

Esnoga Bet Emunah

4544 Highline Dr. SE
Olympia, WA 98501
United States of America
© 2016
<http://www.betemunah.org/>
E-Mail: skilli@aol.com



Esnoga Bet El

102 Broken Arrow Dr.
Paris TN 38242
United States of America
© 2016
<http://torahfocus.com/>
E-Mail: waltoaklev@charter.net

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

Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings	First Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle
I Adar 04, 5776 – Feb. 12/13, 2016	First Year of the Shmita Cycle

Candle Lighting and Habdalah Times:

Amarillo, TX, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 6:08 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 7:06 PM

Chattanooga, & Cleveland, TN, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 6:03 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 7:00 PM

Murray, KY, & Paris, TN, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:12 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:11 PM

San Antonio, TX, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 6:03 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:58 PM

St. Louis, MO, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:17 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:17 PM

Austin & Conroe, TX, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:59 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:54 PM

Manila & Cebu, Philippines

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:41 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:32 PM

Olympia, WA, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:13 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:19 PM

Sheboygan & Manitowoc, WI, US

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 4:58 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:02 PM

Tacoma, WA, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:11 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:17 PM

Brisbane, Australia

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 6:17 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 7:11 PM

Miami, FL, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:54 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:47 PM

Port Orange, FL, U.S.

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 5:53 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 6:48 PM

Singapore, Singapore

Fri. Feb 12 2016 – Candles at 7:03 PM
Sat. Feb 13 2016 – Habdalah 7:53 PM

For other places see: <http://www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting.htm>

Roll of Honor:

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David and beloved wife HH Giberet Batsheva bat Sarah
His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah
His Honor Paqid Adon David ben Abraham
His Honor Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Karmela bat Sarah,
His Honor Paqid Adon Yoel ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Rivka bat Dorit
His Honor Paqid Adon Tsuriel ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Gibora bat Sarah
Her Excellency Giberet Sarai bat Sarah & beloved family
His Excellency Adon Barth Lindemann & beloved family
His Excellency Adon John Batchelor & beloved wife
Her Excellency Giberet Leah bat Sarah
Her Excellency Giberet Gloria Sutton & beloved family
His Excellency Adon Gabriel ben Abraham and beloved wife HE Giberet Elisheba bat Sarah
His Excellency Adon Yehoshua ben Abraham and beloved wife HE Giberet Rut bat Sarah
Her Excellency Giberet Prof. Dr. Emunah bat Sarah & beloved family

His Excellency Adon Robert Dick & beloved wife HE Giberet Cobena Dick
Her Excellency Giberet Jacquelyn Bennett
His Excellency Adon Eliseo Peña and beloved wife HE Giberet Eva Peña
His Excellency Adon Gary Smith and beloved wife HE Giberet Brenda Smith
His Excellency Adon Cory and beloved wife HE Giberet Mariam Felty
His Excellency Adon Jarod Barak Barnum and beloved wife HE Giberet Crystal Barnum

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 loose any of our commentaries, or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to benhaggai@GMail.com with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!

Shabbat: "Vayiten L'kha" - "And give you"

Shabbat	Torah Reading:	Weekday Torah Reading:
וַיִּתֵּן לְךָ		
"Vayiten L'kha"	Reader 1 – B'resheet 27:28-31	Reader 1 – B'resheet 28:10-12
"And give you"	Reader 2 – B'resheet 27:32-35	Reader 2 – B'resheet 28:13-15
"Y te dé"	Reader 3 – B'resheet 27:36-40	Reader 3 – B'resheet 28:16-19
B'resheet (Gen.) 27:28 – 28:9	Reader 4 – B'resheet 27:41-43	
Ashlamatah: Hos 14:6-10 + Joel 1:1-3 + 2:12-13	Reader 5 – B'resheet 27:44-46	
	Reader 6 – B'resheet 28:1-4	Reader 1 – B'resheet 28:10-12
Psalms 22:1-32	Reader 7 – B'resheet 28:5-9	Reader 2 – B'resheet 28:13-15
	Maftir – B'resheet 28:7-9	Reader 3 – B'resheet 28:16-19
N.C.: Mk. 3:11-12; Luke 6:19; Acts 5:42	Hos. 14:6-10 + Joel 1:1-3 & 2:12-13	

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!

Contents of the Torah Seder

- The Blessing of Isaac – Gen. 27:28 - 28:9

Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: B'reshet (Genesis) 27:28 – 28:9

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
28. And may the Lord give you of the dew of the heavens and [of] the fatness of the earth and an abundance of corn and wine.	28. Therefore the Word of the LORD give you of the good dews which descend from the heavens, and of the good fountains that spring up, and make the herbage of the earth to grow from beneath, and plenty of provision and wine.
29. Nations shall serve you and kingdoms shall bow down to you; you shall be a master over your brothers, and your mother's sons shall bow down to you. Those who curse you shall be cursed, and those who bless you shall be blessed."	29. Let peoples be subject to you, all the sons of Esau, and kingdoms bend before you, all the sons of Keturah; a chief and a ruler be you over your brethren, and let the sons of your mother salute you. Let them who curse you, my son, be accursed as Bileam bar Beor; and them who bless you be blessed as Mosheh the prophet, the scribe of Israel. JERUSALEM: Let peoples serve before you, all the sons of Esau: all kings be subject to you, all the sons of Ishmael: be you a chief and a ruler over the sons of Keturah: all the sons of Laban the brother of your mother will come before you and salute you. Who soever curses you, Ya'aqob, my son, will be accursed as Bileam ben Beor; and whosoever blesses you will be blessed as Mosheh the prophet and scribe of Israel.
30. And it came to pass, when Isaac had finished	30. And it was when Yitschaq had finished blessing

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
blessing Jacob, and it came to pass Jacob had just left his father Isaac's presence, that his brother Esau came from his hunt.	Ya'aqob, and Ya'aqob had only gone out about two handbreadths from Yitschaq his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.
31. And he too had made tasty foods, and he brought [them] to his father, and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of the game of his son, so that your soul will bless me."	31. And the Word of the LORD had impeded him from taking clean venison; but he had found a certain dog, and killed him, and made food of him, and brought to his father, and said to his father, Arise, my father, and eat of my venison, that your soul may bless me.
32. And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."	32. And Yitschaq his father said to him, Who are you? And he said, I am your firstborn, Esau.
33. And Isaac shuddered a great shudder, and he said, "Who then is the one who hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate of everything while you had not yet come, and I blessed him? He, too, shall be blessed."	33. And Yitschaq was moved with great agitation when he heard the voice of Esau, and the smell of his food rose in his nostrils as the smell of the burning of Gehinnom; and he said, Who is he who has got venison, and come to me, and I have eaten of all which he brought me before you came, and I have blessed him, and he will, too, be blessed?
34. When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out a great and bitter cry, and he said to his father, "Bless me too, O my father!"	34. When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a cry exceeding great and bitter, and said to his father, Bless me, me also, my father! And he said,
35. And he said, "Your brother came with cunning and took your blessing."	35. Your brother has come with subtlety, and has received from me your blessing.
36. And he said, "Is it for this reason that he was named Jacob? For he has deceived me twice; he took my birthright, and behold, now he has taken my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"	36. And he said, His name is truly called Ya'aqob; for he has dealt treacherously with me these two times: my birthright he took, and, behold, now he has received my blessing! And he said, Have you not reserved a blessing for me?
37. And Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I made him a master over you, and I gave him all his brothers as servants, and I have sustained him with corn and wine; so for you then, what shall I do, my son?"	37. And Yitschaq answered and said to Esau, Behold, I have appointed him a ruler over you, and all his brethren have I made to be his servants, and with provision and wine have I sustained him: and now go, leave me; for what can I do for you, my son?
38. And Esau said to his father, "Have you [but] one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father." And Esau raised his voice and wept.	38. And Esau answered his father, Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, me also, my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.
39. And his father Isaac answered and said to him, "Behold, your dwelling place shall be the fat places of the earth and of the dew of the heaven from above.	39. And Yitschaq answered and said to Esau, Behold, among the good fruits of the earth will be your habitation, and with the dews of the heavens from above.
40. And you shall live by your sword, and you shall serve your brother, and it will be, when you grieve, that you will break his yoke off your neck."	40. And upon your sword will you depend, entering at every place: yet you will be supple and credulous, and be in subjection to your brother; but it will be that when his sons become evil, and fall from keeping the commandments of the Law, you will break his yoke of servitude from off your neck. JERUSALEM: And by your weapons you will live, and before your brother be subject. And it will be when the sons of Ya'aqob labour in the Law, and keep the commandments, they will set the yoke of subjection on your neck; but when the sons of Ya'aqob withdraw themselves and study not the Law, nor keep the

