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

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **Second Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Shevat 10, 5784 – January 19/20, 2024** | **Second Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

**Roll of Honor:**

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

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

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His Excellency Adon 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](mailto:gkilli@aol.com%20) **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**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!

**A special Prayer for our Beloved Hakham**

**His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

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!

**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!**

**Shevat 10, 5784, January 19/20, 2024**

**Shabbat: “VaYishma Yitro” – “Now heard Jethro”**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“VaYishma Yitro”** | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 18:1-4 | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 19:6-9 |
| **“Now heard Jethro”** | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 18:5-7 | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 19:10-13 |
| **“Y oyó Jetro”** | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 18:8-11 | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 19:14-15 |
| Sh’mot (Exodus) 18:1- 19:5 | Reader 4 – Sh’mot: 18:12-14 |  |
| Ashlamatah:  Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:13-22 | Reader 5 – Sh’mot 18:15-18 | **Monday / Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Sh’mot 18:19-23 | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 19:6-9 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 56:1-14 | Reader 7 – Sh’mot 18:24-27 | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 19:10-13 |
|  | Maftir – Sh’mot 19:1-5 | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 19:14-15 |
| N.C.: Mk 7:9-13 - Lk 11:45-54; | Isaiah 33:13-22 |  |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* The Visit of Jethro – Exodus 18:1-27
* Arrival at Sinai – Exodus 19:1-5

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: Shemot (Exodus) 18:1 – 19:5**

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Yitro heard**--- priest of Midian, Moshe's father-in-law--- **about all that Elohim had done for Moshe and for His people** Yisrael, when Adonai brought Yisrael out of Egypt. | 1. **And Jethro,** prince of Midian, the father‑in‑law of Mosheh, **heard all that the Lord had done for Mosheh and for Israel His people,** and that the Lord had brought forth Israel from Mizraim. |
| 2. Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro took Moshe's wife, Tzipporah, after he had sent her back [home], | 2. And Jethro the father‑in‑law of Mosheh took Zipporah his wife, whom Mosheh had sent back from him after going into Mizraim, |
| 3. along with her two sons. The name of one was Gershom, because he [Moshe] had said, "I was a stranger in an alien land." | 3. and his two sons, the name of the one of whom was Gershom, Because He had said, I am a dweller in a strange land which is not mine; |
| 4. The name of the [other] one was Eliezer, because the G-d of my father was my help, and rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh. | 4. and the name of the other Eliezer, For (he had said) the God of my fathers was my helper, and saved me from the sword of Pharoh. |
| 5. Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro came, along with his [Moshe's] sons, and wife, to Moshe, to the desert where he was camped near the mountain of G-d. | 5. And Jethro the father‑in‑law of Mosheh, and the sons of Mosheh, and his wife came to Mosheh at the desert in which he was sojourning by the mountain upon which the glory of the Lord was revealed to Mosheh at the beginning. |
| 6. He said to Moshe, "I, your father-in-law, Yitro, am coming to you along with your wife; her two sons are with her." | 6. And he said to Mosheh, I, thy father‑in‑law Jethro, have come to thee to be a proselyte; and if thou wilt not receive me on my own account, receive me for the sake of thy wife and of her two sons who are with her. |
| 7. Moshe went out to greet his father-in-law. He prostrated himself and [then] kissed him. They asked after each other's well being, and went into the tent. | 7. And Mosheh came forth from under the cloud of glory to meet his father‑in‑law, and did obeisance, and kissed him and made him a proselyte; and they asked of each other's welfare, and came to the tabernacle, the house of instruction. |
| 8. Moshe told his father-in-law all that Adonai had done to Pharaoh and to Egypt for the sake of Yisrael; including all the hardship that had befallen them on the way, and [how] Adonai had rescued them. | 8. And Mosheh recounted to his father‑in‑law all that the Lord had done to Pharoh and to the Mizraee on behalf of Israel; all the hardship they had found in the way, at the sea of Suph, and at Marah, and at Rephidim, and how Amalek had fought with them, and the Lord had delivered them. |
| 9. Yitro rejoiced over all the good that Adonai had done for Yisrael; that He had rescued them from the hand of Egypt. | 9. And Jethro rejoiced over all the good which the Lord had done unto Israel, and that He had given them manna, and the well, and that he had saved them from the hand of the Mizraee. |
| 10. Yitro said, "Blessed is Adonai Who rescued you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of Pharaoh; Who rescued the people from under the hand of Egypt. | 10. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Name of the Lord who hath saved you from the hand of the Mizraee, and from the hand of Pharoh, and hath saved the people from under the tyranny of the Mizraee. |
| 11. Now I know that Adonai is greater than all the gods, because the very thing they plotted came upon them." | 11. Now have I known that the Lord is stronger than all gods; for by the very thing by which the Mizraee wickedly would have punished Israel by (drowning them in) the sea, upon themselves came the punishment, in being punished in the sea. |
| 12. [Then] Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, brought a burnt-offering and [peace]-offerings to G-d. Aharon and all the elders of Yisrael came to eat bread with [Yitro,] Moshe's father-in-law, before G-d. | 12. And Jethro took burnt offerings and holy sacrifices before the Lord, and Aharon and all the elders of Israel. came to eat bread with the father‑in‑law of Mosheh before the Lord; and Mosheh stood and ministered before them. |
| 13. It was on the following day [that] Moshe sat to judge the people and the people stood around Moshe from morning until evening. | 13. And the day after, the day of reconciliation, Mosheh sat to judge the people: and the people stood before Mosheh from morning till evening. |
| 14. When Moshe's father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself and [letting] the people stand around you from morning until evening?" | 14. And the father‑in‑law of Mosheh saw how much he toiled and laboured for his people; and he said, What thing is this that thou art doing to the people? Why dost thou sit alone to judge, and all the people stand before thee from morning until evening? |
| 15. Moshe said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to seek [instruction from] G-d. | 15. And Mosheh said to his father‑in‑law, Because the people come to me to inquire for instruction from before the Lord. |
| 16. Whenever they have a problem, they come to me, and I judge between man and his neighbor. I impart to them G-d's statutes and His laws." | 16. When they have a matter for judgment, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his fellow, and make them to know the statutes and the law of the Lord. |
| 17. Moshe's father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. | 17. And the father-in‑law of Mosheh said to him, This thing that thou art doing is not well ordered; |
| 18. You are going to wear yourself out, you too and this people that is with you. This [activity] is too heavy for you. You cannot do it alone. | 18. thou wilt verily wear thyself away. Aharon also, and his sons, and the elders of thy people, because the thing is heavier than thou art, able to do by thyseIf, (should take part in it.) |
| 19. Now listen to my voice. I will give you advice and G-d be with you. You must be G-d's representative for the people, and bring the[ir] problems to G-d. | 19. Now hearken to me and I will advise thee; and may the Word of the Lord be thy helper! When thou art with the people who seek instruction from before the Lord, thou shouldst take their affair before the Lord, |
| 20. You shall enlighten them as to the statutes and laws, and impart to them the path in which they must walk, and the deeds they must do. | 20. and give them counsel about the statutes and laws, make them understand the prayer they are to offer in the house of congregation, the manner of visiting the sick, of burying the dead, of being fruitful In doing good, and in the work and process of justice, and how to conduct themselves among the wicked. |
| 21. You must seek out from among all the people capable, G-d-fearing men, men of truth, who despise gain. You must then appoint them over [the people] as officers of thousands, officers of hundreds, officers of fifties and officers of tens. | 21. But thou shouldst elect from all the people men of ability who fear the Lord, upright men who hate to receive the mammon of dishonesty, and superappoint them to be heads of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. |
| 22. Let them judge the people at all times. Every major problem they will bring to you, and every minor problem they shall judge by themselves. It will [thus] be easier for you since they will bear the burden with you. | 22. And let them judge the people at all times, and every great matter bring to thee, but every little thing let them judge themselves, that they may lighten the burden that is upon thee, and bear it with thee. |
| 23. If you do this and G-d commands you [to do so], you will be able to survive, and also this entire people will come to their place in peace." | 23. If thou wilt do this, and exempt thyself from judging (every case) as the Lord shall give thee instruction, thou wilt be able to continue to hear them; and Aharon also and his sons, and all the elders of this people, will resort to the place of Judgment in peace. |
| 24. Moshe listened to the voice of his father-in-law and he did all that he said. | 24. And Mosheh hearkened to his father‑in‑law, and did all that he had said. |
| 25. Moshe chose capable men from among all Yisrael, and appointed them leaders over the people; officers of thousands, officers of hundreds, officers of fifties and officers of tens. | 25. And Mosheh selected able men from all Israel, and appointed them chief, over the people, rabbans of thousands, six hundred; rabbans of hundreds, six thousand; rabbans of fifties, twelve thousand; and rabbans of tens, six Myriads. |
| 26. They judged the people at all times. The difficult problems, they would bring to Moshe, and the simple problems they would judge by themselves. | 26. And they judged the people at all times; a hard case they, brought to Mosheh; but every light matter they judged it. |
| 27. Moshe sent his father-in-law off, and he [Yitro] went on his way to his land. | 27. And Mosheh parted from his father‑in‑law, and he went, and himself made proselytes of all the children of his land. |
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| 1. In the third month of the B’neYisrael's departure from the land of Egypt, on that very day they came to the desert of Sinai. | 1. In the third month of the Exodus of the sons of Israel from the land of Mizraim, on that day, the first of the month, came they to the desert; |
| 2. They had journeyed from Rephidim and had come to the desert of Sinai, and camped in the desert. Yisrael camped there opposite the mountain. | 2. for they had journeyed from Rephidim, and had come to the desert of Sinai and Israel encamped there in the desert, of one heart, nigh to the mountain. |
| 3. Moshe went up to [the Presence of] G-d, and Adonai called to him from the mountain, saying, "This is what you shall say to the House of Yaakov, and tell to the B’neYisrael. | 3. And Mosheh on the second day went up to the summit of the mount; and the Lord called to him from the mount, saying, This shalt thou speak to the men of the house of Jakob, and instruct the house of Israel.  [JERUSALEM. And Mosheh went up to seek instruction from before the Lord; and the Word of the Lord anticipated him from the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou speak to the men of the house of Jakob, and teach the congregation of the sons of Israel.] |
| 4. 'You saw what I did to Egypt; and [how] I carried you on wings of eagles, and brought you to Me. | 4. Ye have seen what I did to the Mizraee; and how I bare you upon the clouds as upon eagles' wings from Pelusin, to take you to the place of the sanctuary, there to solemnize the Pascha; and in the same night brought you back to Pelusin, and from thence have brought you nigh, to (receive) the doctrine of My law. |
| 5. And now if you listen diligently to My voice, and preserve My covenant; you shall be My special treasure among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. | 5. And now, if you will truly hearken to My Word and keep My covenant, you shall be more beloved before Me than all the peoples on the face of the earth. |

**Reading Assignment:**

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| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez**  By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by:  Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp.  (New York, 1990)  **Exodus III Vol. 6 – “The Ten Commandments”**  **pp. 3 - 60** | **-Ramban: Exodus Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1973)  **pp. 249 - 274** |

**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.

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Sh’mot (Exodus) ‎‎‎‎‎‎‎‎‎‎18:1 – 19:5**

**Chapter 18**

**1** **Now…Jethro…heard** What news did he hear that [made such an impression that] he came? The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek.-[from Zev. 116a, and Mechilta, combining the views of Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer]

**Jethro** He was called by seven names: Reuel, Jether, Jethro [i.e., Yithro], Hobab, Heber, Keni, [and] Putiel (Mechilta). [He was called] Jether (יֶתֶר) because he [caused] a section to be added (יִתֶר) to the Torah [namely]: “But you will choose” (below verse 21). [He was called] Jethro (יִתְרוֹ) [to indicate that] when he converted and fulfilled the commandments, a letter was added to his name. [He was called] Hobab (חוֺבָב) [which means lover] because he loved (חִבָּב) the Torah. Hobab was indeed Jethro, as it is said: “of the children of Hobab, Moses’ father-in-law” (Jud. 4:11). Others say that Reuel was Jethro’s father. [If so,] what [is the meaning of] what it [Scripture] says [referring to the daughters of Jethro]: “They came to their father Reuel” (Exod. 2:18)? Because [young] children call their grandfather “Father.” [This appears] in Sifrei (Beha’alothecha 10:29).

