Tsefet’S Pericope #81

## The Lights of Messiah

1. σπουδὴν[[1]](#footnote-1) *spoude* {spoo-day'}

Philo: What is not found in Josephus is all the more common in Philo, namely, the use of σπουδαῖος ‎for the morally “good” as in Stoic circles → 560, 39 ff. (opp. φαῦλος). The σπουδαῖος is the “upright ‎and virtuous man,” Leg. All., III, 67 cf. Mut. Nom., 31: πάντως οὖν σπουδαῖος ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, ᾧ ‎φησιν• ἐγώ εἰμι θεὸς σός. Characteristic here is the way in which the religious saying about election in ‎Gn. 15 is turned into a moral statement. It is because Abraham is a σπουδαῖος that G-d says to him: ‎‎“I am your G-d.” The σπουδαῖος is the “**wise man**,” τοῦ σπουδαίου βίος ἐν ἔργοις, ἐν λόγοις δὲ ὁ τοῦ ‎φαύλου θεωρεῖται, Som., II, 302.‎[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. πίστει *pistis* {pis'-tis}

Pistis was never a religious or theological term in Classical Greek.[[3]](#footnote-3) Its use in the LXX indicates a solid collective bond between G-d and the faithful. Yochanan uses pistis as a power that overcomes the kosmos (world).

Faith – pistis to Philo is monotheism to the core which wholeheartedly trusts in G-d’s providence (again turning to Gen 15). In Philo pistis is the disposition of the soul. This disposition according to Philo produced ἀρετήν (moral excellence).[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. ἀρετήν *areten* {ar-et'-ayn}

Rendered “Eminence” in some cases. ἀρετήν is an achievement. In essence, ἀρετήν is righteousness **δικαιοσύνη**. It is interesting that this word is used in close proximity to the Hebrew word חֶסֶד. However, it is most frequently thought of as הוֹד.[[5]](#footnote-5) ἀρετήν is also used to describe faithfulness in 2 Macc 10.28. In the cited passage it is used in conjunction with εὐσεβείᾳ. ἀρετήν is also linked with the word **δύναμις** as a more comprehensive synonym.

1. γνῶσιν *gnosisn* {gno'-sisn}

Primarily synonymous with the Hebrew word “yada.” However, it appears that in some places it is used as da’at. Because the Tanach uses this word in places as “da’at” it only makes sense to translate this as da’at and put it into that position of the da’at in the tree of Messiah’s lights.

1. ἐγκρατείᾳ *egkrateia* {eng-krat'-i-ah}

This word denotes power or lordship expressing power over someone, something, or self. Consequently, the only place where this concept fits in Messiah’s tree of light is in the sphere of Gevurah/Din. The ability to control or master one’s self requires both strength and judgment. Philo sees the use of this word as mastery of one’ desires. [[6]](#footnote-6)

1. ὑπομονῇ *hupomone* {hoop-om-on-ay'}

The ideas of steadfastness, endurance and patience permeate this word. Therefore, this word should be placed with Netzach because it represents patient endurance. This word is also seen as being related to eschatology. Those who possess this quality look for the coming (not yet apparent) kingdom. [[7]](#footnote-7)

1. εὐσεβείᾳ eusebeia {yoo-seb'-i-ah}

While εὐσεβείᾳ means G-dly piety, it contains within its usage the respect for all forms of life be they religious, personal, national, or otherwise. εὐσεβείᾳ finds peace in its environment and works hard to avoid transgressing any form of religious and national law. Because of the universal application of piety and peace this term should be placed under the auspices of Tiferet/ Rachamim.

1. φιλαδελφίᾳ philadelphia {fil-ad-el-fee'-ah}

The Greek term φιλαδελφίᾳ is problematic because it is actually rooted in the idea of “brotherhood.” Honest brotherhood is founded in unity between brothers. The idea of brotherhood in φιλαδελφίᾳ is consistent with the Hebraic use of brother or brothers. Therefore, while it covers a great deal of territory it fits with the idea of Yesod. What’s more interesting is that both the word for “brotherhood” and the word for “love of brothers” are feminine words. **φιλαδελφίαν** is anoun accusative feminine singular from **φιλαδελφία.**

1. ἀγάπην agape {ag-ah'-pay}

Our final word ἀγάπην covers so much ground that it takes the TDNT 34 pages to define the term.[[8]](#footnote-8) This word is directly related to the ideas of the Hebraic term *Ahavah*. It is often abused by translators and scholars, and it is also often used to capture the idea of *Chessed* and *Gedulah* greatness. Those who possess this virtue are truly full of Chesed and greatness.