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
	commandments, behold, then will you break their yoke of subjection from off your neck.
41. And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing that his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "Let the days of mourning for my father draw near, I will then kill my brother Jacob."	41. And Esau kept hatred in his heart against Ya'aqob his brother, on account of the order of blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, I will not do as Kayin did, who slew Chebel in the life (time) of his father, for which his father begat Shet, but will wait till the time when the days of mourning for the death of my father come, and then will I kill Ya'aqob my brother, and will be found the killer and the heir.
42. And Rebecca was told of the words of Esau, her elder son, and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and she said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau regrets [his relationship] to you [and wishes] to kill you.	42. And the words of Esau her elder son, who thought in his heart to kill Ya'aqob, were shown by the Holy Spirit to Rivqah, and she sent, and called Ya'aqob her younger son, and said to him, Behold, Esau your brother lies in wait for you, and plots against you to kill you.
43. And now, my son, hearken to my voice, and arise, flee to my brother Laban, to Haran.	43. And now, my son, hearken to me: arise, escape for your life, and go unto Laban my brother, at Haran,
44. And you shall dwell with him for a few days until your brother's wrath has subsided.	44. and dwell with him a few days, until the wrath of your brother be abated,
45. Until your brother's rage subsides from you, and he forgets what you did to him, and I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of both of you on one day?"	45. until your brother's anger have quieted from you, and he have forgotten what you have done to him; and I will send and take you from thence. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day: you being slain, and he driven forth, as Hava was bereaved of Habel, whom Kain slew, and both were removed from before Adam and Hava all the days of the life of Adam and Hava? JERUSALEM: Until the time when the bitterness of your brother will be turned away from you.
46. And Rebecca said to Isaac, "I am disgusted with my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth like these, from the daughters of the land, of what use is life to me?"	46. And Rivqah said to Yitschaq, I am afflicted in my life on account of the indignity of the daughters of Heth. If Ya'aqob take a wicked wife from the daughters of Heth, such as these of the daughters of the people of the land, what will life be to me?
1. And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and he commanded him and said to him, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.	1. And Yitschaq called Ya'aqob, and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, You will not take a wife from the daughters of the Kena'an
2. Arise, go to Padan aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take yourself from there a wife of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.	2. Arise, go to Padan of Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take you from thence a wife from the daughters of Laban mother's brother.
3. And may the Almighty God bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples.	3. And El Shadai will bless you with many possessions, and increase you and multiply you into twelve tribes, and you will be worthy of the congregation of the sons of the Sanhedrin, the sum of which is seventy, according to the number of the [Gentile] nations.
4. And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, that you may inherit the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham."	4. And He will give the blessing of Abraham to you, and to your sons with you, and cause you to inherit the land of your sojourning, which he gave unto Abraham.
5. And Isaac sent Jacob, and he went to Padan aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of	5. And Yitschaq sent Ya'aqob away, and he went to Padan Aram unto Laban bar Bethuel the Aramaite, the

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.	brother of Rivekah the mother of Jakob and Esau.
6. And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan aram, to take himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him, he commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan."	6. And Esau considered that Yitschaq had blessed Ya'aqob, and had sent him to Padan Aram to take to him from thence a wife, when he blessed him, and commanded him, saying, You will not take a wife of the daughters of the Kenaanites;
7. And Jacob listened to his father and his mother, and he went to Padan aram.	7. and that Ya'aqob obeyed the word of his father, and the word of his mother, and was gone to Padan Aram:
8. And Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing to his father Isaac.	8. and Esau considered that the daughters of Kenaan were evil before Yitschaq his father,
9. So Esau went to Ishmael, and he took Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth, in addition to his other wives as a wife.	9. and Esau went unto Ishmael, and took to wife Mahalath, who is Besemath the daughter of Ishmael bar Abraham, the sister of Nebaioth from his mother, besides his other wives.

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. Kal 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 ehad:** 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-yoṣe bo mi-maḳom aher:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.
- 7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

Reading Assignment:

The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me'Am Lo'Ez - Vol II: The Patriarchs

By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1988)

Vol. 2 – "The Patriarchs," pp. 486-523

Rashi's Commentary for: B'resheet (Genesis) 27:1 – 28:9

28 And may the Lord give you-May He give and repeatedly give (Gen. Rabbah 66:3). According to its simple meaning, it refers back to the previous topic: "Look, the fragrance of my son" which God has given him, "is like the fragrance of a field, etc.," and furthermore, "May He give you of the dew of the heavens, etc."

of the dew of the heavens [It is to be interpreted] according to its simple meaning, and there are Midrashic interpretations of many kinds. (Another explanation: What is the meaning of הַאֲלֵהֶיִם? [I.e., why is the Divine Name which signifies God's attribute of Justice used here? To teach that He will treat you] with justice. If you deserve it, He will give to you, and if not, He will not give to you. But to Esau he said, "The fat places of the earth shall be your dwelling place." Whether righteous or wicked, He will give to you. And from him [Isaac], Solomon learned; when he built the Temple, he arranged his prayer, [saying that] an Israelite, who has faith and justifies the Divine decree upon himself, will not complain about You; therefore (I Kings 8:39): "and give to every man [Israelite] according to his ways," for You know what is in his heart. But a gentile lacks faith; therefore [Solomon] said (ibid. verse 43): "You shall hear in heaven, etc., and do according to all that the stranger calls upon You for," i.e., whether he is deserving or undeserving, give to him, so that he should not complain about You. [This is found] in an old and correct edition of Rashi.) [From Tanchuma Buber, Toledo 14]

29 your mother's sons But Jacob said to Judah, "your father's sons" because he [Jacob] had sons from many mothers, but here, since he [Isaac] had married only one wife, he said, "your mother's sons" (Gen. Rabbah 66:4).

Those who curse you shall be cursed, and those who bless you shall be blessed But concerning Balaam, Scripture says (Num. 24:9): "Those who bless you shall be blessed, and those who curse you shall be cursed" (Gen. Rabbah ibid.). [The reason for this is that, for] the righteous—their beginning is suffering and their end is tranquillity; and thus, those who curse them and cause them pain precede those who bless them. Isaac therefore mentioned the curse of those who curse before the blessing of those who bless. As for the wicked, however, their beginning is tranquility, and their end is suffering; Balaam, therefore, mentioned the blessing before the curse. [From Gen. Rabbah 66:4]

30 had just left Heb. אָצַף אָצַף , [lit., going out, had gone out.] This one was leaving, and that one was coming in. [From Gen. Rabbah 66:5]

33 And Isaac shuddered [וַיִּתְהַרֵךְ is to be explained] as the Targum, וַיִּתְהַרֵךְ , an expression of bewilderment. According to the Midrash, however, he [actually shuddered because] he saw Gehinnom open beneath him. [From Tanchuma, Vezoth Haberachah 1]

Who then [the word] אֲפֹיֵא is an expression by itself, which has many usages. Another explanation: אֲפֹיֵא is a combination of אֵיפֹי [where] and אֵיפֹי [here], [so that אֲפֹיֵא אֲפֹיֵא means]: Who is he and where is he, who hunted game?

and I ate of everything Any flavors I wished to taste, I tasted in it (Gen. Rabbah 67:2).

He, too, shall be blessed That you should not say that had Jacob not deceived his father, he would not have received the blessings. Therefore, he concurred and blessed him intentionally (Gen. Rabbah 67:2).