**Moses’ father-in-law** Here Jethro prides himself on [his relationship to] Moses, [saying,] “I am the king’s father-in-law.” In the past, Moses attributed the greatness to his father-in-law, as it is said: “Moses went and returned to Jether, his father-in-law” (Exod. 4:18). [from Mechilta]

**for Moses and for Israel** Moses was equal to all of Israel. [Mechilta]

**all that…had done** for them with the descent of the manna, with the well, and with Amalek.

**that the Lord had taken Israel out…** This was the greatest of them all.-[from Mechilta]

**2** **after she had been sent away** When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt” (Exod. 4:19), “and Moses took his wife and his sons, etc.” (Exod. 4:20), and Aaron went forth “and met him on the mount of God” (Exod. 4:27), he [Aaron] said to him [Moses], “Who are these?” He [Moses] replied, “This is my wife, whom I married in Midian, and these are my sons.” "And where are you taking them?" he [Aaron] asked. “To Egypt,” he replied. He [Aaron] retorted, “We are suffering with the first ones, and you come to add to them?” He [Moses] said to her [Zipporah], “Go home to your father.” She took her two sons and went away.- [from Mechilta]

**4** **and rescued me from Pharaoh’s sword** When Dathan and Abiram informed [Pharaoh] about the incident of the Egyptian [whom Moses had slain], and he [Pharaoh] sought to slay Moses, his [Moses’] neck became [as hard] as a marble pillar.-[from Exod. Rabbah 1:31, Deut. Rabbah 2:27]

**5** **to the desert** [We too know that he was in the desert [without the text stating it explicitly], but the text is speaking of Jethro’s praise, that he lived amidst the greatest honor of the world, but his heart prompted him to go forth to the desert wasteland to hear words of Torah.- [from Mechilta]

**6** **And he said to Moses** through a messenger.-[from Mechilta, view of Rabbi Eleazar the Modite]

**I, Jethro, your father-in- law…** If you will not come out for my sake, come out for your wife’s sake, and if you will not come out for your wife’s sake, come out for the sake of her two sons.-[from Mechilta]

**7** **So Moses went out** Jethro was afforded great honor at that time. Since Moses went out, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu also went out, and who [was it who] saw these [men] going out and did not go out? [Thus, everyone went out to greet Jethro.]-[from unknown midrashic source similar to Mechilta and Tanchuma Yithro 6]

**prostrated himself and kissed him** I do not know who prostrated himself to whom. [But] when it says, “one another (אִישׁ-לְרֵעֵהוּ),” [lit., a man to his friend,] who is called "a man"? This is Moses, as it is said: “But the man (וְהָאִישׁ) Moses” (Num. 12:3). [from Mechilta]

**8** **Moses told his father-in-law** to attract his heart, to draw him near to the Torah.-[from Mechilta]

**all the hardships** By the sea and [the hardship] of Amalek.-[from Mechilta]

**the hardships** Heb. הַתְּלָאָה. “Lammed aleph” comprise the root of the word. The “tav” is both formative and basic and sometimes is omitted from it. Similarly, separation (תְּרוּמָה), waving (תְּנוּפָה), rising (תְּקוּמָה), removing (תְּנוּאָה).

**9** **Jethro was happy** Heb. וַיִּחַדְּ, and Jethro rejoiced. This is its simple meaning. The Aggadic midrash, however, [explains that] his flesh became prickly [i.e., gooseflesh] [because] he was upset about the destruction of the Egyptians. This is [the source of] the popular saying: Do not disgrace a gentile in the presence of a convert, [even] up to the tenth generation [after the conversion].-[from Sanh. 94a]

**about all the good** The good of the manna, the well [of water that went with them], and the Torah, and above all, that He rescued them from the hands of the Egyptians. Until now, no slave had been able to escape from Egypt because the [border of the] land was locked, but these [people] fled six hundred thousand strong.-[from Mechilta]

**10** **Who has rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians** A strong nation.

**and from the hand of Pharaoh** A strong king.

**from beneath the hand of the Egyptians** As the Targum [Onkelos] renders: [from beneath the control of the Egyptians,] an expression of tyrannization and domination. [The verse is referring to] the hand, which they [the Egyptians] laid heavily upon you [the Israelites]; the slavery.

**11** **Now I know** I recognized Him in the past, but now [I recognize Him] even more.-[from Mechilta]

**than all the deities** This teaches us that he [Jethro] was knowledgeable about every type of idolatry in the world, and there was no pagan deity that he did not worship.-[from Mechilta]

**for with the thing that they plotted, [He came] upon them** Heb. זָדוּ [To be explained] according to its [Aramaic] translation. [Onkelos renders: For with the thing that the Egyptians plotted to judge Israel, with that He judged them.] With water, they planned to destroy them, and they [themselves] were destroyed with water.

**that they plotted** That they planned wickedly. Our Rabbis, however, interpreted it [זָדוּ] as an expression related to “Now Jacob cooked (וַיָּזֶד)” (Gen. 25:29) [and thus to infer that] in the very pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked. [from Sotah 11a]

**12** **burnt offering[s]** Heb. עֹלָה. As its apparent meaning, because it [the offering] was completely (כֻּלָּה) burned [on the altar].

**and [peace] offerings** Peace offerings.

**And Aaron came** And where did Moses go? [Why is he not mentioned here as partaking of the feast?] He was standing and serving them.-[from Mechilta, Jonathan]

**before God** From here [we learn] that if one derives pleasure from a feast at which Torah scholars are seated, it is as if he has derived pleasure from the splendor of the Shechinah.-[from Ber. 64a, Mechilta]

**13** **It came about on the next day** This was the day after Yom Kippur. This is what we learned in Sifrei [actually in the Mechilta]. Now what is meant by "on the next day"? On the day after his [Moses’] descent from the mountain [which took place on Yom Kippur]. You must admit that it is impossible to say [that the next day means] anything but that [Moses sat down to judge the people] on the day after Yom Kippur. Before the giving of the Torah it was impossible to say (verse 15), “and I make known the statutes, etc.,” [since the statutes had not yet been given]. And from the time that the Torah was given, until Yom Kippur, Moses did not [have the chance to] sit down to judge the people, for on the seventeenth of Tammuz he descended [Mount Sinai] and broke the tablets. On the next day he ascended early in the morning and stayed for eighty days and descended on Yom Kippur. Hence, this section is not written in [chronological] order, for “It came about on the next day,” was not said until the second year. Even according to the one [Tanna] who says that Jethro arrived before the giving of the Torah, he was not sent away to his land until the second year, for it says here (verse 27), “Moses saw his father-in-law off,” and we find in the journey of the divisions [of the tribes, which took place in the second year,] that Moses said to him [Jethro], “We are journeying to the place…Please, do not leave us” (Num. 10:29-31). Now if this [incident] had taken place before the giving of the Torah, where do we find [i.e., where is it mentioned] that he returned? If you say that there [Num. 10:29] Jethro is not mentioned, but Hobab [is mentioned], and he was Jethro’s son, [that is not so since] Hobab is identical with Jethro, for so it is written: “of the children of Hobab, Moses’ father-in-law” (Jud. 4:11). -[based on Mechilta]

**that Moses sat down…, and the people stood** He sat like a king, and they [everyone who came to be judged] all stood. The matter displeased Jethro, that he [Moses] belittled the respect due [the people of] Israel, and he reproved him about it, as it is said: “Why do you sit by yourself, and they are all standing?” [from Mechilta]

**from the morning until the evening** Is it possible to say this [that Moses actually sat in judgment from morning until evening]? But this [teaches us that] any judge who issues a true verdict-as truth demands it-even [if he spends only] one hour [reaching his judgment], Scripture deems it as if he had engaged in [the study of] the Torah for the entire day, and as if he were a partner with the Holy One, blessed is He, in the [act of] Creation, in which it says: “and it was evening, [and it was morning…]” (Gen. 1:5). [from Mechilta, Shab. 10a]

**15** **For…come** Heb. כִּי-יָבֹא, the present tense. [Although, strictly speaking, יִבֹא is the future tense, in this case it is used as the present, i.e., the people of Israel had already come to be judged.]

**to seek God** [To be understood] as its Aramaic translation (Onkelos): to seek teaching from before the Lord.

**16** **If any of them has a case, he comes to me** The one who has the case comes to me.

**17** **Moses’ father-in-law said**-As a token of honor, Scripture refers to him as the king’s father-in-law [and not by his name].

**18** **You will surely wear yourself out** Heb. נָבֹל תִּבֹּל. As the Targum renders: [You will surely wear yourself out,] but the expression is an expression of withering, fleistre in Old French, like [these examples:] “even the leaves will be withered (נָבֵל)” (Jer. 8:13); “as a leaf withersכִּנְבֹל עָלֶה from a vine, etc.” (Isa. 34:4), which withers both from the heat and from the cold, and its strength weakens, and it is worn out.

**both you**-גַּם-אַתָּה lit., also you. [This comes] to include Aaron, Hur, and the 70 elders.

**is too heavy for you** Its weight is greater than your strength.

**19** **I will advise you, and may the Lord be with you** in [this] counsel. He [Jethro] said to him [Moses], “Go, consult the Lord [as to whether my advice is sound].”-[from Mechilta]

**[You] represent the people before God** [as a] messenger and an intermediary between them and the Omnipresent, and one who inquires of Him concerning the ordinances.-[from Onkelos]

**the matters** The matters of their quarrels.-[from Jonathan]

**21** **But you shall choose** with the holy spirit that is upon you.-[from Mechilta]

**men of substance** Heb. אַנְשֵׁי-חַיִל, wealthy men, who do not have to flatter or show favoritism.-[from Mechilta]

[**men of truth** These are people who keep their promises, upon whose words one may rely, and thereby, their commands will be obeyed.-[from Mechilta]

**who hate monetary gain** Who hate [to have] their own property in litigation, like [the Talmudic adage] that we say: Any judge from whom money is exacted through litigation is not [fit to be] a judge.-[based on Mechilta and B.B. 58b]

**leaders over thousands** They were six hundred officers for six hundred thousand [men].-[from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

**leaders over hundreds** They were six thousand.- [from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

**leaders over fifties** Twelve thousand.-[from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a]

**and leaders over tens** Sixty thousand.-[from Mechilta, Sanh. 18a] [Rashi lists the number of each category of judges, which appears to be superfluous, because the Torah should start with the lowest denomination and ascend to the highest instead of starting with the highest and descending to the lowest. Rashi answers that it starts with the highest officers because they are the lowest number.]