I have tried to weigh all of Rashi’s comments on Lev. 17:1-16 in the following chart and I have placed Rashi where he seems most appropriate.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| VERSE | RASHI’S QUESTIONS/COMMENTARY | HAKHAM TSEFET | SEPHIROT |  |
| 3 | Bring the sacrifice to the door of the Tent | Diligence | Chokhmah | σπουδὴν |
| 4 | Carefulness in sacrifice | Faithful Obedience | Binah | πίστει |
| 5 | Which animals | Virtue/Excellence | Hod | ἀρετήν |
| 7 | Satyrs/demons | Knowledge | Da’at | γνῶσιν |
| 8 | Liability for a burnt offering | Mastery/self-control | Gevurah/Din | ἐγκρατείᾳ |
| 9 | Avoiding potential judgment upon father and children | Patience/endurance | Netsach | ὑπομονῇ |
| 10 | Ha-Shem, in His righteousness, turns His attention to this problem | Godliness/piety | Tiferet/Rachamim | εὐσεβείᾳ |
| 14 | Feminine form of word | Brotherly love | Yesod/So’od | φιλαδελφίᾳ |
| 16 | Atonement | Love  | Chessed/Gedulah | ἀγάπην |

Keter is not used because it is indicative of aspects of HaShem which we cannot understand through mundane thought.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sephirah/Attribute** | **Given Names in English/Hebrew** |
| Keter | Crown, Divine Will |
| Chokhmah | Wisdom, Beginning, Primordial point, Father |
| Binah | Understanding, Palace, Womb, Mother |
| Da’at | Knowledge |
| Chessed/Gedulah | Mercy, Greatness, Love, Grace |
| Gevurah/Din | Might, Power, Judgment, Rigor |
| Tiferet/Rachamim | Beauty, Compassion, Peace, Harmony |
| Netsach | Endurance, Prophecy, Victory |
| Hod | Splendour, Prophecy, Majesty |
| Yesod/So’od | Foundation, Secret, Truth, Honesty |
| Malkhut | Kingdom, Shekhinah, Congregation |
|  |  |

The sphere of Malkhut (Kingdom) is not mentioned in this pericope because Messiah and the Kingdom lacks complete fulfillment. The theme in this Seder of the Triennial Torah reading cycle is about the New Moon and its relationship to the fall festivals. To be sure, Hakham Tsefet does mention the term BASILEIA (Heb. Malkhut) in the next pericope (2 Peter 1:11).

The following chart shows the orders of the spheres of the Lights of Messiah as found in Messiah’s Tree of Life and contrasted with the order given by Hakham Tsefet.

|  |
| --- |
| Comparative order |
|  | Typical order | Tsefet |
| 1 | Chokhmah | Chokhmah |
| 2 | Binah | Binah |
| 3 | Da’at | Hod |
| 4 | Chessed/Gedulah | Da’at |
| 5 | Gevurah/Din | Gevurah/Din |
| 6 | Tiferet/Rachamim | Netsach |
| 7 | Netsach | Tiferet/Rachamim |
| 8 | Hod | Yesod/So’od |
| 9 | Yesod/So’od | Chessed/Gedulah |

While we can definitely associate each of Hakham Tsefet’s lights with the Lights of Messiah’s Tree, we cannot, at present account for the divergent order of words.

Endnotes:

(2Pe 1:5-7 STE)

5  καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετήν ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν

 6  ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν εὐσέβειαν

 7  ἐν δὲ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ τὴν φιλαδελφίαν ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην

216  διὸ καὶ πιστεῦσαι λέγεται τῷ θεῷ πρῶτος, ἐπειδὴ καὶ πρῶτος ἀκλινῆ καὶ βεβαίαν ἔσχεν ὑπόληψιν, ὡς ἔστιν ἓν αἴτιον τὸ ἀνωτάτω καὶ προνοεῖ τοῦ τε κόσμου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ. κτησάμενος δὲ **πίστιν**, τὴν τῶν **ἀρετῶν** βεβαιοτάτην, συνεκτᾶτο καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἁπάσας, ὡς παρὰ τοῖς ὑποδεξαμένοις νομίζεσθαι βασιλεύς, οὐχὶ ταῖς παρασκευαῖς ἰδιώτης γὰρ ἦν ἀλλὰ, τῷ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μεγέθει, φρονήματος ὢν βασιλικοῦ. (Vir 1:216 PHI).

Here Philo lists moral excellence (**ἀρετῶν**) as the result of faith (**πίστις** - pistis) Philo also suggests that the goal (τελειοτάτῃ) or perfection of is accomplished by or through **πίστις.** The achievement of such moral excellence is no easy task. This was given to Avraham as **ἆθλον** a great prize.

TDNT tells us that Philo uses in close proximity the two words **ἀρετῶν** and **εὐσεβείᾳ**. These two virtues when found together produce **iereion** -Shalom. In summary of Philo’s thoughts on **πίστις** Philo sees **πίστις** as the goal of piety (faithful obedience) **ἀρετῶν** and **εὐσεβείᾳ**.

Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Paris, Tenn. October 21, 2010

BS”D (B’Siyata D’Shamaya)‎

Aramaic: With the help of Heaven

**Comments and Approbation**

By Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

It is with great pleasure that I receive and accept the most excellent research findings of His Excellency Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham with regards to the relationship between the Torah Seder of Leviticus 17:1-6 and the corresponding commentary of Hakham Tsefet in Pericope # 81 of the Peshat Nazarean Codicil Triennial Cycle reading. In this brief list of terms given by Hakham Tsefet there seems to be an inescaple allusion to the 10 spheres of light as refracted by Messiah’s Tree of Life, and paralleled to the 10 Hebrew "Sayings" of G-d ("Let there be..") in the account of creation, as well as in the Decalogue (Ten Words).