35 with cunning with cleverness. [From Targumim]

36 And he said, "Is it for this reason that he was named Jacob - וְיַעֲקֹב is an expression denoting the interrogative, as in (below 29:15): "Is it because (וְיַעֲקֹב) you are my kinsman...?" Was he named Jacob (וְיַעֲקֹב) because of the future, because he was destined to deceive me (וְיַעֲקֹב) ? Midrash Tanchuma (Buber, Toledo 23) [asks]: Why did Isaac shudder? He said, "Perhaps I am guilty of an iniquity, for I have blessed the younger son before the older one, and thus altered the order of the relationship." [Thereupon], Esau started crying, "He has already deceived me twice!" His father said to him, "What did he do to you?" He replied, "He took my birthright." He [Isaac] said, "That is why I was troubled and shuddered, for [I was afraid that] perhaps I [had] transgressed the line of strict justice, [but] now

[that I know that] I actually blessed the firstborn, 'he too shall be blessed'."

for he has deceived me Heb. וַיִּעֲקֹבֵנִי . [To be explained] according to the Targum וַיִּכְמַנֵּי [meaning]: and he lay in wait for me. [The word] וַיִּאָרֵב [(Deut. 19:11): "and he lies in wait,"] is translated by the Targum אַסְמִן וַיִּכְמַנֵּי Others read in the Targum [not וַיִּכְמַנֵּי , but] וַיִּחְכַּמֵּנִי [meaning]: he outwitted me.

reserved [אֶצְלָתָהּ] an expression of separation, as in וַיִּאָצֵּל ("and he separated") (Num. 11:25). (Other editions read: וַיִּצָּל (below 31:9). [From Targum Onkelos]

37 Behold...a master This is the seventh blessing [given to Jacob] and yet he puts it first? Rather, he said to him, "What use will a blessing be to you? If you acquire property, it will be his, for I have made him a master over you, and whatever a slave acquires, belongs to his master." [From Gen. 67:5]

so for you then, what shall I do Where will I seek for something to do for you?

38 Have you [but] one blessing The "hey" [in הֲבַרְכָה] indicates an interrogative expression, as in (Num. 13:19): "are they in open cities (הַבְּמִחְנֵי) ?"; "is it fat (הַשְּׂמֵנָה) ?"; (II Sam. 3:33): "[Should Abner die] like the death of (הַכְּמוֹת) a wicked man?"

39 Behold...the fat places of the earth **This is the part of Italy belonging to Greece** (from Gen. Rabbah 67:6).

40 And...by your sword - וְעַל הַרְבֵּה is the same as בְּהַרְבֵּה [by your sword]. Sometimes עַל takes the place of the letter "beth," as in (Ezek. 33:26); "You stood by your sword (עַל הַרְבֵּכֶם) ," [which is the same as] בְּהַרְבֵּכֶם (Exod. 6:26); "by their hosts (עַל צְבָאוֹתָם) " [is the same as] בְּצְבָאוֹתָם .

and it will be, when you grieve [תִּרִיד] is an expression of pain, as in (Ps. 55:3): "I will lament (אֲרִיד) in my speech"; i.e., when the Israelites will transgress the Torah, and you will have cause to grieve about the blessings that he took, "you will break his yoke," etc. [From Targum Onkelos]

41 Let the days of mourning for my father draw near As its apparent meaning, "that I should not grieve my father," and there are various Midrashic explanations.

42 And Rebecca was told of She was told by Divine Inspiration what Esau was thinking in his heart. [From Gen. Rabbah 67:9]

regrets [his relationship] to you Heb. מִתְנַחֵם . He regrets the brotherly relationship, to consider other [than brotherly] thoughts, to behave towards you as a stranger and to kill you. The Midrash Aggadah (Gen. Rabbah 67:9), however, explains [it as an expression of consolation]: In his eyes, you are already dead, and he has drunk a cup of consolation [a cup of wine customarily drunk in the house of mourning] over you. But according to its simple meaning, it is an expression of consolation. By killing you he consoles himself about [losing] the blessings (Tanchuam Buber, Vayetzei 1).

44 a few days Heb. אֶחָדִים , few.

45 Why should I be bereft Heb. אֶשְׁכַּח . I will be bereft of both of you. [This teaches that] one who buries his children is called שְׂכֹחַ , bereft. And so, concerning Jacob, it is said (below 43:14): "As I am bereft (שְׂכַלְתִּי) , I shall be bereft (שְׂכַלְתִּי) ."

of both of you If he rises up against you and you kill him, his sons will rise up and kill you. And the Divine Spirit poured itself upon her and she prophesied that they would die on the same day, as is delineated in the chapter entitled לְאִשְׁתּוֹ הַמִּקְנָא (Sotah 13a).

46 I am disgusted with my life Heb. קִצַּתִּי , I am disgusted with my life.

Chapter 28

2 to Padan Heb. פְּדָן like לְפָדַן . [From Targum Onkelos]

to the house of Bethuel Heb. בֵּיתָהּ to the house of (לְבֵית) Bethuel [Targum Onkelos]. Any word that requires a “lamed” at the beginning may take a “hey” at the end instead. [From Yev. 13b]

3. And...the Almighty God Heb. שֶׁדֵּי . May He Who has enough (יִשְׁפֹּץ) blessings for those who are blessed from His mouth, bless you.

4 the blessing of Abraham that He said to him (above 12:2): “And I will make you into a great nation”; (above 22:18): “[And all the nations of the world] will bless themselves with your seed.” May those aforementioned blessings be for you. May that nation and that blessed seed emanate from you. [From Tanchuma, Vezoth Haberachah 1]

5 the mother of Jacob and Esau I do not know what this teaches us. [I. e., We already know from the narrative that Rebecca was their mother.]

7 And Jacob listened This is connected to the aforementioned topic: When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed [Jacob] and that he had sent him off to Padan-aram, and that Jacob listened to his father and went to Padan-aram, and that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing [to his father], then he, too, went to Ishmael.

9 the sister of Nebaioth Since it says, “the daughter of Ishmael,” do I not know that she was the sister of Nebaioth? But this teaches us that Ishmael died after he had betrothed her to Esau, before her marriage, and her brother Nebaioth gave her hand in marriage. This also teaches us that Jacob was sixty- three years old at that time, for Ishmael was seventy-four years old when Jacob was born. Ishmael was fourteen years older than Isaac, and Isaac was sixty years old when they were born, hence [Ishmael was] seventy-four. He lived one hundred and thirty seven years, as it is stated (above 25:17): “and these are the years of the life of Ishmael,” etc. Consequently, Jacob was sixty-three at Ishmael’s death. We learn from here that he hid for fourteen years in the house of Eber and afterwards went to Haran. [This can be deduced from the fact that] he stayed in Laban’s house before Joseph’s birth only fourteen years, as it is said (below 31:41): “I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your sheep,” and the payment for the sheep took place after Joseph was born, as it is said (below 30:25): “And it came to pass when Rachel had given birth to Joseph, etc.,” and Joseph was thirty years old when he became ruler, and from then until Jacob descended to Egypt were nine years: seven of plenty and two of famine. And Jacob said to Pharaoh (below 47:9): “The days of the years of my sojournings are one hundred and thirty years.” Go forth and figure 14 years before Joseph was born, plus the 30 years of Joseph’s age, plus the 9 years from the time he became ruler until Jacob came. The total is 53. And when he [Jacob] left his father, he was 63, totaling 116. Yet he said [to Pharaoh, “I am] one hundred and thirty years old.” Hence, there are fourteen years missing. Thus, you learn that after he had received the blessings, he hid in the house of Eber for fourteen years. [From Meg. 17:1] (However, he was not punished [for these fourteen years] because of the merit [of having studied] Torah, for Joseph was separated from his father only twenty-two years, i.e., from age seventeen until age thirty-nine, corresponding to the twenty-two years that Jacob was separated from his father [when] he did not honor him. These are the twenty years in Laban’s house, plus the two years that he spent traveling [home], as it is written (below 33:17): “And he built himself a house, and for his cattle he made booths.” Our Rabbis of Blessed Memory inferred from this verse that he spent eighteen months on the road, for the house was for the rainy season, and the booths were for the summer. And, according to the calculation of the verses, which we calculated above, from the time he left his father until he went down to Egypt, at the age of one hundred and thirty, we find an additional fourteen years, **therefore, it is certain that he hid in the house of Eber to learn Torah while on his way to the house of Laban.** And because of the merit of the Torah, he was not punished for them [those fourteen years], and Joseph was separated from him for only twenty-two years-measure for measure. The above is from an old Rashi text).