**22** **And they shall judge** Heb. וְשָׁפְטוּ. [Onkelos renders:] an imperative expression.]

**thereby making it easier for you** Heb. וְהָקֵל. This thing [i.e., this arrangement will serve] to make it easier for you. וְהָקֵל is like הַכְבָּד in “he hardened (וְהַכְבֵּד) his heart” (Exod. 8:11) [lit., making heavy his heart]; “and slew (וְהַכּוֹת) the Moabites” (II Kings 3:24) [lit., and slaying the Moabites], a present tense.

**23** **and the Lord commands you, you will be able to survive**-Consult God; if He commands you to do this, you will be able to endure, but if He prevents you [from doing it], you will be unable to endure.-[from Mechilta]

**and also, all this people** Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the 70 elders who now accompany you.-[from Mechilta]

**26** **And they would judge**- וְשָׁפְטוּ. [Onkelos renders:], And they judge the people. [Unlike this word in verse 22, which denotes the imperative, this denotes the present.]

**they would bring** Heb. יְבִיאוּן. [Onkelos renders:] they bring [in the present tense and not in the future tense].

**they themselves would judge** Heb. יִשְׁפּוּטוּ, same as יִשְׁפֺּטוּ, and similarly [we find the verb תעבורי,], “neither shall you go away (לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי)” (Ruth 2:8), likeלֹא תַעֲבוֺרִי The Targum [Onkelos] renders: they judge. The earlier passages(verse 22) were in the imperative form.

**27** **and he went away to his land** to convert the members of his family.-[from Mechilta]

**Chapter 19**

**1** **on this day** On the New Moon (Mechilta, Shab. 86b). It could have said only, “on that day.” What is the meaning of "on this day"? That the words of the Torah shall be new to you, as if they were given just today.-[from Tanchuma Buber, p. 73]

**2** **They journeyed from Rephidim** Why did [Scripture] have to repeat and explain from where they had journeyed? Did it not already state (Exod. 17:1) that they were encamped in Rephidim? It is known that they journeyed from there. But [it is repeated] to compare their journey from Rephidim to their arrival in the Sinai desert. Just as their arrival in the Sinai desert was with repentance, so was their journey from Rephidim with repentance.-[from Mechilta]

**and Israel encamped there** Heb. וַיִּחַן, [the singular form, denoting that they encamped there] as one man with one heart, but all the other encampments were [divided] with complaints and with strife.-[from Mechilta]

**opposite the mountain** [This means] to its east. And wherever you find [the word] “opposite (נֶגֶד),” it means facing the eastern side.-[from Mechilta] [This signifies that they were facing west, toward the eastern side of Mount Sinai.]

**3** **Moses ascended** on the second day (Shab. 86a), and all his ascents were early in the morning, as it is said: “And Moses arose early in the morning” (Exod. 34:4).

**So shall you say** With this language and in this order.-[from Mechilta]

**to the house of Jacob** These are the women. Say it to them in a gentle language.-[from Mechilta]

**and tell the sons of Israel** The punishments and the details [of the laws] explain to the males, things that are as harsh as wormwood. -[Mechilta, Shab. 87a]

**4** **You have seen** This is not a tradition that you have. I am not sending you this [message] with words; I am not calling witnesses to testify before you, but you [yourselves] have seen what I did to the Egyptians. They were liable to Me for many sins before they attacked you, but I did not exact retribution from them except through you.-[from Mechilta]

**and [how] I bore you** Heb. וָאֶשָּׂא. This is [alluding to] the day that the Israelites came to Rameses-because the Israelites were scattered throughout the land of Goshen. And in a short time, when they came to start on their journey and leave, they all gathered in Rameses (Mechilta).

**on eagles’ wings** Like an eagle, which carries its young on its wings, for all other birds place their young between their feet since they fear another bird flying above them. The eagle, however, fears only man, lest he shoot an arrow at it, because no other bird flies above it. Therefore, it places them [its young] on its wings. It says, “Rather the arrow pierce me and not my children.” I [God] too did that: “Then the angel of God…moved, …And he came between the camp of Egypt, etc.” (Exod. 14:19, 20), and the Egyptians shot arrows and catapult stones, and the cloud absorbed them.-[from Mechilta]

**and I brought you to Me** As the Targum [Onkelos renders: and I brought you near to My service]. [This is to avoid ascribing corporeality to God.]

**5** **And now** If now you accept upon yourselves [the yoke of the commandments], it will be pleasant for you in the future, since all beginnings are difficult.-[from Mechilta]

**and keep My covenant** which I will make with you concerning the observance of the Torah.

**a treasure** Heb. סְגֻלָּה, a beloved treasure, like “and the treasures (וּסְגֻלַּת) of the kings” (Eccl. 2:8), [i.e., like] costly vessels and precious stones, which kings store away. So will you be [more of] a treasure to Me than the other nations (Mechilta). Now don’t think (lit., and do not say) that you alone are Mine, and [that] I have no others besides you. So what else do I have, that [My] love for you should be made evident? For the whole earth is Mine, but they [the other nations] mean nothing to Me.

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 56:1-14**

| **Rashi** | **Targum on the Psalms** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. For the conductor, on yonath elem rehokim, of David a michtam, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. | 1. For praise, concerning the congregation of Israel which is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities, yet they repeatedly praise the Lord of the World, like David, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. |
| 2. Be gracious to me, O God, because men yearn to swallow me; all day long the warrior oppresses me. | 2. Have mercy on me, O Lord God, for a sinful man has crushed me beneath him; all the day the foeman will overpower me. |
| 3. Those who eye me have yearned to swallow me all day long, for many fight against me, O Most High. | 3. My oppressors crush my bones all the day, for many are the oppressors fighting against me, O God Most High, whose throne is on high |
| 4. The day I fear, I will hope to You. | 4. In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. |
| 5. With God, I will praise His word; in God I trusted, I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? | 5. I will praise the attribute of the justice of God; in the word of God I will put my trust, I will not be afraid. What will flesh do to me? |
| 6. All day long, my words grieve [me]; all their thoughts about me are for evil. | 6. All day on my account they toil; against me all their thoughts are for evil. |
| 7. They lodge, they hide, they watch my steps, when they hope for my life. | 7. They will gather together and they will conceal a trap, they will watch my tracks; as they have waited, they have done to my soul. |
| 8. For iniquity, they expect rescue. Bring down nations with anger, O God. | 8. For the lies in their possession, drain them; for the rage of the peoples, make them poor, O God. |
| 9. You counted my wanderings; place my tears in Your flask. Is it not in Your accounting? | 9. The days of my wandering You have numbered; place my tears in your bottle, O Lord; is not the sum total of my humiliation in Your record? |
| 10. Then my enemies will retreat on the day that I call. Thereby I will know that I have a God | 10. Then my enemies will turn, turning around, on the day that I pray. This I know, for God is my help. |
| 11. With God['s justice] I will praise a word; with the Lord['s kindness] I will praise a word. | 11. In the attribute of justice of God I will give praise in His Word; in the attribute of mercy of the Lord I will give praise in His Word. |
| 12. In God I trusted, I will not fear. What can man do to me? | 12. In the Word of God I have placed my trust, I will not fear what a son of man will do to me. |
| 13. Upon me, O God, are Your vows; I will pay thanksgiving offerings to You. | 13. I have taken Your vows upon myself, O God; I will repay sacrifices of thanksgiving in Your presence. |
| 14. For You saved my soul from death, even my feet from stumbling, to walk before God in the light of life. | 14. For You have delivered my soul from being killed, indeed, my feet from bruising, to walk before the Lord in the light of life. [Another Targum: For You have delivered my soul from the death that the sinful die, indeed, my feet from stumbling through sin, so that I will walk before the Lord in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous/generous.] |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Tehillim (Psalms) 56:1-14**

**1 yonath elem rehokim** He said this concerning himself, for he was with Achish, far from the land of Israel, and Goliath’s brothers were requesting permission from Achish to kill him, as it is said (I Sam. 21:12): “Is this not David, the king of the land?” And he was among them as a mute dove.

**2 yearn** Heb. שאפנו , yearn to swallow me up, goloseir or goloser, to long, to be impatient. (Cf. Rashi to Amos 2:7.) As (Jer. 2:24): “that snuffs up (שאפה) the wind.”

**the warrior** Heb. לחם , an expression of war (מלחמה) .

**3 O Most High**The Holy One blessed be He, Who dwells on High.

**5 With God, I will praise His word** Even when He deals with me with the Divine standard of justice I will praise His word and trust in Him.

**6 All day long, my words grieve [me]** My pursuers grieve me until all the words of my mouth are grief and cries.

**7 They lodge, they hide** They lurk and lodge in the place they hope I will go, and they watch my steps (traces in French, tracks, explained in Gen. 49:19, Song of Songs 1:8) to spy on me and to lead pursuers there. All this he would complain about the wicked of Israel: that they would lie in wait for him and out of fear of them he had fled to Achish.

**they hide**They lurk.

**when they hope for my life** When they know [that I will pass] and hope for me, “He will go this way.”

**8 For iniquity, they expect rescue**To find rescue and riches for a matter of iniquity and wickedness. And פַלֶט is like לפלט , to rescue. They expect reward from Saul for that.

**Bring down...with anger** With Your anger, bring down this nation in whose midst I am, from their wisdom and from the plots that they devise to kill me.

**9 You counted my wanderings** You know the number of the places to which I wandered, to flee. place my tears in Your flask

**Place my tears in Your flask,** and let them be preserved before You.

**Is it not in Your accounting** Place them in Your accounting, to count them with the rest of my troubles. Menachem, however, associated it (p. 128) as an expression of an actual book.

**11 With God I will praise a word; with the Lord I will praise**For the Divine standard of justice and for the Divine standard of mercy I will praise.

**14 in the light of life**To return to the Land of Israel.

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎56:1-14**

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

We first read of David’s sojourn in the court of the Philistine king, Achish of Gath, in Psalm 34. There, speaking in retrospect, David exults over his miraculous escape from the Philistines. Here, however, his mood is somber as he records his initial shock and dismay upon realizing the terrible danger which faced him so unexpectedly in Achish’s palace.

Hounded by Saul and his army, the fugitive could no longer evade his relentlessly determined pursuers. He was forced to flee to a hostile foreign kingdom in the hope that perhaps these gentiles would afford him the haven that was tragically unavailable to him in his own homeland.

How bitter was David’s disappointment when he was recognized by the king’s bodyguard, who was none other than the giant Yishbi, the brother of Goliath, David’s most famous victim! David seemed to be on the very brink of death as Yishbi stormed before Achish and demanded the right to avenge the blood of his slain brother.

The holy spirit which enveloped David at that moment stirred him not only to bemoan his personal grief, but also to relate the woeful tale of his persecuted people, who were also fated to wander from land to land as hunted refugees. In this sense both the king and his people truly resembled “A silenced dove in wandering, whose salvation is far away”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This Psalm was written by David when he recalled being trapped by Yishbi, Goliath’s brother, in the palace of Achish in Gath.[[2]](#footnote-2) David saved himself by pretending to be a madman. Most of the commentaries attribute this psalm to David’s first encounter with Achish in Gath. Some explain that David composed this psalm when Achish asked him to join the war against Saul. This caused him the most terrible anguish and suffering. For on the one hand he did not want to raise a hand against King Saul, despite his persecution of him. On the other hand, his refusal would be seen as an act of disloyalty to Achish, and he would be killed. So he kept silent. In the end the princes expressed their opposition to David’s participation in the war. “Make this fellow return”,[[3]](#footnote-3) they said to Achish, and David returned to his own country. He then composed this psalm about his wondrous deliverance.

