Torah, which “G-d blew his spirit on the nostrils of Adam and he became a living/speaking being.”

The Divine Presence frequently manifests in varied functions, which are either supernatural[[49]](#footnote-49) or appear as supernatural. However, these “manifestations” are not a separate entity. We often have an awareness of G-d when occupied with religious duty or activities. However, this awareness is not some special entity or fragment of G-d. Yeshua’s casting out of shedim (demons) is not a supernatural act. The exorcism of evil shedim is an act of compassion restoring the human good mental health. Furthermore, we are not aware of exactly how Yeshua “exorcised” these shedim. The most plausible method was teaching of the Oral Torah, which the captive soul needed. Ya’aqob referred to the Torah as the “perfect Law (Torah – principle or rule) of Liberty.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

The Greek word βλασφημ – ***Blaspheme* always refers finally to God**. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament notes the following “Blasphemies.”

1. Whether in the sense of the disputing of His (God’s) redemptive power‌
2. The desecrating of His name by the Gentiles who capture and enslave His people (Is. 52:5)
3. The violation of His (God’s) glory
4. Against His (God’s) people (the B’ne Yisrael) (2 Macc. 15:24),
5. All ungodly speech and action, especially on the part of the Gentiles (Is. 66:3; 1 Macc. 2:6; 2 Macc. 8:4; 10:34 ff.; [[51]](#footnote-51)
6. Against His Sages and Hakhamim

We will not take the time to comment on each of these definitions. However, we will briefly say that it would behove a soul to be very careful with his speech concerning each of these items.

We also exercise extreme caution with regard to evil speech concerning…

1. The Olam HaBa
2. The Torah
3. The Oral Torah/Mesorah
4. Moshe Rabbenu
5. Messiah
6. The Hakhamim
7. The Bet Din

The present list is roughly associated with the Ani Ma’amin and Mishnah Sanhedrin chapter ten concerning those who will not have their part in the Olam HaBa (be “saved”).

**Peroration**

Lashon HaRa is a very serious offense. Because sin is spiritual in nature, we need to understand that it leaves detrimental marks on the soul. Teshuba usually repairs the injurious blemishes. However, even Teshuba cannot remove some of these marks. Therefore, we should use extreme caution when speaking about the above mentioned categories. Nevertheless speaking Lashon HaRa against a Hakham or Paqid, or raising a false accusation publicly against any of them is a sin that will not be forgiven.

**Halakhic Implications**

Because of the complexity of this issue, we suggest reading “Hilchot Teshuvah” (Laws of Repentance) by the Rambam[[52]](#footnote-52) and “The Gates of Repentance” by Rebbeinu Yonah of Gerona.[[53]](#footnote-53)

**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

**Blessing After Torah Study**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Fast of the 9th of Av (July 26/27, 2023)**

**Next Shabbat:**

**Shabbat: “Ke yesh shebar” - “There were provisions”**

**Av 11, 5783 – July 28/29, 2023**

**1st Sabbath of Consolation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **כִּי יֶשׁ-שֶׁבֶר** |  |  **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“****Ke yesh shebar”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 42:1-5 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 42:18-21 |
| **“****There were provisions”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 42:6-8 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 42:22-24 |
|  | Reader 3 – B’resheet 42:9-11 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 42:25-28 |
| B’resheet (Genesis) 42:1-23 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 42:12-13 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Amos 8:4-12 + 9:14-15 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 42:14-16 |  **Monday and Thursday Mornings** |
| Special Ashlamatah:Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 40:1-26 | Reader 6 – B’resheet 42:17-19 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 42:18-21 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 36:1-13 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 42:20-21 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 42:22-24 |
|   |  Maftir – B’resheet 42:22-23 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 42:25-28 |
| N.C.: Mk 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21 | Ashlamatah: Amos 8:4-12 + 9:14-15 |   |

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Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Edited by Paqid Ezra ben Abraham