to his other wives He added wickedness upon his wickedness, for he did not divorce the first ones. [From Gen. Rabbah 67:13]

Ketubim: Psalms 21:1-14 + 22:1-32

Rashi's Translation	Targum
1. For the conductor, on the ayeleth hashachar, a song of David.	1. For praise; concerning the strength of the regular morning sacrifice; a psalm of David.
2. My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? [You are] far from my salvation [and] from the words of my moaning.	2. My God, my God, why have you left me far from my redemption, are the words of my outcry.
3. My God, I call out by day and You do not reply, and at night I do not keep silent.	3. O God, I call by day and You will not accept my prayer; and by night I have no quiet
4. But You are holy; You await the praises of Israel.	4. But You are holy, who make the world rest on the psalms of Israel.
5. Our ancestors trusted in You; they trusted and You rescued them.	5. Our fathers hoped in You; they hoped/were consoled in Your word, and You saved them.
6. They cried out to You and they escaped; they trusted in You and they were not shamed.	6. In Your presence they prayed and were saved; and on You they relied, and were not disappointed.
7. But I am a worm and not a man; a reproach of man, despised by peoples.	7. But I am a feeble worm, not a rational man; the reproach of the sons of men, and the butt of the Gentiles.
8. All who see me will mock me; they will open their lips, they will shake their head.	8. All who see me will gloat over me, attacking with their lips; they will shake their heads.
9. One should cast his trust upon the Lord, and He will rescue him; He will save him because He delights in him.	9. Let him give praise in the presence of the LORD; and He has delivered him, He saved him because He favoured him.
10. For You drew me from the womb; You made me secure on my mother's breasts.	10. Because You took me out of the womb; You gave me hope/consolation on my mother's breasts.
11. Upon You, I was cast from birth; from my mother's womb You are my God.	11. By your aid I was pulled forth from her bowels; from my mother's womb You are my God.
12. Do not distance Yourself from me, for distress is near; for there is none to help.	12. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is no redeemer.
13. Great bulls have surrounded me; the mighty ones of Bashan encompassed me.	13. The Gentiles have surrounded me, who are like many bulls; the princes of Mathnan have hemmed me in.
14. They opened their mouth against me [like] a tearing, roaring lion.	14. They open their mouths at me like a roaring and ravaging lion.
15. I was spilled like water, and all my bones were separated; my heart was like wax, melting within my innards.	15. Like water I am poured out; all my bones are crushed; my heart is melting like wax within my bowels.
16. My strength became dried out like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my palate; and You set me down in the dust of death.	16. My strength has dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue is stuck to my palate; and You have brought me to the grave.
17. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me, like a lion, my hands and feet.	17. Because the wicked have surrounded me, who are like many dogs; a gathering of evildoers has hemmed me in, biting my hands and feet like a lion.
18. I tell about all my bones. They look and gloat over me.	18. I will tell of all the wounds of my bones; those who see me despise me.
19. They share my garments among themselves and	19. They divide my clothing for themselves; and for

Rashi's Translation	Targum
cast lots for my raiment.	my cloak they will cast lots.
20. But You, O Lord, do not distance Yourself; my strength, hasten to my assistance.	20. You, O LORD, do not be far off; O my strength, hurry to my aid.
21. Save my soul from the sword, my only one from the grip of the dog.	21. Save my soul from those who slay with the sword; from the power of the dog save the breath of my body.
22. Save me from the lion's mouth, as from the horns of the wild oxen You answered me.	22. Redeem me from the mouth of the lion; and from kings who are strong and tall as a bull You have received my prayer.
23. I will tell Your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You.	23. I will tell of the might of Your name to my brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
24. You who fear the Lord, praise Him; all the seed of Jacob, honor Him, and fear Him, all the seed of Israel.	24. O you who fear the LORD, sing praise in His presence; all the seed of Jacob, give Him glory; and be afraid of Him, all you seed of Israel.
25. For He has neither despised nor abhorred the cry of the poor, neither has He hidden His countenance from him; and when he cried out to Him, He hearkened.	25. For He does not despise or scorn the prayer of the poor; and He has not removed His presence from their midst; and when they pray in His presence, He accepts their prayer.
26. Because of You is my praise in the great congregation; I pay my vows in the presence of those who fear Him.	26. My psalm in the assembly of many peoples is from You; I will fulfil my vows before those who fear Him.
27. The humble shall eat and be sated; they shall praise the Lord, those who seek him; your hearts shall live forever.	27. The humble will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will sing praise in His presence; the spirit of prophecy will dwell in the thoughts of your hearts forever.
28. All the ends of the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall prostrate themselves before You.	28. All the ends of the earth will remember His offerings and will repent in the presence of the LORD; and all the families of the Gentiles will bow down before You.
29. For the kingship is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.	29. For kingship is from the presence of the LORD, and He rules over the Gentiles.
30. They shall eat all the best of the earth and prostrate themselves; before Him shall all those who descend to the dust kneel, and He will not quicken his soul.	30. All who are fat on earth have eaten and bowed down; all who descend to the grave prostrate themselves before Him; but the soul of the wicked will not live.
31. The seed that worships Him; it shall be told to the generation concerning the Lord.	31. The seed of Abraham will worship in His presence; and they will tell the mighty greatness of the LORD to a later generation.
32. They shall come and tell His righteousness to the newborn people, that which He has done.	32. Their children will return and recount His generosity; to His people yet to be born they will recount the wonders He performed.

Rashi's Commentary on Psalms 22:1-32

1 ayeleth hashachar The name of a musical instrument. Another explanation: Concerning the nation of Israel, which is a beloved hind (אילת אהבים), who looks forth like the dawn (שחר) (Song 6:10). Our Sages, however, interpreted it as referring to Esther (Mid. Ps. 22:1, Meg. 15b). Menachem (p. 22) interprets אילת as an expression of strength, as (verse 20): "My strength (אילות), hasten to my assistance." השחר is an expression of dawn, but Menachem (p. 172) interprets it as an expression of seeking, as (in Prov. 11:27): "He who desires (שָׁחַר) good etc." and as (ibid. 7:15) "to look (לשחר) for you."

2 why have You forsaken me? They are destined to go into exile, and David recited this prayer for the future.

far from my salvation and from the words of my moaning.

3 I call out by day I call out to You every day, and You do not answer.

4 But You are holy and You wait to hear the praises of Israel from time immemorial.

7 But I am a worm **He refers to all Israel as one man.**

8 they will open Heb. יפטיירו , they open, as (in Exod. 13:12, 13): “all that open (פטר) the womb,...and firstling (ופטר) of a donkey.” [Also] (in Prov. 17: 14): “like letting out (פוטר) water.”

9 One should cast his trust upon the Lord Heb. לגל like לגל , lit. to roll. A person should roll his burden and his load upon His Creator so that He rescue him.

10 drew me Heb. גהי , who took me out and drew me out, as (in Job 40:23): “he will draw (יגיה) the Jordan into his mouth.”

You made me secure on my mother's breast You prepared breasts for a person, upon which to rely for sustenance.

11 Upon You, I was cast from birth I was cast from birth since You took me out of the womb, as Scripture states (in Isa. 46:3): “who are carried from birth.” From the time the tribes were born, He carried them and led them.

13 Great bulls Mighty kingdoms.

the mighty ones of Bashan That too is an expression of the bulls of Bashan, which are fat.

encompassed me Heb. כתרני . They encompassed me like a crown (כתר) , which encompasses the head.

14 a tearing lion Nebuchadnezzar.

15 like wax Wax, which melts from the heat of the fire.

16 my palate Heb. מלקוהי . This is the palate which is called palayc (palais) in Old French, gaumen in German. When a person is distressed, he has no saliva in his mouth. Menachem, however, interprets מלקוהי as etenayles in Old French (tongs), like (Isa. 6:6): “with tongs (במלקחים) he had taken it.” And the מלקוהי is the teeth, which resemble a smith's tongs. (The quotation from Menachem appears only in the Salonika edition of Rashi printed in 1515.)

and in the dust of death To the crushing of death.