We read in the Book of Shmuel alef[[4]](#footnote-4) that upon learning of King Saul’s desire to kill him, David fled to the land of the Pelishtim, where he was welcomed by Achish, ruler of the city Gat. Soon after his arrival, however, Achish’s servants objected to David’s presence in the city, noting the fame and heroic stature that David had earned among his people. They quoted the chant, “Shaul killed in his thousands, and David in his tens of thousands”,[[5]](#footnote-5) which the Israelite women would sing upon David’s return from his successful battles against the Philistines.[[6]](#footnote-6) According to a Midrashic tradition which Rashi cites in his commentary to this chapter in Tehillim, these servants who warned Achish about David were family members of the Philistine warrior Goliath, whom David had killed. They warned their ruler about David’s military capabilities and loyalties to Bne Israel, which made him a formidable threat to the city of Gath.

David quickly became aware of what was being said about him to Achish, and was terribly frightened, realizing that he would likely be arrested and killed. In fact, the reference here in our psalm to his “seizure” by the Philistines suggests that he was actually detained. He responded to the threat by reciting this prayer to G-d, and by feigning insanity.[[7]](#footnote-7) Achish heard reports of his peculiar conduct, and dismissed him as but a crazed fool. David was thus allowed to escape back to Israel unharmed.

In this prayer David emphasizes the anguish he experiences as he is pursued on all sides, that he is under the constant pressure of his adversaries who follow his every step in an attempt to capture him. In Israel he was threatened by King Saul, and now in the Philistine lands he is suddenly threatened by Achish. Despite the relentless attempts of his foes to kill him, David nevertheless feels confident in G-d’s ability to rescue him:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:12*** *In G-d I trust, I shall not fear – what can man do to me?*

In this Psalm’s final verse,[[8]](#footnote-8) David expresses his desire “to walk about before G-d in the light of life”. According to the *Radak*, this refers to David’s longing to be able to *focus his mind and thoughts on matters of Torah and spirituality*. This period of turmoil has forced him to concentrate on ensuring his very survival, and has not allowed him time or peace of mind to devote himself as he wished to pursuing his spiritual goals. He thus asks G-d to bring him back safely to the Land of Israel and to a life of security and tranquillity, so that he could once again focus his time and energies on the service of G-d and the in-depth study of His Torah. This psalm is thus called *Michtam*,[[9]](#footnote-9) which means a *vessel of fine gold*. It is a golden prayer composed by David to fortify himself and to help him overcome his troubles, an expression of his trust in G-d[[10]](#footnote-10) that he would be raised out of his nadir of affliction.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Some Jews recite Psalms chapter 56 for the well-being of an ill person.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Just as a matter of interest, our psalm contains a kri and ktiv:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:7*** *They gather themselves together,* kri: *they hide themselves* (ktiv: They set an ambush), *they mark my steps; according as they have waited for my soul.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 56:7[[13]](#footnote-13)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **kri -** קרי | **ktiv -** כתיב |
| יִצְפּוֹנוּ | יצפינו |
| *They hide themselves*. Lying in wait to trap him. | They set an ambush. |

Recall that “*kri*-and-*ktiv*”, is a word, in the Tanach, that is read and pronounced (*kri*) one way, but written (*ktiv*) in the scroll a different way. These two ways of reading the word also imply different shades of meaning. These dual word forms are Masoretic vehicles for passing down additional teachings, unavailable without the additional word form. In general, a *kri* is the logical meaning of the word, given its context. The meaning of the *ktiv* however, is often beyond logic,[[14]](#footnote-14) and may even seem to be out of context, yet it reveals unexpected mystical implications. When we encounter a *kri*-and-a-*ktiv* we are invited into contemplation: how can we embrace this conflict in meaning?

*ktiv* **always** indicates the inner meaning, accessible only to those who can understand the deeper aspects of a word.

The *ktiv* represents the realm of Divine self-concealment; the *kri* represents the realm of Divine self-revelation. In the future, when the Name of HaShem will be read as it is written, these two realms will unite.

Now let’s spend a bit of time looking at a very interesting concept found in the very last pasuk of our psalm:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:14*** *For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; hast Thou not delivered my feet from stumbling? that I may walk* (halak - הלך) *before G-d in the light of the living.*

I would like to look more closely at this ‘walk’ (halak - הלך) that David had. What I found is that Torah was HaShem’s plan for creation, given to Israel through Moshe at Mount Sinai, in the presence of all the people of Israel. This plan was written out in the Torah. One worships HaShem by studying this plan and putting it into *practice*, i.e. one must walk (*halak*) in the Torah. *Torah does not change. But in one sense, halakhah does change… Halakhah is the application of an unchanging Torah to a changing world.* *Halakhah changes so that the Torah should not change.**[[15]](#footnote-15) The central underlying proposition of the halakhah is that it articulates, within the limits of human understanding, the will of G-d as set forth in the Torah.[[16]](#footnote-16)*

The Talmud puts this idea into perspective for us:

***Berachoth 8a*** *Raba said to Rafram b. Papa: Let the master please tell us some of those fine things that you said in the name of R. Hisda on matters relating to the Synagogue! — He replied: Thus said R. Hisda: What is the meaning of the verse: The Lord loveth the gates of Zion [Ziyyon] more than all the dwellings of Jacob?[[17]](#footnote-17) The Lord loves the gates that are distinguished [me-zuyanim] through Halachah more than the Synagogues and Houses of study.[[18]](#footnote-18) And this conforms with the following saying of R. Hiyya b. Ammi in the name of ‘Ulla: Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has nothing in this world but the four cubits of Halachah alone. So said also Abaye: At first I used to study in my house and pray in the Synagogue. Since I heard the saying of R. Hiyya b. Ammi in the name of ‘Ulla: ‘Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has nothing in His world but the four cubits of Halachah alone’, I pray only in the place where I study. R. Ammi and R. Assi, though they had thirteen Synagogues in Tiberias, prayed only between the pillars where they used to study.[[19]](#footnote-19)*

Righteousness is, by definition, the state created by living according to the Torah, HaShem’s plan. Jewish life was defined by Torah regardless of where one lived. Today, we call this type of walk: *halakhah -* הלכה*.[[20]](#footnote-20)*

The name *Halakhah[[21]](#footnote-21)* derives from the Hebrew halak הלך meaning “walk” or “going” hence the “[correct] the way to go according to the law”. The term Halakha may refer to a single rule, to the literary corpus of rabbinic legal texts, as well as to the overall system of religious law.

*Halachah* is the collective corpus of Jewish religious law, including biblical law (the 613 *mitzvot*) and later Talmudic and rabbinic law as well as customs and traditions. Like the religious laws in many other cultures, Judaism classically draws no distinction in its laws between religious and non-religious life. Hence, Halakhah guides not only religious practices and beliefs, but numerous aspects of day-to-day life. It’s the framework that keeps our focus on relationship with G-d at all times.

When properly observed, halakhah increases the spirituality in a person’s life, because it turns the most trivial, mundane acts, such as eating and getting dressed, into acts of religious significance. When people write and ask how to increase their spirituality or the influence of their religion in their lives, the only answer we can think of is: observe more halakhah. Keep kosher, light Sabbath candles, say the grace after meals, or pray at least twice a day. When you do these things, you are constantly reminded of your faith, and it becomes an integral part of your entire existence. Your existence then becomes integrated with HaShem.

Historically, Halakhah served many Jewish communities as an enforceable avenue of civil and religious law. In Israel, family and personal status law are governed by the rabbinic courts. Jews are bound by Covenant to observe Halakhah. Judaism is not about chasing the next great aesthetic high. It’s not about just having feel-good experiences where the sky opens up and you feel all, like, connected and spiritual. The point is staying focused and present and connected to G-d in all the small moments, the hard moments, the drudge moments. Let’s digress for a moment and review a bit of the history of the codifications of halakhah.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Teachers of the halakhah in the Middle Ages and afterward were of two main types. Firstly, there were the legal theoreticians such as Rashi and the tosafists, whose main activity consisted of exposition of the classical legal texts of the Talmud and other early rabbinic works. These were known as the mefareshim[[23]](#footnote-23) and their writings were naturally utilized to determine the practical law even though this was not their own province. Secondly there were the poskim[[24]](#footnote-24) whose opinions in practical legal matters were accepted because of their acknowledged expertise in this field. The activity of the poskim was of two kinds: responsa and codification. Questions of law on which direct guidance from the Talmud was not forthcoming were addressed to the great legal luminaries and from time to time these responsa were collected, helping to form the basis for new codifications of the halakhah. Both the new and older laws were frequently classified and codified. The process of responsa and subsequent codification has continued down to the present.

One of the earliest codes was the Halakhot Gedolot of Simeon Kayyara.[[25]](#footnote-25) Isaac Alfasi compiled an abbreviated, and with regard to some texts an expanded, version of the Babylonian Talmud in which only the conclusions of the Talmudic discussions were recorded so as to provide a digest of Talmudic halakhah in its practical application. Where the Babylonian Talmud has no rulings Alfasi followed decisions found in the Jerusalem Talmud. Maimonides compiled his gigantic code, the Mishneh Torah,[[26]](#footnote-26) in which he presented the final decisions in all matters of halakhah, including those laws which no longer obtained in his day, such as the laws of the sacrificial cult. Asher b. Jehiel , known as the Rosh,[[27]](#footnote-27) compiled a code in which due weight was given to the opinions of the French and German authorities which frequently differed from those of the Spanish authorities as recorded by Maimonides. Asher's son, Jacob b. Asher , followed in his father's footsteps in his code known as the Tur.[[28]](#footnote-28)

By the time of Joseph Caro there was much confusion in the whole realm of practical halakhah. In addition to the many differences between the codes, Jewish communities tended to differ in their application of the laws so that, as Caro remarks,[[29]](#footnote-29) the Torah had become not two torot but many torot. In his great commentary to the Tur, called Beit Yosef, Caro sought to remedy the situation by working out a practical guide for a uniform application of the halakhah. His method was to follow a majority opinion whenever the three earlier codes of Alfasi, Maimonides, and the Tur disagreed and to rely on other authorities whenever this method of deciding was not possible. Caro's Shulchan Aruch contains the gist of his decisions as worked out in the Beit Yosef. Unfortunately, however, Caro's method weighted the scales in favor of the Spanish schools, since these were generally in accord with the views of Alfasi and Maimonides, against the German views as represented by Asher b. Jehiel and the Tur. The Shulchan Aruch was thus incapable of serving as a practical guide to the German Jews and their followers in Poland, which from the 16th century became a foremost center of Jewish life. The remedy was provided by Moses Isserles of Cracow who added notes to the Shulchan Aruch, known as the MAPPAH, in which the German-Polish practices were recorded where these differed from the opinions of the Shulchan Aruch. The Shulchan Aruch, together with the Mappah, became the most authoritative code in the history of the halakhah, partly, at least, because it was the first code to be compiled after the invention of printing and was therefore sure of the widest dissemination.

The Shulchan Aruch marked a turning point in the history of the halakhah. Even when later authorities departed from its rulings they did so reluctantly. Adherence to the Shulchan Aruch became the test of Jewish fidelity. The "Shulchan Aruch Jew" became the supreme type of Jewish piety. Earlier rabbinical authorities were known as \*Rishonim while later ones were known as Acharonim. Rabbinic authority even in modern times is much more reluctant to disagree with the Rishonim than the Acharonim.