The term “light” is used in the Nazarean Codicil to describe both G-d who created it, and Messiah who embodies it. Thus we read:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from **the Father of lights** with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17 ESV)

And:

1 In the beginning was the Torah, and the Torah was with God, and the Torah was/is an Elohim (Judge). 2 He was in the beginning (Genesis 1:1) with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was/is life, and the life was/is **the [primordial] light[[9]](#footnote-9) of men**. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, **to bear witness about the [primordial] light**, that all might faithfully obey through him. 8 He was not the light, but came **to bear witness about the [primordial] light.** 9 **The true [primordial] light,** which enlightens everyone, was coming/returning into the world. (John 1:1-9)

The first mention of some of the components or spheres of this primordial Light/power are found in the Scriptures in the texts of:

“and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in **wisdom,** and in **understanding,** and in **knowledge,** and in all manner of workmanship,” (Exodus 31:3 JPS)

“Yours, LORD, are **greatness,** **might,** **splendor,** **triumph,** and **majesty** -- yes, all that is in heaven and on earth; to You, LORD, belong **kingship** and **preeminence** above all.” (1Ch 29:11 JPS 1985)

“The LORD founded the earth by **wisdom;** He established the heavens by **understanding;** By His **knowledge** the depths burst apart, And the skies distilled dew.” (Proverbs 3:19-20 JPS 1985)

“A house is built by **wisdom,** And is established by **understanding;** By **knowledge** are its rooms filled With all precious and beautiful things.” (Proverbs 24:3-4 JPS 1985)

This concept then of the primordial light refracted by the ten lights of the Messiah in the Tree of Life was well known to the Master and to his Talmidim. Therefore it is of no surprise that Hakham Tsefet uses these ten lights as virtues which when cultivated properly and in their correct manner makes one to become like the Master himself!

It appears that the list of Hakham Tsefet virtues in 2 Pet 1:5-7 as noted by His Excellency Dr. Adon Yeshayahu in his most excellent research are not mentioned in the order of their flow. But one may also say that the text of 1 Chr. 29:11 has also the order somewhat altered. What can we make of this? Perhaps we can avail ourselves of the often quoted Rabbinic postulate that the Scriptures do not always follow chronological order, and in this case, sequential order, and this for some rhetorical effect or purpose.

Therefore, we should agree with the proposition made by Her Excellency Giberet Vardit bat Sarah in her Question to me regarding Leviticus 17:1-16 and the 10 Sephiroth of the refracted light of the Messiah:

*How is it that Rashi, a thousand years after the writing of the Nazarean Codicil, follows ‎the same order of Hakham Tsefet’s commentary for this Torah Seder?‎ Could it be that they are both following the same blueprint of the Torah Seder?*

And the answer to her question after careful consideration must be a resounding Yes! Barukh Ha-Shem!

Again, once again I am greatly indebted to the high quality research of His Excellency Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham, and to the wise counsel of my esteemed colleague HH Rosh Paqid Adon Hillel ben David, and to the great questions of Her Excellency Giberet Vardit bat Sarah. In truth it is said: “Where there is no guidance, a people fall, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (Prov 11:14 ESV). Blessed be Ha-Shem who has not left us in darkness but has in mercy given us ample supply of wisdom, amen ve amen!

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

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Heshvan 13, 5771

1. See TDNT 7:564 (Philo) where σπουδὴν means “wise man” Hakham [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is vital to look at how Philo looks at certain things. This is because Philo was a Hellenistic Jew. However, this creates a plethora of problems that we will not discuss here. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. TDNT 6:179 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. TDNT 6:202

VIR 1:216 PHE 216 for which reason he is the first person who is said to have **believed** in God [Genesis 15:6], since he was the first who had an unswerving and firm comprehension of him, apprehending that there is one supreme cause, and that he it is which governs the world by his providence, and all the things that are therein. And having attained to a most firm comprehension of the **virtues**, (ἀρετήν) he acquired at the same time all the other virtues and excellencies also, so that he was looked upon as a king by those who received him [Genesis 23:6], not indeed in respect of his appointments, for he was only a private individual, but in his magnanimity and greatness of soul, inasmuch as he was of a royal spirit. (VIR 1:216 PHE) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Hab 3.3, Zech 6.13, of Messiah; it is also used for the praises of G-d, Isa 43.21, 42.12, 63.7 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. TDNT 2:339-342 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. TDNT 4:581-588 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. TDNT 1:21-55 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The concept of “primordial light” in Judaism is said to be created by G-d before the creation narrative starting with Gen. 1:1, and was withdrawn when Adam sinned, and will be restored to the righteous at the end of days with the coming of the Messiah. This is implied, for example in the rendition of Gen. 1:1 in the Jerusalem Targum: “In wisdom (be-hukhema) the Lord created ...”, as well as in the texts of Prov. 3:19-20; and 24:3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)