You set me down Heb. תשפתי . You set me down, an expression of setting a pot, as (in Ezek. 24:3, II Kings 4:38): “set on (שפת) the pot.” Menachem (p.179) interprets every expression of שפיתה as an expression of placing.

17 like a lion, my hands and feet As though they are crushed in a lion's mouth, and so did Hezekiah say (in Isa. 38:13): “like a lion, so it would break all my bones.”

18 I tell about all my bones The pain of my bones. They look They rejoice at my misfortune.

19 and cast lots for my raiment They plunder our property.

20 my strength Heb. אִילוּתִי , my strength, as (below 88:5): “I was as a man without strength (אִיל) ,” and as (Gen. 31:29): “It is within the power (לֹאֵל) of my hand.”

22 Save me from the lion’s mouth as You answered me from the horns of the wild oxen. This is the Amorite, “whose height is as the height of the cedar trees” (Amos 2:9); the thirty-one kings.

23 I will tell Your name to my brothers when any of my assemblies gathers, and so I will say to them, “You who fear the Lord, praise Him.” **This refers to the proselytes, and “all the seed of Jacob.”**

24 and fear Heb. וּגְוִרִי , an expression of fear.

25 the cry of the poor Every [expression of] עֲנִיָּה in Scripture is an expression of a cry. עֲנָה can also be interpreted as an expression of humility, as (in Exod. 10:3): “to humble yourself (לְעַנֹּת) ,” because he (the poor man) humbles himself and prays before You.

27 The humble shall eat at the time of our redemption in the days of our Messiah.

your hearts shall live forever I will say all this before them.

28 shall remember and return to the Lord The nations shall remember the evil that befell us when they see the good and return to the Lord.

29 For the kingship is the Lord’s For they will see that the kingship and the rule has returned to You.

30 They shall eat all the best of the earth and prostrate themselves Lit. they shall eat and prostrate themselves all the best of the earth. This is a transposed verse. The humble shall eat all the best of the earth and prostrate themselves to the Lord with praise and thanksgiving for the good. לֶשְׂנֵי means the good, the fat of the earth. [People at] all the ends of the earth will see all this and return to the Lord.

before Him shall...kneel Then all the dead of nations [will kneel] from Gehinnom but He will not have mercy upon them to revive their souls from Gehinnom.

his soul [The soul] of each one.

He will not quicken Lit. He did not quicken. Our Sages (Mid. Ps. 22:32) derived from this verse that the dead, before their death, at the time their soul is taken, see the countenance of the Shechinah.

31 The seed that worships Him The seed of Israel, who constantly worship Him.

it shall be told to the generation concerning the Lord Transpose the verse and explain it thus: It shall be told to the last generation in the name of the Lord and in His praise what He did for that seed.

32 They shall come The first ones shall come and tell His righteousness to the newborn people, for He performed righteous deeds for them.

Meditation from the Psalms Psalms 22:1-32

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

Psalms chapter 22 although entitled, 'A song of David' primarily deals with events which were destined to occur hundreds of years after David's time. David, with his 'holy spirit' foresaw the bleak Babylonian and Persian exiles in general, and in particular, the terrible threat of Haman and Achashverosh against the entire Jewish nation, personified by Queen Esther. Although there are countless events in Jewish history which David does not discuss in the Book of Psalms, Alshich explains that David dedicated a Psalm to Esther because he personally had a hand in the salvation of Israel in her days. When David fled from Absalom, Shimi ben Gera of the tribe of Benjamin went out to viciously curse David. Yet, David would not allow his men to kill Shimi although he deserved death for blaspheming the king.¹ The Talmud² says that David foresaw that Mordecai [and Esther] was destined to descend from Shimi ['Mordecai, son of Yair, son of Shimi'³] and being that the salvation of Israel was at stake, David forfeited his own dignity for the sake of saving his people.

Therefore, David was inspired to compose a psalm in honor of the Purim miracle, for without him it could not have come to pass. It was the custom of the Vilna Gaon to recite this psalm as the שיר של יום, 'the song for the day' on the day of Purim.⁴

The superscription of Psalms 21 and 22 both declare that they were written by David. Psalm 21 speaks of King David and King Messiah the son of David. The psalm shows that what has happened to David will also happen to the Messiah.⁵ We see that both David and Messiah point to HaShem as the one who should be praised because He enabled all of their accomplishments.

Since Psalms chapter 22 was designated by the Vilna Gaon as the song for Purim, let's look a bit more closely at Purim.

The first half of the first chapter seems to be superfluous. It starts off by telling us, briefly, that king Achashverosh gave a six-month feast for the nobles. It does not tell us what happened at this feast. Then it describes a feast that lasted seven days and was given for everyone in Susa.⁶

Achashverosh holds an elaborate six-month feast for all his officers and subjects in the capital city of Shushan. What was the king celebrating?

Jeremiah the prophet had reported, in HaShem's name, that following the destruction of the first Temple, the Jews would be in exile for seventy (70) years.⁷ According to Achashverosh's calculations, the seventy years had been completed, meaning that HaShem Himself had been permanently defeated. It turns out that Achashverosh, and Belshazzar before him, had miscalculated the seventy years. He thought that it began with the exile of the first Jews. In reality, Jeremiah's prophecy was figured from the time of the destruction of the Temple, some two years later. In fact, the exile did end, as prophesied, after seventy years!

At the feast, Achashverosh denigrated HaShem, and the Jews, by wearing the special clothes of the High Priest and by displaying the Temple vessels.⁸ The entire purpose of this feast was to denigrate the holy objects and, in effect, celebrating the end of the Jewish people.

So, who went to this party where Vashti ends up dead? Were there any Jews there? Somehow this first half of chapter one does not seem necessary, yet it plays a crucial role in understanding the rest of the scroll of Esther.

¹ II Shmuel (Samuel) 16:5-13

² Megillah 13a

³ Esther 2:5

⁴ Maaseh Rav no. 250

⁵ These opening remarks were 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.

⁶ Esther 1:1-8

⁷ Yeremyahu (Jeremiah) 29:10

⁸ see v. 1:14

Since HaShem is in control even while He is concealed in this story, we can assume that the decree to destroy the Jews, which was advanced by Haman, was something that HaShem allowed. The question is: What did the Jews do to deserve this awful decree? The Talmud sheds some light on this:

Megillah 12a R. Simon b. Yohai was asked by his disciples, Why were the enemies of Israel⁹ in that generation deserving of extermination? He said to them: Do you answer. They said: Because they partook of the feast of that wicked one.¹⁰ [He said to them]: If so, those in Susa should have been killed, not those in other parts?¹¹ They then said, Give your answer. He said to them: It was because they bowed down to the image.¹² They said to him, Did HaShem then show them favoritism?¹³ He replied: They only pretended to worship,¹⁴ and He also only pretended to exterminate them; and so it is written, For he afflicted not from his heart.¹⁵ In the court of the garden of the king's palace.¹⁶ Rab and Samuel gave different interpretations of this — One said that those who had the entree¹⁷ of the court were [entertained] in the court, and those who had the entree of the garden in the garden, and those who had the entree of the palace in the palace. The other said: He first put them in the court, and it did not hold them — Then he took them into the garden and it did not hold them; and finally he had to take them into the palace, and he found room for them. In a Baraita it was taught: He took them into the court and opened two doors for them, one into the garden and one into the palace.

So, the Jews, of Shushan, derived pleasure from the wicked king's party, which they probably had to go to, and the other Jews, in captivity, derived pleasure from the fact that the Shushan Jews had pleasure. So why is this worthy of Haman's decree? Why did they have pleasure? Because even as exiles, they were elevated to the point of getting an invitation to the king's party! This king was king over the whole world and he had invited the Jews to his party. No wonder the Jews derived pleasure from the king's party! **The Jews, then, were defining their existence according to the laws of nature, according to logic.** (It is instructive to note that these same Jews have already been told that they could return to Israel and have a feast in The King's [HaShem's] palace – The Temple. They chose to stay in exile and go to this pagan feast.) It is important to recognize this in order to understand the rest of the story. HaShem is going to deal with the Jews measure for measure according to their sins. Since they followed natural law, HaShem is going to let them be buffeted by natural law. Natural law indicates that Jews do not deserve to exist, therefore Haman's decree merely repaid the Jews measure for measure.