Ok, now let’s return to the path we were on before we took our digression to look at the history of codifications.

In this next passage, HaShem indicates that if we are to be His people, and He is to be our G-d, then we MUST walk in His statutes. There is no other way.

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 5:31 - 6:2*** *But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do [them] in the land which I give them to possess it. Ye shall observe to do therefore as HaShem your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall* ***walk*** *in all the ways which HaShem your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and [that it may be] well with you, and [that] ye may prolong [your] days in the land which ye shall possess. Now these [are] the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which HaShem your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do [them] in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear HaShem thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.*

It’s possible to be a meticulously observant Jew with an intense program of Torah study and still be headed in the wrong direction. We teach conforming to *halakhah*, the art of walking (הלך = go, walk), but neglect inculcating having a *Derech*, a “path”, to pursue, feel passion for, and make one’s religion and life about. We have to reorient the mindset so that we not only know that Judaism is a path to becoming more than we were yesterday, but we actually make that our lifestyle. An Orthodoxy in which it’s natural to have spiritual goals for the year, daily, and weekly exploration as to what we can do to reach those goals. Most of us invest this level of conscious planning into our jobs and careers, shouldn’t at least as much effort be expended on behalf of our souls? So, even if you are walking correctly, one will not have a relationship with HaShem if one does not “beautify” the mitzvot, if one does not passionately pursue a relationship with HaShem like a man’s passion when he has found the woman of his dreams.

One proper path in the pursuit of a fervent relationship with HaShem, may include the following starting points:

1. Say one blessing on a mitzva with kavanah,[[30]](#footnote-30)
2. Say one Shema[[31]](#footnote-31) with kavanah,
3. Start one Shemone Esrei[[32]](#footnote-32) with kavanah, and
4. Say one blessing on food with kavanah.

Never the less, if one has the proper path, one still needs to walk correctly. The boundaries of Jewish law are determined through the halakhic process, a religious-ethical system of legal reasoning. Our Hakhamim generally base their opinions on the primary sources of Halakhah as well as on precedent set by previous rabbinic opinions. The major sources and genre of Halakhah consulted include:

* The foundational Talmudic literature (especially the Mishna and the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud) with commentaries;
* The post-Talmudic codificatory literature, such as Maimonides’ Mishneh Torah and the Shulchan Aruch[[33]](#footnote-33) with commentaries;
* Regulations and other “legislative” enactments promulgated by rabbis and communal bodies:
  + *Gezerah*: “preventative legislation” of the Rabbis, intended to prevent violations of the commandments.
  + *Takkanah*: “positive legislation”, practices instituted by the Rabbis not based (directly) on the commandments.[[34]](#footnote-34)
* *Minhag*: Customs, community practices, and customary law, as well as the exemplary deeds of prominent (or local) rabbis.[[35]](#footnote-35)
* The *she’eloth u-teshuvoth* (responsa, literally “questions and answers”) literature.
* *Dina d’malchuta dina* (“the law of the land is law”): an additional source of Halakhah, being the principle recognizing non-Jewish laws and non-Jewish legal jurisdiction as binding on Jewish citizens in areas of commercial, civil and criminal law, provided that they are not contrary to any laws of Judaism.

Unlike British common law, though, Halakhah does not rely on a strict theory of binding precedent nor provide for systematic review of precedents. Generally, Halakhic arguments are effectively, yet unofficially, peer-reviewed. When a rabbinic posek[[36]](#footnote-36) proposes a ruling concerning a new situation, that ruling may be considered binding for the posek’s questioner or immediate community. Depending on the stature of the posek and the quality of the decision, an interpretation may also be gradually accepted by rabbis and members of similar Jewish communities.

Saadia Gaon[[37]](#footnote-37) stated that, “only halakhah, Jewish law, joined Jews together into a people”. Therefore, let us join together and “walk” with King David before G-d in the land of the living:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:14*** *For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; hast Thou not delivered my feet from stumbling? that I may walk* (halak - הלך) *before G-d in the light of the living.*

What caught David’s attention in our Torah portion? The verbal tally suggests that David was struck by what HaShem and His people do, or have done.[[38]](#footnote-38) Our Torah relates what HaShem has done through the eyes of Yitro, and our chapter of Psalms relates what David, who represents Israel, did in his relationship with HaShem. Yet, we note that both are focusing on the actions of HaShem and the people’s[[39]](#footnote-39) reactions to what He has done. Halakhah represents our response to HaShem’s actions. Our response is to imitate HaShem and to become more conformed to the image in which we were created, through our ‘walk’.

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:13 – 22**

| **Rashi** | **Targum of Isaiah** |
| --- | --- |
| 13. Hear, you that are far off, what I have done; and, you that are near, acknowledge My might. | 13. Hear, you righteous/generous, who have kept My Law from the beginning, what I have done; and you penitent, who have repented to the law recently, acknowledge My might. |
| 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the ungodly: 'Who among us will dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us will dwell with everlasting burnings?' | 14. Sinners in Zion are shattered; fear has seized them. To the wicked/lawless whose ways are thieving they say, “Who can dwell for us in Zion where the splendour of the Shekhinah is like a devouring fire? Who can sojourn for us in Jerusalem, where the wicked/lawless are about to be judged and handed over to Gehenna, everlasting burning?” |
| 15. He that walks righteously/generously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; | 15. The prophet said, The righteous/generous will sojourn in it, everyone who walks in innocence and speaks uprightly, who despises mammon of deceit, who removes his soul from oppressors, who withholds his hands, lest they accept a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing those who spill innocent blood and averts his eyes from looking upon those who do evil, |
| 16. He will dwell on high; his place of defence will be the munitions of rocks; his bread will be given, his waters will be sure. | 16. He, his camping place will be in a high and exalted place, the sanctuary; his soul will amply provide his food; his water will be sure as a spring of waters whose waters do not cease. |
| 17. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty; they will behold a land stretching afar. | 17. Your eyes will see the glory of the Shekhinah of the Eternal King in His celebrity; you will consider and behold those who go down to the land of Gehenna. |
| 18. Your heart will muse on the terror: 'Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed? Where is he that counted the towers?' | 18. Your mind will reckon up great things; “Where are the scribes, where are the reckoners?” Let them come if they are able to reckon the number of the slain heads of the armies of the mighty ones. |
| 19. You will not see the fierce people; a people of a deep speech that you cannot perceive, of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand. | 19. You will no more see the mastery of a strong people, the people whose obscure speech you cannot comprehend, scoffing with their tongue because there is no understanding among them. |
| 20. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemn gatherings; your eyes will see Jerusalem a peaceful habitation, a tent that will not be removed, the stakes whereof will never be plucked up, neither will any of the cords thereof be broken. | 20. You will look upon their downfall, Zion, city of the assemblies! Your eyes will see the consolation of Jerusalem in its prosperity, in its contentedness, like a tent which is not loosed, whose stakes are never plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. |
| 21. But there the LORD will be with us in majesty, in a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein will go no galley with oars, neither will gallant ship pass thereby. | 21. But from there the might of the LORD will be revealed to do good for us, from a place of rivers going forth, overflowing, broad, where no fisherman’s ship can go, nor any great sailboat can pass through. |
| 22. For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us. | 22. For the LORD is our judge, who brought us by His might out of Egypt, the LORD is our teacher, who have us the teaching of His Law from Sinai, the LORD is our King; He will save us and take just retribution for us from the armies of Gog. |
| 23. Your tacklings are loosed; they do not hold the stand of their mast, they do not spread the sail; then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey. | 23. In that time the Gentiles will be broken of their strength, and will resemble a ship whose ropes are cut, which has no strength in their mast, which has been cut, and it is not possible to spread a sail on it. Then the house of Israel will divide the possessions of the Gentiles, booty and spoil in abundance; although there are blind and lame among them, even they will divide booty and spoil in abundance. |
| 24. And the inhabitant will not say: 'I am sick'; the people that dwell therein will be forgiven their iniquity/lawlessness. | 24. From now on they will not say to the people who dwell in safety all around the Shekhinah, “From you a stroke of sickness has come upon us;” the people, the House of Israel, will be gathered and return to their place, forgiven of their sins. **{S}** |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:13 – 22**

**13 you far-off ones** Those who believe in Me and do My will from their youth.

**you near ones** Repentant sinners who have recently drawn near to Me.

**14 Sinners in Zion were afraid** How they would find an opening to repent.

**Who will stand up for us against a consuming fire?** (lit., Who will live for us a consuming fire?) I.e., who will stand up for us to appease burning wrath? Alternatively, who among us will dwell, i.e., who among us will dwell in Zion with the Rock, Who is a consuming fire? And he replies, “He who walks righteously, etc.”

**15 He who walks righteously** Who will be found? One who walks righteously.

**who shakes his hands** (eskot in O.F.).

**closes his ear** Comp. (I Kings 6:4) “transparent but closed.

**and closes** (V’O’otsem) Comp. (supra 29:10) “And He has closed your eyes.”

**16 his bread shall be given** He will not seek bread, for it will be supplied to him from heaven.

**his water sure** The source of his water will not fail. I.e., his seed will become great, and all his wants will be supplied.

**17 The King in His beauty shall your eyes behold** (The Holy One, blessed be He, Who is a King, Him you shall see from a distant land where you are standing. You shall see the miracles and the greatness that I will perform for you, and a people of a strange tongue, of obscure speech, shall not see the Shechinah of the King in His beauty. [This does not appear in many editions.])

**The King in His beauty shall your eyes behold.** To you, O righteous man, I say that you shall merit to see the splendor of the Shechinah of the Omnipresent.

**they shall see [from] a distant land** Jonathan renders: You shall look and see those who go down to the land of Gehinnom.

**18 Your heart shall meditate [in] fear** When you see the princes and the savants of the heathens, who ruled during their lifetime, and who are now being judged in Gehinnom, your heart will meditate in terror, and you will say, “Where is the wisdom and the greatness of these men? Where is the one who, during his lifetime, would count and weigh every word of wisdom, for they would ask him every counsel of the kingdom?

**Where is he who counts the towers** This too is a matter of the kingdom. He is appointed over the houses of the kingdom, how many they are, and how many towers a certain city requires. Comp. (Ps. 48:13) “Encircle Zion and surround it, count its towers,” how many towers it requires.

**19 A people of a strange tongue** (Noa’az) like (Loez). These are all the heathens, whose language is not the holy tongue. ([Other editions read:] These are Assyria and Babylon, whose language is not the holy tongue.) ([Manuscripts read:] These are all the nations whose language is not the holy tongue.) you shall not see You shall not esteem in your heart, for they shall all be dark and humble.

**speech...obscure** (Shafa, lit. lip.) Comp. (Gen. 11:1) “And all the land was one speech.”

**of** **stammering tongue** (Nilag Lashon). Comp. (32:4) “The tongue of the stammerers,” (and of obscure speech. All this is a foreign language, for they do not understand the holy tongue.)

**20 See Zion** But whom will you see in your heart to be regarded as a kingdom and a ruling power? Zion, which is the city of our meeting place.

**that shall not fall** Yitsa’an) shall not be lowered. Comp. (Jud. 4:11) “Elon-bezaanannim,” which is rendered as: the plain of pits, which are pits in the fields, called kombes in O.F. Comp. (Baba Kamma 61b) “The pits of the earth they are considered,” where water gathers from the mountains and the hills.