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1. Tehillat HaShem [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This introduction was 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-2)
3. This study is based on the lectures of Rabbi Dr.Akiva Tatz. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The back of the neck is called HaOref who’s letters can be rearranged to spell Paroh. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In fact it was*kol, crying,*that initiated the redemption: Shemot 2:23. “… the king of Egypt died; and the people of Israel sighed because of the slavery, and they cried, and their cry came up to G-d because of the slavery.. And G-d heard their groaning, and G-d remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob…..” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:12ff [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Chakmah is commonly translated as ‘wisdom’ and is the first of the lower seven sephirot. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Daat* (knowledge) and *dibur* (speech) are linked together. Hence the first time we find *daat* mentioned in the Torah is when Adam knew his wife Chavah. He felt connected to her. It follows that all spoken reproof is really a form of connection. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Plato (348/347 BCE) was a philosopher in Classical Greece and the founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. He is widely considered the most pivotal figure in the development of philosophy, especially the Western tradition. Unlike nearly all of his philosophical contemporaries, Plato’s entire œuvre is believed to have survived intact for over 2,400 years. Along with his teacher, Socrates, and his most famous student, Aristotle, Plato laid the very foundations of Western philosophy and science. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Bereshit (Genesis) 3:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Bereshit (Genesis) 4:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bereshit (Genesis) 27:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Plural ‘voices’ - Shemot (Exodus) 20:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Tehillim (Psalms) 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Dibur = Speech or words. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. ‘*Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles:* Principle #7 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Principle 7:Moses was the greatest prophet who ever lived. No prophet who lived or will live could comprehend G-d more than Moses. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Maharal [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The simple translation of mitzva (pl. mitzvot) is *commandment*, but there is a deeper meaning in the word. Mitzva comes from the root word *tzavta*, which means *connection*. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Rashi comments, “Because Ruach Hakodesh [prophetic intuition] speaks from her throat. She is greater than you in prophecy.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 58:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The first term for speech, "dibur" comes from the same root word as "Asseret Hadibrot", the ten words, or commandments. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Midrash (מדרשׁ) is an interpretive act, seeking the answers to religious questions (both practical and theological) by plumbing the meaning of the words of the Torah. (In the Bible, the root d-r-sh [דרשׁ] is used to mean inquiring into any matter, including occasionally to seek out G-d’s word.) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The targumim (singular: "targum", Hebrew: תרגום‬) were spoken paraphrases, explanations and expansions of the Jewish scriptures (also called the Tanakh) that a rabbi would give in the common language of the listeners, which was then often Aramaic. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bereshit Rabbah [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Attributed to Onkelos, a Roman convert to Judaism thought to have lived c.35-120. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Targum Onkelos changes “the adam” to “in Adam”. Rashi (ad loc.) also interprets the phrase “nefesh chayah” to mean speech: ‘“And the adam became a nefesh chayah’, even a beast and a [wild] animal are called nefesh chayah, but this [nefesh] of Adam is more living than all of them, because in him was added knowing/dei'ah and speech/dibur”. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Speech - Any translation of plan into action. This is where the potential is turned into the actual. There is always a trace of *chidush* (originality) in true *dibur.* [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. R. Tsadok HaKohen adds that *dibur* always carries some imprint of its spokesperson. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. AKA Torah [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. AKA Numbers [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A desert is a place where no speech is possible. A desert is like an ocean with no landmarks. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. So midbar is exchangeable with midaber, meaning speech that comes forth automatically, of its own accord. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Speech (dibur) also means leadership in Hebrew, the king rules with his word. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Vaeira 25b [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 26:5-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The Haggada itself states: “To elaborate on these ideas is praiseworthy”. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 29:9-30:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 31:1-31:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Shabbat 55a; Yoma 69b, Sanhedrin 64a. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Rosh Hashana 18a [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. **Eretz** (land) means running towards, while **Shamayim** (heavens) are the endpoints that we were running towards. Thus we understand that women have a greater connection to the lower world, the land, while men have a greater connection to the upper worlds, the spiritual realms. Never the leee, we always want what we don’t have. That is why men seek the lower world and its pleasures, while women seek the spiritual world and its pleasures. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Sotah 32, Rav Chisda [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. As noted in the Theological Wordbook of the New Testament (1.621) the concept of the Greek word βλασφημ- always refers finally to God, whether in the sense of the disputing of His redemptive power (4 Βασ‌. 19:4, 6, 22), the desecrating of **His name** by the Gentiles who capture and enslave His people (Is. 52:5), **the violation of His glory** by derision of the mountains of Israel (Ez. 35:12) and **His people** (2 Macc. 15:24), all ungodly speech and action, especially on the part of the Gentiles (Is. 66:3; 1 Macc. 2:6; 2 Macc. 8:4; 10:34 ff.; [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Verbal tally with B’resheet (Gen) 41:38 see also Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993], c1961). *A handbook on the Gospel of Mark*. Originally published: A translator's handbook on the Gospel of Mark, 1961. UBS handbook series; Helps for translators. New York: United Bible Societies. p. 124 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Sabin, M. N. (2006). *The Gospel According to Mark.* Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press. 38 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. "Above nature, transcending nature, belonging to a higher realm," from M.L. supernaturalis "above or beyond nature," from L. *super* "above" + natura "nature." Originally with more of a religious sense, "of or given by God, divine; heavenly;" etc., has predominated since c.1799. See also Bushnell, Horace, D. D. (1887). *Nature and the Supernatural, As Together Constituting the One System of God.* London: Richard D. Dickenson. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ya’aqob (James) 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1:621-622 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Rambam, M. M. (1998). *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah* (Vol. 1:4). (R. E. Touger, Trans.) Moznaim Publishing Corp. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Gerona, Rabbeinu Y. (1967 / 5727). *The Gates of Repentance.* (S. Silverstine, Trans.) Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)