Haman, the Agagite, is a descendant of Amalek.¹⁸ Amalek's theology is that there is no G-d Who works both naturally and supernaturally. Amalek has a philosophy that everything "just happens". Amalekites see only the natural law. They do not acknowledge the hand of HaShem. This explains why an Amalekite appears on the scene to bring punishment to the Jews who were acting like Amalekites.

At this time in history, HaShem's people were never more secure, according to the laws of nature. Mordechai was a high government minister, Esther was about to become queen, and the children of Israel had been elevated in status to the point that they were now being invited to the king's palace for a party. HaShem had prepared the cure before He allowed the disease to afflict His people.

When HaShem gives measure for measure, then people always get their 'just desserts'. Consider Vashti,

At first glance it appears as though the lecherous king has made a wicked request of an innocent woman. If we

⁹ Euphemism for 'Israel'.

¹⁰ Achashverosh.

¹¹ As only those in Susa were invited.

¹² Set up by Nebuchadnezzar.

¹³ By delivering them, since they really deserved to be exterminated.

¹⁴ Lit., 'they did only for appearance'.

¹⁵ Lamentations 3:33. [uckn is rendered 'without heart', n being taken as partitive: G-d does not afflict him who sins without intent (Maharsha).]

¹⁶ Esther 1:5.

¹⁷ Lit., 'he who was worthy'.

¹⁸ Amalekites are any people who try to destroy Jews even if they are killed themselves – like suicide bombers in Israel.

consider 'who' and 'what' Vashti was, we might think a little differently.

Vashti was the granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Just as Nebuchadnezzar was very wicked, so was his daughter. Vashti was just like her father. Vashti was called to appear before the king, naked on Shabbat, as punishment for her tradition of forcing enslaved Jewish girls to work for her on Shabbat stripped of their clothing. HaShem always deals midda kneged midda, measure for measure.

The next part of our story concerns a beauty contest. We can assume that most of the empire's eligible women wanted to be queen. If you are an observant Jew, the last thing that you wanted was to be made the queen of a pagan idol worshipper. Being Achashverosh queen was the last thing that Esther wanted. Yet, that is exactly what HaShem caused because it is the nature of lecherous kings to want the most beautiful of women:

Natural law had taken its course. What Esther least wanted, that is what she got. Mordechai, Esther's cousin and husband, was a descendant of King Saul (a son of Kish)¹⁹ and that makes Esther also of royal blood. Natural law dictates that those of royal blood should be king and queen. The Talmud explains:

Megillah 12b *There was a certain Jew in Shushan the castle, etc. a Benjamite.²⁰ What is the point of this verse? If it is to give the pedigree of Mordecai, it should trace it right back to Benjamin!²¹ [Why then were only these specified?] — A Tanna taught: All of them are designations [of Mordecai]. 'The son of Jair' means, the son who enlightened [he'ir] the eyes of Israel by his prayer. 'The son of Shimei means, the son to whose prayer HaShem hearkened [shama']. 'The son of Kish' indicates that he knocked [hikkish] at the gates of mercy and they were opened to him. He is called 'a Jew' [yehudi] which implies that he came from [the tribe of] Judah, and he is called 'a Benjamite', which implies that he came from Benjamin. [How is this]? — R. Nahman said: He was a man of distinguished character.²² Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: His father was from Benjamin and his mother from Judah. The Rabbis, however, said: The tribes competed with one another [for him]. The tribe of Judah said: I am responsible for the birth of Mordecai, because David did not kill Shimei the son of Gera, and the tribe of Benjamin said: He is actually descended from me. Raba said: The community of Israel explained [the two designations] in the opposite²³ sense: 'See what a Judean did to me and how a Benjamite repaid me!' What a Judean did to me viz., that David did not kill Shimei from whom was descended Mordecai who provoked Haman. 'And how a Benjamite repaid me', viz., that Saul did not slay Agag from whom was descended Haman who oppressed Israel. R. Johanan said: He did indeed come from Benjamin. Why then was he called 'a Jew'? Because he repudiated idolatry. For anyone who repudiates idolatry is called 'a Jew', as it is written, There are certain Jews²⁴ etc.*

Mordechai had raised Esther. What sort of education could Mordechai provide for Esther? Lets look at the Talmud:

Megillah 13b *In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh were wroth.²⁵ R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, [once] caused a master to be wroth with his servants in order to fulfill the desire of a righteous man, namely Joseph, as it says, And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, etc.,²⁶ and servants with their master in order to perform a miracle for a righteous man, namely, Mordecai, as it is written, 'And the thing was known to Mordecai etc. ' R. Johanan said: Bigthan and*

¹⁹ King Saul was a Benjamite.

²⁰ Esther 2:5.

²¹ And not mention three names only.

²² Lit., 'crowned with his nimus'. The word nimus means in the Talmud 'manner', or 'way' (**), hence bearing, character. Rashi translates 'with his names' (as just explained) as if 'nimus' here = Greek **. [Var. lec. add 'as an ornament', hsgf. V. Aruch who explains: He was adorned with the precepts of the Law as with an ornament. Yehudi as applied to Mordecai then does not denote a tribal name but is an epithet of distinction.]

²³ I.e., derogatory.

²⁴ Daniel 3:12. Though Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to whom he refers were not of the tribe of Judah. V. Sanh. 93 b (Tosaf.).

²⁵ Ibid. 21.

²⁶ Genesis 41:12.

Teresh were two Tarseans²⁷ and conversed in the Tarsean language. They said: From the day this woman came we have been able to get no sleep.²⁸ Come, let us put poison in the dish so that he will die. They did not know that Mordecai was one of those who had seats in the Chamber of Hewn Stone,²⁹ and that he understood seventy languages.³⁰ Said the other to him, But are not my post and your post different?³¹ He replied: I will keep guard at my post and at yours. So it is written, And when inquisition was made, he was found,³² that is to say, they were not [both] found at their posts.

Since Mordechai was a member of Sanhedrin, and since we know that one of the requirements of this group was the ability to speak seventy languages, we can, therefore, know that Mordechai spoke seventy languages. If you are going to be queen over the entire world, it makes sense that a knowledge of languages would be very useful. Esther, therefore, was obviously one of the most qualified ladies, in Achashverosh kingdom, to be queen, according to natural law. To Mordechai, it did not make any sense. How could a lady be chosen who was specifically trying not to be chosen? How could a married woman be chosen in a beauty contest that was open only to virgins? Achashverosh didn't know, or care, about Esther's unique qualifications. He just wanted a beauty queen. HaShem's hand is concealed as he starts to turn things up side down. Mordechai senses that HaShem is at work, so he tells Esther to keep quiet about her nationality.

Esther is now in the place HaShem wanted her to be. Mordechai is almost set up. He is a minister in the palace, but we need one more piece to ensure that Mordechai is set up:

Esther 2:21-23 During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Achashverosh. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

This event is rather odd. Would you plot against the king in the earshot of one of his ministers? Obviously no! So, what's going on here? The answer relates to Mordechai's ability to speak seventy languages. The guards did not expect Mordechai to understand since he was not one of their country men. Mordechai is wearing his kipah³³ and his tzitzith³⁴ were hanging out. His white beard and obvious Jewish attire were not what the guards were wearing. Mordechai was different.

Mordechai is now set up. He has his position and he has the king's good graces. But, something odd happened. He has given the king information which saved his life, yet Mordechai did not get rewarded. If you are king and depend on 'tips' from your subjects, you are in a very bad way if you don't give a reward for information. Obviously no one will risk giving the king information if there is no reward. Therefore, no reward, no information.

Our story seems very illogical so far. Esther is chosen for queen, when she tries not to be chosen. She is married and the contest was only for virgins. Mordechai saves the king's life, but he receives no reward. This is all very illogical.