**whose pegs shall never be moved** (Yisa) The pegs with which they tie the ropes of the tent he shall not move them from the earth, from the place into which they are thrust. Comp. (I Kings 5:31) “And they quarried great stones.” Also (Jud. 16:3), “And he plucked them together with the bolt,” an expression of uprooting.

**21 But there** ‘But’ refers back to ‘whose pegs shall never be moved,’ and ‘shall not be torn.’ The evil shall not be, only the good. There the Lord shall be mighty for us, and the city shall be a place of rivers and streams, in the manner it is said in Ezekiel (47:4f.): “And He measured a thousand (cubits), and He led me...a stream that I could not cross.” And so did Joel prophesy (4:18) “And a spring shall emanate from the house of the Lord,” that it shall become progressively stronger.

**a galley with oars** a ship that floats on the water. and a great ship and a great ship [from Jonathan].

**22 For the Lord is our judge** Our prince and judge.

**Correlations**

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

& H.H. Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah

Shemot (Exodus) 18:1 – 19:5

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:13-22

Tehillim (Psalms) 56

Mk 7:9-13, Lk 11:45-54

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

God - אלהים, Strong’s number 0430.

Done / Do - עשה, Strong’s number 06213.

People - עם, Strong’s number 05971.

LORD - יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

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

Heard / Hear - שמע, Strong’s number 08085.

Done / Do - עשה, Strong’s number 06213.

People - עם, Strong’s number 05971.

LORD - יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

**Shemot (Exodus) 18:1** When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father in law, **heard <08085> (8799)** of all that **God <0430>** had **done <06213> (8804)** for Moses, and for Israel his **people <05971>**, and that the **LORD <03068>** had brought Israel out of Egypt;

**Tehillim (Psalms) 56:4** In **God <0430>** I will praise his word, in **God <0430>** I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can **do <06213> (8799)** unto me.

**Tehillim (Psalms) 56:7** Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the **people <05971>**, O **God <0430>**.

**Tehillim (Psalms) 56:10** In **God <0430>** will I praise his word: in the **LORD <03068>** will I praise his word.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:13 Hear <08085> (8798)**, ye that are far off, what I have **done <06213> (8804)**; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:19** Thou shalt not see a fierce **people <05971>**, a **people <05971>** of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:21** But there the glorious **LORD <03068>** will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

**Hebrew:**

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Reading**  **Ex. 18:1 – 19:5** | **Psalms**  **56:1-14** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is 33:13-22** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **lh,ao** | tent | Exod. 18:7 |  | Isa. 33:20 |
| **lk;a'** | eat, ate | Exod. 18:12 |  | Isa. 33:14 |
| **~yhil{a/** | God | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:4 Exod. 18:5 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:12 Exod. 18:15 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:21 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 19:3 | Ps. 56:1 Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:7 Ps. 56:9 Ps. 56:10 Ps. 56:11 Ps. 56:12 Ps. 56:13 |  |
| **#r,a,** | land, earth | Exod. 18:3 Exod. 18:27 Exod. 19:1 Exod. 19:5 |  | Isa. 33:17 |
| **rv,a]** | who,whom, which | Exod. 18:3 Exod. 18:5 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:10 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 19:4 |  | Isa. 33:13 |
| **[c;B,** | gain | Exod. 18:21 |  | Isa. 33:15 |
| **rb'D'** | proven, word, thing | Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:17 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:22 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:26 | Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:5 Ps. 56:10 |  |
| **%l;h'** | walk | Exod. 18:20 Exod. 18:27 | Ps. 56:13 | Isa. 33:15 Isa. 33:21 |
| **hz<** | this | Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:23 | Ps. 56:9 |  |
| **hz"x'** | select, see | Exod. 18:21 |  | Isa. 33:17 Isa. 33:20 |
| **[d'y"** | know, known | Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:20 | Ps. 56:9 | Isa. 33:13 |
| **hwhy** | LORD | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:10 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 19:3 | Ps. 56:11 | Isa. 33:21 Isa. 33:22 |
| **~Ay** | day | Exod. 19:1 | Ps. 56:1 Ps. 56:2 Ps. 56:3 Ps. 56:5 Ps. 56:9 |  |
| **lKo** | all, whole, entire, every | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:12 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:21 Exod. 18:22 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:24 Exod. 18:25 Exod. 18:26 Exod. 19:5 | Ps. 56:1 Ps. 56:2 Ps. 56:5 | Isa. 33:20 |
| **aol** | cannot, no, not | Exod. 18:18 | Ps. 56:13 | Isa. 33:19 Isa. 33:21 |
| **~x,l,** | meal, bread, food | Exod. 18:12 |  | Isa. 33:16 |
| **hm'** | what, how | Exod. 18:14 | Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:11 |  |
| **!mi** | than, too, among | Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 19:5 |  | Isa. 33:15 Isa. 33:19 |
| **~Aqm'** | place | Exod. 18:23 |  | Isa. 33:21 |
| **~Arm'** | proudly, heights |  | Ps. 56:2 | Isa. 33:16 |
| **[s;n"** | set, pulled | Exod. 19:2 |  | Isa. 33:20 |
| **lc;n"** | delivered | Exod. 18:4 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:10 | Ps. 56:13 |  |
| **!t;n"** | given, made | Exod. 18:25 |  | Isa. 33:16 |
| **rp;s'** | told, tell | Exod. 18:8 | Ps. 56:8 | Isa. 33:18 |
| **l[;** | sake, above, over, upon | Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:13 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:21 Exod. 18:25 | Ps. 56:5 Ps. 56:7 |  |
| **~ynIP'** | before, face | Exod. 18:12 | Ps. 56:13 |  |
| **ar'q'** | called | Exod. 19:3 | Ps. 56:9 |  |
| **ha'r'** | saw, see | Exod. 18:14 Exod. 19:4 |  | Isa. 33:15 Isa. 33:17 Isa. 33:19 Isa. 33:20 |
| **~Wf** | place, set, put | Exod. 18:21 | Ps. 56:8 |  |
| **~v'** | where | Exod. 18:5 Exod. 19:2 |  | Isa. 33:21 |
| **[m;v'** | hear, heard | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:24 Exod. 19:5 |  | Isa. 33:13 Isa. 33:15 Isa. 33:19 |
| **rm;v'** | keep | Exod. 19:5 | Ps. 56:6 |  |
| **jp;v'** | judge | Exod. 18:13 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:22 Exod. 18:26 |  | Isa. 33:22 |
| **arey"** | fear | Exod. 18:21 | Ps. 56:3 Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:11 |  |
| **~[;** | people | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:10 Exod. 18:13 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:15 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:21 Exod. 18:22 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:25 Exod. 18:26 Exod. 19:5 | Ps. 56:7 | Isa. 33:19 |
| **hf'['** | done, did, do, make, made | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:17 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:20 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:24 Exod. 19:4 | Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:11 | Isa. 33:13 |
| **[r'** | evil, wicked |  | Ps. 56:5 | Isa. 33:15 |

**Greek**

| **GREEK** | **ENGLISH** | **Torah Reading**  **Ex. 18:1 – 19:5** | **Psalms**  **56:1-14** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is 33:13-22** | **Peshat**  **Mishnah of Mark,**  **Mk 7:9-13** | **Tosefta of**  **Luke**  **Lk 11:45-54** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **αἷμα** | blood |  |  | Isa 33:15 |  | Lk. 11:50 Lk. 11:51 |
| **ἀνήρ** | man, men | Exo 18:21 Exo 18:25 |  |  |  |  |
| **ἄνθρωπος** | man |  | Psa 56:1 Psa 56:11 |  | Mk. 7:11 | Lk. 11:46 |
| **ἄρα** | so, thus |  |  |  |  | Lk. 11:48 |
| **ἄρτος** | bread, food | Exod. 18:12 |  | Isa. 33:16 |  |  |
| **γῆ** | land, earth | Exod. 18:3 Exod. 18:27 Exod. 19:1 Exod. 19:5 |  | Isa. 33:17 |  |  |
| **δίδωμι** | given, give,made | Exod. 18:25 |  | Isa. 33:16 |  |  |
| **δικαιοσύνη** | righteousness |  |  | Isa 33:15 Isa 38:19 |  |  |
| **ἔθνος** | nations | Exo 19:5 |  |  |  |  |
| **εἴδω** | see | Exo 18:14 | Isa 33:15 Isa 33:19 |  |  |  |
| **εἷς** | one | Exo 18:3 |  |  |  | Lk. 11:46 |
| **ἐκζητέω** | seek after, should be required | Exo 18:15 |  |  |  | Lk 11:50 Lk 11:51 |
| **ἔπω** | said, spoke | Exo 18:10 Exo 18:17  Exo 18:24 |  |  | Mar 7:10 Mar 7:11 | Lk 11:46 Lk 11:49 |
| **ἔργον** | works | Exo 18:20 |  |  |  | Lk. 11:48 |
| **ἐρέω** | say, said | Exo 19:3 |  |  |  |  |
| **ἔχω** | who were ill, have, had |  |  |  |  |  |
| **ζάω** | live, lliving |  | Psa 56:13 |  |  |  |
| **ζητέω** | seek |  |  |  |  | Lk 11:54 |
| **ζωή** | life |  | Psa 56:8 |  |  |  |
| **ἡμέρα** | day | Exod. 19:1 | Ps. 56:1 Ps. 56:2 Ps. 56:3 Ps. 56:5 Ps. 56:9 |  |  |  |
| **θάνατος** | death |  | Psa 56:13 |  | Mk. 7:10 |  |
| **θεός** | God | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:4 Exod. 18:5 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:12 Exod. 18:15 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:21 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 19:3 | Ps. 56:1 Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:7 Ps. 56:9 Ps. 56:10 Ps. 56:11 Ps. 56:12 Ps. 56:13 | Isa 33:22 | Mk. 7:9 Mk. 7:13 | Lk. 11:49 |
| **κινέω** | moved |  |  | Isa 33:20 |  |  |
| **κόσμος** | world |  |  |  |  | Lk. 11:50 |
| **κρίνω** | judge | Exo 18:22 Exo 18:26 |  |  |  |  |
| **κύριος** | LORD | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:10 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 19:3 | Ps. 56:11 | Isa. 33:21 Isa. 33:22 |  |  |
| **λαμβάνω** | took, take | Exo 18:2  Exo 18:12 |  | Isa 33:14 |  |  |
| **λέγω** | says | Exo 18:3  Exo 18:4  Exo 18:6  Exo 18:14  Exo 18:15  Exo 19:3 |  |  | Mk. 7:9 Mk. 7:10 Mk. 7:11 | Lk. 11:45 Lk. 11:46 Lk. 11:49 Lk. 11:51 |
| **λόγος** | words, things | Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:16 Exod. 18:17 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:19 Exod. 18:22 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:26 | Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:5 Ps. 56:10 |  | Mk. 7:13 |  |
| **οἰκέω** | shall live in, dwell |  |  | Isa 33:16 |  |  |
| **οἶκος** | house | Exo 19:3 |  |  |  | Lk. 11:51 |
| **ὅς / ἥ / ὅ** | who, which, whom | Exod. 18:3 Exod. 18:5 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:10 Exod. 18:11 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 19:4 | Psa 56:9 Psa 56:12 | Isa. 33:13 | Mk. 7:11 Mk. 7:13 |  |
| **πᾶς** | all, whole, entire, every | Exo 18:1 Exo 18:8  Exo 18:9  Exo 18:11  Exo 18:12  Exo 18:13  Exo 18:14 Exo 18:18  Exo 18:21  Exo 18:22  Exo 18:23 Exo 18:25  Exo 18:26  Exo 19:5 | Psa 56:5 |  |  | Lk. 11:50 |
| **πατήρ** | father | Exo 18:4 |  |  | Mk. 7:10 Mk. 7:11 Mk. 7:12 | Lk. 11:47 Lk. 11:48 |
| **ποιέω** | did, do, make, made | Exod. 18:1 Exod. 18:8 Exod. 18:9 Exod. 18:14 Exod. 18:17 Exod. 18:18 Exod. 18:20 Exod. 18:23 Exod. 18:24 Exod. 19:4 | Ps. 56:4 Ps. 56:11 | Isa. 33:13 | Mk. 7:12 Mk. 7:13 |  |
| **χείρ** | hands | Exo 18:4 Exo 18:8 Exo 18:9  Exo 18:10 |  | Isa 33:15 |  |  |
| **χρόνος** | of time |  |  | Isa 33:20 |  |  |

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra of Shmot (Ex.) 18:1 – 19:5**

**“VaYishma Yitro” “Now Heard Jethro”**

By: H. Em Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hakham Shaul’s**  **School of Tosefta**  **Luqas (Lk) 11:45 - 54** | | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat Mordechai (Mk) 7:1-13** |
| **And one of the experts in halakhah answered** and **said to him, “Teacher,** when you **say these** things**, you insult us also!” So he said, “Woe to you also, experts in halakhah, because you load people** with **burdens hard to bear, and** you **yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers! Woe to you because you built the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them! Thus, you are witnesses, and you approve of the deeds of your fathers because they killed them, and you build** their tombs**! For this** reason, **also the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them Nebi’im** (prophets) **and Sheliachim[[40]](#footnote-40)** (apostles**), and** some **of them they will kill and persecute,’ so that the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation! Woe to you, legal experts, because you have taken away the key to knowledge! You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering!”**  **And** when**he departed from there, the Soferim** (scribes) **and the P’rushim** (Pharisees) **began to be terribly hostile and to question him closely about many** things**, plotting to catch him regarding something** he might say**.** | **And he said to them, “You splendidly ignore the commandment of God so that you can keep your** (Shammaite) **tradition. For Moshe Rabbenu said, “Honour your father and your mother,” and, “The one who speaks evil of father or mother must certainly die. But you say, if a man says to his father or to his mother, “Whatever benefit you would have received from me *is* korban” (that is, a gift *to God)*, you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother,** thus**making void the Torah of God by your** (Shammite) **tradition that you have handed down, and you do many similar** things **such as this.”** | |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ex 18:1 – 19:5** | **Psa 56:1-14** | **Isaiah 33:13-22** | **Mk 7:9-13** | **Lk 11:45-54** |

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

Shemot 19:5 Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine…[[41]](#footnote-41)

## Will the Real Yeshua Please Stand

While my comments below incorporate passages from the previous Torah Seder, they undergird the events in the present pericopes of Mordechai (Mark) and Luqas (Luke). Yeshu’s argument about handwashing, listed below, continues into the other arguments that he held against the Shammaite P’rushim (Pharisees).

We hold that Yeshua believed and followed that Jewish life that lived a Theocratic lifestyle. This was Yeshua’s honest conviction. Here in this pericope of Mark, it is self-evident. How could any proclaimed Messiah hold any other view? With the Men of the Great Assembly in about the year 445 B.C.E, the Jewish people subordinated in earnest to Theocratic rule. However, it is readily known that the Jewish People of the first century were so fractured that it is believed that was not “normative Judaism.” This might have been believed in one sense, but I do not hold this as being true. It should be evident to all readers that Yeshua was from the School of Hillel.

Most people who Christians who read the Nazarean Codicil do not realize or acknowledge that Yeshua attended any school whatsoever. That said they believe that all of Yeshua’s education was G-d given. If this idea holds any truth, it is incredible that G-d taught him everything Moshe Rabbenu believed and taught. In this pericope, he clearly demonstrates his Torah Knowledge and its proper interpretation. In short, we acknowledge G‑d’s revalatory power and are most confident that Yeshua received his fair share. But it stands to reason that Yeshua was educated in a Yeshiva-style setting. Regarding primary and elementary schools, it stands to reason that Yeshua attends one, most likely in the Galil. There were 394 primary schools in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) alone. Therefore, severah (logic) stands to reason that there were many in the Galil as well. The exact number is not known. Even though many people of the Galil were considered the “Am HaEretz” (uneducated Jewish people), Yeshua does not fit that category.

While both Schools of the P’rushim existed in Yerushalayim, The School of Shammai and the School of Hillel, evidence is overwhelming that Yeshua followed the School of Hillel. The pilpul (the art of debate) among the educated was well developed by Yeshua’s time, and by reading the Nazarean Codicil, it is evident he knew how to do it very well.

The Nazarean Codicil, while showing Yeshua’s Rabbinic prowess, should not all be understood as absolute violent conflict with all Jewish groups. Nevertheless, there is room for near violence between the two Schools of the P’rushim. However, it will be more evident that the more significant conflict Yeshua and both Schools of the P’rushim had was with the Tzdukim (Sadducees).

Howerver, last weeks pericope proves as an example of Yeshua’s practice and ability to pilpul with other Jewish beliefs that were prevelent at the time. It should be interesting to note the practices of Yeshua have won the argument enev to this very day. What is also evident is that the House of Hillel won the authority of transmission of the Oral Torah. Scholars Jewish and Christian need to throw away old theology and look at Yeshua from a strictly Jewish perspective. What this means for Jewish scholars is to throw out Christian Theology and look at his life from their own education and see what they find.

Arguments about Handwashing

Again, we do not need great help realizing that the present Marqan pericope of Hakham Tsefet’s Peshat is anchored firmly in the present Torah Seder.

Now we see that Mark is related to the Torah Seder. As we have described before, this passage has been misinterpreted drastically and contains Christian scribal distortions to support an un-Scriptural Christian Dogma – i.e., that the Master rejected the Jewish Oral Law and Rabbinic authority.

Sabin[[42]](#footnote-42) introduces this pericope of Mark with the following words:

“In Jewish tradition, there are clear boundaries between the sacred and the profane, between what is to be consecrated to God and what is to be regarded as secular or “common.” The Jewish people see themselves as consecrated to God in accordance with God’s blessings of them in Exodus 19:6 – “You will be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” The Ten Commandments of the covenant, as well as the subsidiary Laws designed to support and protect them, are considered a gift to be cherished.

The laws concerning food are part of this larger context. Eating Kosher food and using Kosher dishes are an acknowledgement that all life, as well as the nourishing of it, is sacred to the Lord. The whole discussion in this chapter should be regarded in that context and not as an argument over trivial rules. The Jewish custom of washing their hands before eating, and the vessels before using them, was originally more than good hygiene. They were also acts of ritual purification, signaling Jewish desire to consecrate this most basic of human activities.”

With this thought in mind, let us explore the import of this pericope of Mark.

We need to start this discussion by pointing to the Babylonian Talmud and Tractate Berakhot 51b. In this passage of the Babylonian Talmud, there is a record of one of the important disputes between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. One of these disputes concerns the washing of hands. R. Hillel rules that one says the blessing over the wine and then washes hands, whereas, Shammai rules that one washes hands first ‎and then blesses the wine. R. Shammai would say that R. Hillel was eating with defiled hands even when R. Hillel washed his hands before eating, because R. Hillel would have washed after ‎the blessing of the wine.

In other words, because R. Hillel did not observe the order that Shammai had set, even though R. Hillel washed hands before eating, R. Shammai would say that such a washing of hands is invalid and considered of no effect because it was done after the blessing of the wine. Logically then, according to R. Shammai, R. Hillel would be “not walking according to the tradition of the elders, but ate bread with unwashed hands” (Mark 7:5).

Likewise, in the eyes of R. Shammai and his disciples, the Master and his disciples ate with unclean ‎hands because they washed hands after the blessing of the cup. ‎

For further information regarding this argument, please see the following audio lectures by Mr. Stephen Allen:

* <http://www.archive.org/details/DidYeshuaUpholdTheTraditionOfTheElders>
* <http://www.archive.org/details/DidYeshuaUpholdTheTraditionOfTheElderspart2>
* <http://www.archive.org/details/DidYeshuaUpholdTheTraditionOfTheElderspart3>

**7:1 - And the P’rushim (Pharisees) and some of the Soferim (scribes) who had come from Yerushalayim gathered to him. –** Now this verse is alerting that these P’rushim (Pharisees) and Soferim (Scribes Proto-Rabbis) had come to synagogue with Yeshua from Yerushalayim. Since there were two schools of Law within the Pharisaic movement (House of Hillel and House of Shammai), we need to ask whether these P’rushim (Pharisees) and Soferim (Scribes Proto-Rabbis) that came together from Yerushalayim were of the School of R. Hillel or of the School of R. Shammai. As a rule, every time we read in the Nazarean Codicil of any P’rushim (Pharisees) coming from Yerushalayim we know that they came from the House of R. Shammai. As a rule, I also find that when P’rushim (Pharisees) come from Yerushalayim, they always hold to the positions and teachings of the School of R. Shammai.

These P’rushim (Pharisees) and Soferim (Scribes Proto-Rabbis) came from Yerushalayim to observe what the position of the Master regarding this Halakha means that they considered the Master to have at least Halakhic authority even when his position would not agree with theirs. They considered him important enough to synagogue with him and the Master’s disciples!

**7:2 - And they saw that some of his talmidim were eating their bread with unclean, that is, unwashed hands,** and **found fault. –** Marcus[[43]](#footnote-43) comments on this verse:

“Loaves of bread (Greek: **ἄρτους –** ARTOUS – G740), lit. “the breads.” This plural is a bit awkward in the context; the singular ARTON would be more natural.”

Again, here we indicate that it was NOT “normal leavened bread” that they were eating, but “Challah” for Shabbat. Thus, the uncomfortable, awkward Greek plural. Mordechai is perhaps writing in Greek but his mother tongue is Hebrew and he twists the Greek grammar and syntax to conform to his mother tongue. That is why it is so relatively easy to retranslate Mark to Hebrew, as Pastor Lindsey[[44]](#footnote-44) found out!

The context here may well be Shabbat and how hands are washed for Sabbath Challah. However, there are also undertones of Pesach present. This has some weight in that the Hagaddah prescribes the order (Seder) of service as “Kaddesh” drinking the first cup of wine and U’rchatz. Why does the second step say U’rchats instead of “Rachatzah” as it does in the latter portion of the Seder? The short explanation is that the Blessing of the cup and then washing of the hands are seen as a single act of Kaddesh (sanctification of the day, person etc.).

Note that the text says that **“they** (the P’rushim [Pharisees] from the School of Shammai and the Scribes accompanying them) **found fault.”** The text does not say that they found the Master or his talmidim (disciples) to be heretics or apostates. They found the Master and his Talmidim at fault in the same way that they found the School of R. Hillel at fault since both R. Hillel and the Master of Nazareth agreed!

**7:3 - (For the P’rushim (Pharisees) and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands (ritually), thusholding fast to the traditions of the Zechanim.** “All the Jews” does not mean “All of the Jewish people” but rather “most the Jewish people.” The Greek word used here for **“fist”** is **πυγμῇ - PYGMI (G 4435)** and from where we get the English word “pugilist.” This could also be translated as “with a cupped hand” which is the way Orthodox Jews have washed hands since time immemorial. But it also admits the possibility that the washing of the hands is from the “wrist” or “fist” to the nails (cf. Mishnah Yadayim 2:3). Both are excellent possibilities with much and equal merit.