It is now time to turn our attention to Haman. Who is Haman? Haman is a descendant of Agag the Amalekite!³⁵ The Talmud, which we read earlier, has described Haman as a descendent of Agag who was conceived because of king Saul's misplaced mercy. The Amalekites were dedicated to the destruction of the Children of Israel:

²⁷ There was a Tarsus in Cilicia and in Cappodocia and it is not certain which is referred to.

²⁸ Having always to dance attendance on Achashverosh.

²⁹ The meeting place of the Sanhedrin in the Temple at Jerusalem.

³⁰ V. Sanh. 17a.

³¹ So that neither of us can do duty for both.

³² E.V., 'it was found'.

³³ Hat worn by orthodox Jews.

³⁴ Bamidbar (Numbers) 15:37ff

³⁵ Esther 3:1

Shemot (Exodus) 17:8 *The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.*

Because of this attack, HaShem dictated that the Amalekites should all be destroyed.

Shemot (Exodus) 17:14-16 *Then HaShem said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Moses built an altar and called it HaShem is my Banner. He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of HaShem. HaShem will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."*

King Saul failed to obey HaShem's command to kill EVERY Amalekite. He spared the king of the Amalekites:

I Shmuel (Samuel) 15:8-9 *He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs--everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.*

Haman has a most despicable heritage. The task that king Saul was charged with: the destruction of Agag, will be accomplished by Saul's descendent, Mordechai; upon Agag's descendent, Haman.

Haman had a problem. Haman wanted worship from Mordechai, but Mordechai would not worship Haman. Haman is enraged. He goes to Achashverosh and he 'logically' explains the problem. The Jews are all spread out and they have customs that are different. These are the characteristics of HaShem's people. They wear different clothes. They wear different hair styles. They pray differently. They are dispersed throughout the entire world, yet they still look and act alike. This is still true of HaShem's people today.

Achashverosh agrees with logic and does not listen to the money. Logic says that the Jews do not deserve to be alive. Because the Jews had relied on logic at Achashverosh party, HaShem will allow logic to have its way with the Children of Israel. Achashverosh show his true character and allows the destruction of HaShem's people. Notice that Achashverosh acts illogically towards HaShem's people. He should have had Haman draft the law and give it to the king for review before he uses his signet ring. But, that is not what happens. Achashverosh is so hateful towards HaShem's people that he just gives Haman the signet ring. This enables Haman to draft whatever he wants, and the king does not care. Achashverosh is not a nice guy.

So, what is the significance of the day that the order goes out? It is two days before Passover! Passover is supposed to be the feast of our physical freedom. Instead it has been turned into a time of mourning while in exile, an exile that they could already have ended.

At this point the lights should be going on in Mordechai's head. He should immediately realize why Esther became queen. He should have immediately requested that she appeal to the king to spare their lives. Mordechai does not do the logical thing. He realizes that HaShem is allowing this for a reason. He analyzes and understands that it is a result of their logical attitude towards Achashverosh's party. So he does not do the logical thing. Mordechai does a very strange thing.

Esther 4:1-4 *When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.*

Mordechai begins to act as though he trusts in HaShem, not in logic or natural law. Notice that Mordechai is not the

only one to adopt this attitude. All of the Children of Israel adopt this attitude. HaShem's people have begun the process of returning to HaShem. No one has gone to appeal to the queen. No one has acted logically. Esther does not even know what is going on. After he mourned, one would expect Mordechai to go in to the queen. Instead he rips his royal garment and wears sackcloth to ensure that he can *not* go in to the queen!

The Midrash records that Mordecai went and taught 22,000 children the laws of the mincha (meal) offering. This is odd. He didn't go out and give to charity or do other mitzvot. Instead he taught those who were least able to help HaShem's people, and he taught them a part of Torah that would not help them out of their predicament. In fact, he taught them something that they could not do, because the Temple was destroyed, though some were engaged in rebuilding it (the 70,000 who returned to Israel when they were permitted to do so). This was very illogical, but it demonstrated that He was going to depend on HaShem to handle the situation. He recognized the problem.

Midrash Rabbah - Esther IX:4 4. Having made the gallows, he went to Mordecai, whom he found in the house of study with the schoolchildren sitting before him with sackcloth on their loins, studying the Torah and crying and weeping. He counted them and found twenty-two thousand children. He put chains of iron on them and set guards over them, saying, 'Tomorrow I will kill these children first, and then I will hang Mordecai.' Their mothers brought them bread and water and said to them: 'Children, eat and drink before you die to-morrow, and do not die of starvation.' Straightway they put their hands on their books and swore by the life of Mordecai their teacher saying, 'We will neither eat nor drink, but will die while still fasting.' They all wept piteously until the sound of their crying ascended to heaven and the Holy One, blessed be He, heard the sound of their weeping at about the second hour of the night. At that moment the compassion of the Holy One, blessed be He, was stirred, and He arose from the Throne of Judgment and sat on the Throne of Mercy and said: 'What is this loud noise that I hear as the bleating of kids and lambs?' Moses our teacher thereupon stood before the Holy One, blessed be He, and said: 'Sovereign of the Universe, they are neither kids nor lambs, but the little ones of Thy people who have been keeping a fast now for three days and for three nights, and tomorrow the enemy means to slaughter them like kids and lambs.' At that moment the Holy One, blessed be He, took the letters containing their doom which were signed with a seal of clay and tore them and brought fright upon Ahasuerus in that night, as it says, *ON THAT NIGHT*. etc. (VI, 1).

Mordechai had taught the children that they needed to attach themselves to HaShem. In teaching the children, he had taught their parents. They had all learned the lesson of the meal offering. They had all learned that they needed to draw closer to HaShem. Mordechai taught the meal offering in order to teach Torah. He taught a part of Torah that the children could not possibly fulfill in order to demonstrate that *Torah study alone* will draw us closer to HaShem. This is the importance of Torah study.

About this time, Esther is beside herself trying to figure out what is wrong with Mordechai. He does not want to cooperate with her. So, she sends out a very special person as her messenger. Our Sages teach that Hathach is Daniel. The prophet Daniel who has prophesied regarding the end of days, one of HaShem's mightiest servants. He was still serving in the palace, in exile. Mordechai tells Hathach the problem and he gives instructions to Esther.

Now Esther responds with logic to tell Mordechai why she can't obey his instructions:

Esther 4:10-11 Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

Esther does not yet understand the problem, but she is no dummy. She realizes, quickly, when Mordechai explains it to her:

Esther 4:12-17 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, He sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief

and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Now Esther gets it! She starts to act illogically. Instead of making herself beautiful before going in to the king, she makes herself ugly by fasting for three days. This is very illogical, but Esther now understands what Mordechai understood. She must quit trusting logic and natural law. She must begin to trust wholeheartedly in HaShem. Mordechai was now confident that Esther understood because he went out to carry out her wishes, where he had ignored them before.

It is important to understand how illogical it is for Mordechai, Esther, and the other Jews to fast for three days. one of the three days will be Passover! Passover is a feast! You are not allowed to fast on Passover. You are commanded by HaShem to eat!

The decree then went out on Nisan 13. So Esther and the Jews of Shushan fasted on Nisan 13, 14, and 15. The evening of the 14th was HaShem's Passover feast:

Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:5 *HaShem's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.*

The Midrash states that Mordechai protested the fast on Passover. Esther replied that if there are no Israelites, there will be no Passover! Mordechai, obviously, agreed. **The deliverance of the Israelites has begun! No wonder it takes place on Passover!** Once the Children of Israel begin returning to HaShem, He promises that He will deliver them. Isn't HaShem's timing perfect?