Interestingly, Christians, with their misinterpretation and mistranslation of this pericope of Mark, seem to side with the Sadducees and their modern incarnation as Karaites, who hold that only the regulations written in Scripture, not those “from tradition of the Fathers” need to be observed. In fact, much of Christianity seems to be “Sadducaism Redivivus.” But as Hanson[[45]](#footnote-45) points out: **“Scripture without an interpretative tradition is dumb and useless.”** (See also above how the knowledge about the Tsitsit and how they are tied depends solely on TRADITION.)

**7:4 - And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash (their hands).** We can also translate the verse as follows**… And** (fruit and vegetable goods) **coming from the market, if they do not immerse, they do not eat. And there are many other things which they received to observe: dippings of cups, and of utensils, and of copper vessels.** This is very correct and for more information see Mishnah Tractate Kelim. By the way, this is from the Bible and not from Tradition (see: Lev. 11:32; 15:12).

Passages 5-13 were severely criticized by the Rabbis, who agree with the Master (see Mishnah Qidd. 31b – “Honour Father and Mother” means that he must give them food and drink, clothes and cover them, lead them in and out. See also Philo Decalogue 113-18). This, therefore, also seems to be an area where the Schools of R. Hillel and R. Shammai may have differed, albeit there is no evidence for this. Again, Marcus[[46]](#footnote-46) notes:

“We have no direct evidence for judging the attitude of the Pharisees to vows, but their successors, the Rabbis, agreed with Josephus and the Jesus of the Gospels: vows are not binding if made for an unworthy purpose, and avoidance of the necessary support of parents would fall into this category.” The sort of abuse here is forbidden in the third century by the Mishnah, which says that the imperative to honor parents overrules any vow (Mishnah Nedarim 9:1).”

Klausner[[47]](#footnote-47) is of the opinion Pharisaic stringency on vows was subsequently relaxed by the Rabbis as expressed in the Mishnah and Talmuds. Klausner’s proposition seems to be like mine (although I am more forceful in attributing stringency on vows to R. Shammai and leniency to R. Hillel and our Master. However, this is just pure academic guesstimate, as there is no record to prove this, except this and other passages of the Nazarean Codicil.

Marcus proposes another opinion with merit,[[48]](#footnote-48) when he states that; “It is also possible, however, that a Pharisaic ruling on hand washing is conflated with a priestly one, since priests would have had a motive for insisting that vows to the Temple be honored.” Interestingly in this pericope, Yeshua is not only arguing with P’rushim (Pharisees) from the school of R. Shammai but also with Soferim (Scribes) who may well have been also priests.

In summary, Sabin provides for us the final note, when she comments:

“In context, Isaiah is expressing God’s frustration that the people of Jerusalem do not trust that God will save them from the besieging enemies. God finds the root cause in the fact that the people honor Him with their lips, not with their hearts and minds. Their worship has become merely “routine observance of God’s commandments” and thereby transformed into human precepts. ... But the point of Jesus criticism is clearly part of the larger theme of the chapter, Jesus is pointing out that human relationships (i.e. parents to children and vice versa) are what is truly sacred, and no religious formula can rationalize that sacredness away.”

**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!”**

**Next Shabbat:**

**Shevat 17, 5784, January 26/27, 2024**

**Shabbat: “V’Atem Tihyu Li” – “And you will be unto me”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“V’Atem Tihyu Li”** | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 19:6-9 | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 21:1-3 |
| **“And you will be unto me”** | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 19:10-13 | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 21:4-6 |
| **“Y vosotros seréis para Mí”** | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 19:14-16 | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 21:7-11 |
| Sh’mot (Exodus) 19:6 – 20:23 | Reader 4 – Sh’mot 19:17-25 |  |
| Ashlamatah:  Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 61:6 – 62:4 | Reader 5 – Sh’mot 20:1-14 | **Monday / Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Sh’mot 20:15-18 | Reader 1 – Sh’mot 21:1-3 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 57:1-12 | Reader 7 – Sh’mot 20:19-23 | Reader 2 – Sh’mot 21:4-6 |
|  | Maftir – Sh’mot 20:21-23 | Reader 3 – Sh’mot 21:7-11 |
| N.C.: Mk 7:14-16; | Isaiah 61:6 – 62:4 |  |

**Upcoming Festival:**

**Tu B’Shebat - Shevat 15, 5774 – January 24/25, 2024**

**Tu B’Shebat is the New Year for the Trees.**

**Tu B’Shebat Begins at sundown on January 24, 2024 and ends at 3 Stars on January 25, 2024**

**For more information, see:** [**https://www.betemunah.org/tubshevt.html**](https://www.betemunah.org/tubshevt.html)

**Reading Assignment for next Shabbat**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez**  By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by:  Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp.  (New York, 1990)  **Exodus III Vol. 6 – “The Ten Commandments”**  **pp. 60 - 446** | **-Ramban: Exodus Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1973)  **pp. 274 - 337** |

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Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Edited by HH Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham

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1. v.l, 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-1)
2. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) chapter 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) 29:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) chapter 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) 18:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. see Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 18:7, 21:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Tehillim (Psalms) 56:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See also: ***Sotah 10b*** *For the Chief Musician, the silent dove of them that are afar off. Of David, Michtam* (Psalms 56:1) *— R. Johanan said: At the time when her proofs were removed, she became like a silent dove. ‘Of David’, ‘Michtam’ — [that means] there issued from her David who was meek [mach] and perfect [tam] to all.* (Note: *Ruth*, David’s great grandmother was the *dove*) *Another explanation of ‘Michtam’ is: his wound [makkah]* (I.e., the place where there should have been a wound after circumcision.) *was whole [tammah], since he was born already circumcised. Another explanation of ‘Michtam’ is: just as in his youth [before he became king] he made himself small in the presence of anyone greater than himself to study Torah, so was he the same in his greatness.* (After he became king, he humbled himself to study. So he was meek and perfect.) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Elohim - אלהים [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *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-11)
12. Siddur Sfat Emet, Rabbi Wolf Heidenheim, Rodelheim [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Soncino books of the Bible, The Psalms, Hebrew text & English translation with an introduction and commentary, by The Rev Dr. A. Cohen, revised by Rabbi E. Oratz, assisted by Rav Shalom Shahar. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Igeret Hakodesh*, Chapter 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Crisis and Covenant, by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, p. 154, 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid. 15, P. 156 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Tehillim (Psalms) 87:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Beth Midrash is here understood as the house of popular, aggadic lectures which, however, was not devoted to the study of Halakhah. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. In the Beth-hamidrash. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Halakha constitutes the practical application of the 613 mitzvot (“commandments”) in the Torah, as developed through discussion and debate in the classical rabbinic literature, especially the Mishna and the Talmud (the “Oral Torah”) and as codified in the Mishneh Torah (“Repetition of the Torah”) or Shulchan Aruch (“Code of Law”). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Judaism is not just a set of beliefs about HaShem, man, and the universe. Judaism is a comprehensive way of life, filled with rules and practices that affect every aspect of life: What you do when you wake up in the morning, what you can and cannot eat, what you can and cannot wear, how to groom yourself, how to conduct business, who you can marry, how to observe the holidays and Sabbaths, and perhaps most important, how to behave towards HaShem, other people, and animals. This set of rules and practices is known as halakhah. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This review of history is an excerpt from Encyclopedia Judaica: Halakhah. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. "commentators" [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. "decision-makers" [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. ninth century [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. called, after his death, the Yad Chazakah. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Rabbenu Asher [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Tur = "row," pl. Turim, properly the "Four Rows," so called because the work is divided into four parts. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Beit Yosef, Intro. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Kavanah: (Heb. כַּוָּנָה; lit. “directed intention”), the phrase used in rabbinic literature to denote a state of mental concentration and devotion at prayer and during the performance of *mitzvot*. Although the demand for *kavanah* as an obligatory component of religious prayer and action is not explicitly mentioned in the Pentateuch, it is clearly referred to by the prophets. Isaiah, for instance, condemns those who “with their mouth and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me” (Isaiah 29:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The *Shema* is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God. Many poskim say that the recitation of the Shema is the minimum amount one should pray, i.e. once in the evening and once in the morning. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Amida (Hebrew: תפילת העמידה, Tefilat HaAmida, “The Standing Prayer”), also called the Shemone Esrei (שמנה עשרה, “The Eighteen”, in reference to the original number of constituent blessings: there are now nineteen), is the central prayer of the Jewish liturgy. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Shulchan Aruch (literally: “Set Table”) also known by most Jewish communities as “the Code of Jewish Law.” There are various legal codes in Judaism but the Shulchan Aruch is the most widely consulted. It was authored in Safed (today in Israel) by Yosef Karo in 1563 and published in Venice two years later. Together with its commentaries, it is the most widely accepted compilation of Jewish law ever written. The halachic rulings in the Shulchan Aruch generally follow Sephardic law and customs. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Halakhah also includes some laws that are not derived from mitzvot in the Torah. A Takkanah is a law that was instituted by the rabbis. For example, the "mitzvah" to light candles on Chanukah, a post-biblical holiday, is a Takkanah. The practice of public Torah readings every Monday and Thursday is a Takkanah instituted by Ezra.

    Some takkanot vary from community to community or from region to region. For example, around the year 1000 C.E., a rabbi instituted a prohibition of polygamy, a practice clearly permitted by the Torah and the Talmud. It was accepted by Ashkenazic Jews, who lived in Christian countries where polygyny was not permitted, but was not accepted by Sephardic Jews, who lived in Islamic countries where men were permitted up to four wives.

    A Takkanah, like a Gezerah, is just as binding as a Torah mitzva. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. A custom or procedure among Jews that is so firmly established as to have the binding force of law. One should not deviate from the Minhagim of one’s ancestors. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. “decisor” [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Rabbi Saadia ben Yosef Gaon was a prominent rabbi, Jewish philosopher, and exegete of the Geonic period who was active in the Abbasid Caliphate. The first important rabbinic figure to write extensively in Arabic, he is considered the founder of Judeo-Arabic literature. Known for his works on Hebrew linguistics, Halakha, and Jewish philosophy. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Done / Do - עשה, Strong’s number 06213, in Exodus 18:1 and Psalms 56:5 (56:4 in the KJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. People - עם, Strong’s number 05971, Exodus 18:1 and Psalms 56:8 (56:7 in the KJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Yitro sent a message that he was coming to meet Moshe through a messenger. Cf. *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs: Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary*. 2nd ed. London: Soncino Press, 1981. p. 288 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Carasik, M., ed. (2005). Exodus: NJPS English Translation (M. Carasik, Trans.; First edition, Ex 19:5). The Jewish Publication Society. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Sabin, M. N. (2006), New Collegeville Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Marcus, J. (2000), *The Anchor Bible: Mark 1-8 – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New ‎York: Doubleday, p. 436.‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Lindsey R.L. (1969) *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark: Greek-Hebrew Diglot With English Introduction*, Jerusalem: Dugith Publishers, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Hanson, A. T. (1980). *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture,* London: SPCK, pp. 13-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Marcus, J. (2000), *The Anchor Bible: Mark 1-8 – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New ‎York: Doubleday, p. 436.‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Klausner, J. (1929), *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching*, New York: Macmillan, p.290. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Marcus, J. (2000), *The Anchor Bible: Mark 1-8 – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New ‎York: Doubleday, p. 436.‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-48)