Midrash Rabbah - Esther VIII:7 *7.THEN ESTHER BADE THEM RETURN ANSWER UNTO MORDECAI (ib. 15). She said to him: GO, GATHER TOGETHER ALL THE JEWS THAT ARE PRESENT IN SHUSHAN, AND FAST YE FOR ME, AND NEITHER EAT NOR DRINK THREE DAYS (ib, 16): these were the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth of Nisan. He sent back word to her: But these include the first day of Passover? She replied: Elder of Israel, why is there a Passover?³⁶ Mordecai thereupon acceded to her request, as it says, SO MORDECAI WENT HIS WAY, AND DID ACCORDING TO ALL AT ESTHER HAD COMMANDED HIM (ib. 17). In Babylon they say that this³⁷ means that he spent the festival of Passover in fasting on account of that calamity. Mordecai prayed to the Lord and said: 'It is fully known before the throne of Thy glory, O Lord of all worlds, that it was not from pride of heart or vain gloriousness that I acted in not bowing down to Haman, but through fear of Thee I did thus, not to bow down to him, for I was in fear of Thee lest I should assign Thy honour to flesh and blood, and I was not willing to bow down to any beside Thee. For who am I that I should not bow down to Haman for the salvation of Thy people Israel? For that I would even kiss his shoe-latchet. Now therefore, our G-d, deliver us, we pray Thee, from his hand and let him fall into the pit which he has dug and let him be caught in the snare which he has hidden for the feet of Thy saints, and let this sinner know that Thou hast not forgotten the promise*

Three days later, Esther does another illogical thing. Esther puts her life on the line to go ask the king to deliver her people. When her life is spared, her wildest hopes are also answered: the king is disposed to give her ANYTHING she wants, up to half of his kingdom. Does she make her appeal for her people? NO! Instead she invites the king, and Haman to a wine party. This is very illogical. What is going on here?

Queen Esther enters Achashverosh's palace just as the High Priest gingerly and reverently steps into the Holy of Holies to atone for the Jewish people. Whereas the High Priest wears simple, modest clothing upon his reverent penetration into the Holy of Holies, the queen wears lavish, seductive attire in her attempt to appease the gluttonous king. The High Priest enters twice, first to produce the thick cloud of the incense to cover the Ark, and thereafter to

³⁶ Radal emends: If there is no Israel, why should there be a Passover?

³⁷ The word wa-ya'abor (went his way), which literally means 'passed', and can also be rendered 'transgressed'.

actually perform the service of sprinkling the blood to obtain atonement. Correspondingly, Esther first enters the royal chamber to invite the king to her feast, the purpose of which is to confuse and blur the king's perception. Thereafter, after Haman is hung, she enters once again to plead with the king to annul the threatening decree.

When they have all feasted on the wine, the king is again favorably disposed towards Esther:

Esther 5:6-8 As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."

So, does Esther make an appeal for her people? NO! She again does an illogical thing: she invites the king and Haman to another wine party – remember those four cups of wine at the seder. What is going on here? The text tells us that Haman was invited to make him so confident that he decides to show his heart and attempt to destroy Mordechai. We also see his wife's heart and his sons' hearts. They are all alike in their hatred of the Jews. They have the heart of hatred, of the Amalekites.

Now we need to figure out why Esther is waiting to ask her question. In perhaps the most famous scene of the entire Megillah, Mordechai is paraded on horseback through the streets of Shushan, wearing the royal robes, with Haman leading the way.

After this incident, Haman returns home "with his head covered".³⁸ The Midrash explains the meaning of this phrase: When the parade route passed by Haman's house, his daughter saw them coming and had a great idea: She would take a chamber pot up to the second floor window, and pour its contents on Mordechai's head! The only problem is that the girl assumed it was her wonderful father being honored on horseback, with that lowly Jew Mordechai pulling him along. So when the parade passed by, she timed it perfectly and, splash! The one pulling the horse got it right on the head.

The Midrash says that when the girl saw that she'd dumped toilet waste all over her father, she was so despondent that she jumped out of the window to her death. And Haman returned home "with his head covered."

To make matters worse, Haman found little encouragement at home: His wife Zeresh tells him: "If this is how things are going, you're going to lose your fight against the Jewish People!"³⁹

The King can't sleep

What causes a king to lose sleep? Surely not money worries or hunger. Yet, here is a sleepless king. Something is bothering him, but what? We can tell by what he does: he has his servant read the book of chronicles to him. This would seem to indicate that he is looking for a reason to explain why certain types of things are not happening. From his answer it appears that he is no longer getting tips from his subjects. The subjects are not likely to risk going to the king with a tip if he does not reward them. When the king discovers that he has never rewarded Mordechai, he finally understands why he hasn't been receiving any tips lately. The word has gotten out that he is ungrateful and that he never rewarded Mordechai for saving his life. The king immediately sets about to correct this problem. This is the set up that will lead us to Esther's strange behavior. After Esther observes Haman's debasement and Mordechai's elevation, she immediately pops the question. It appears that she was looking to see if HaShem was predisposed towards helping her and her people. After this little parade she has her answer.

HaShem has seen that his people have recognized their sin in failing to look to Him for the reason for their existence. The People of Israel have recognized their sin at the beginning of Esther, the party sin. They have

³⁸ Esther 6:12

³⁹ Esther 6:13

repented and begun to look to HaShem for their the reason for their existence.

Next we find that Haman constructed his gallows using the beam from Noah's ark that was fifty amot long. This transcendent ark was used to preserve the Jewish people twice.

At the second wine feast, she recounts the story of Passover from the first person, including herself as part of the Exodus from Egypt, as we are commanded to do. Esther's words are allusions to the story of Passover: "The Jews were sold to be destroyed, slain, and exterminated".⁴⁰ Esther now reveals that she is Jewish and that genocide is planned against her people.

Outraged, the king demands to know who would dare threaten the Queen and her relatives⁴¹. Esther points to none other than Haman! Haman is aghast and while pleading with Esther, accidentally falls on "the couch upon which Esther was"⁴². This is an allusion to the custom to lean during the seder rather than sit.

Measure for measure, HaShem has given to Haman as Haman had given to Mordechai. Haman had sought to debase Mordechai, and had been debased himself. He had sought to hang Mordechai, and had been hung on his own gallows.

Haman had sought to destroy his enemies, the Jews; and HaShem turned that about and used the Jews to destroy their enemies.

Esther was not content to see the vile Haman dead. She immediately put her life at risk again, to make another plea. HaShem has decided to hear Esther's plea. The king, again, extends his scepter, and again invites her to make a request. This time he can not do what she wants, but he does what he can. He invites Esther and Mordechai to come up with a solution. The solution is illogical. Mordechai had written a new decree that enabled the Jews to defend themselves and to slay their enemies. This is illogical. How could a small group of people from the southern kingdom of Judah, possibly fight the whole world? What chance did they have?

As if this is not illogical enough, Mordechai and the Children of Israel go out with JOY and begin celebrating! They haven't even started to fight, and they are already celebrating! What is going on here? The Children of Israel had already figured out that if they rely on HaShem, He will not disappoint them. They knew they had the victory because they knew that the battle belonged to HaShem. The Children of Israel had learned their lesson well.

Ashlamatah: Hos 14:6-10 + Joel 1:1-3 + 2:12-13

Rashi	Targum
2. Return, O Israel, to the LORD your GOD, for you have stumbled in your iniquity.	2. Return, O Israel, to the fear of the LORD your GOD, for you have fallen because of your sin.
3. Take words with yourselves and return to the LORD. Say, "You shall forgive all iniquity and teach us [the] good [way], and let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips.	3. Bring with you words of confession and return to the worship of the LORD. Say before Him, "It is near for You to forgive iniquities," then we will be accepted as good. Let the words of our lips be accepted before You with favor like bullocks on Your altar!
4. Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses, nor will we say any longer, our gods, to the work of our hands, for in You, by Whom the orphan is granted mercy. "	4. The kings of Assyria will not save us, We will not put our trust in horsemen, and no more will we say, "Our god" to the works of our hands. For it was from before You that mercy was shown to our forefathers when they

⁴⁰ Esther 7:4

⁴¹ Esther 7:5

⁴² Esther 7:8

	were like orphans in Egypt.
5. I will remedy their backsliding; I will love them freely, for My wrath has turned away from them.	5. I will accept them in their repentance. I will forgive their sins. I will have compassion on them when they freely repent, for My anger has turned away from them.
6. I will be like dew to Israel, they shall blossom like a rose , and it shall strike its roots like the Lebanon .	6. My Memra will be like dew to Israel; they will bloom like the lily , and they will dwell in their fortified land like the tree of Lebanon that puts forth its branches .
7. Its branches shall go forth, and its beauty shall be like the olive tree , and its fragrance like the Lebanon .	7. Sons and daughters will multiply, and their light will be like the light of the candelabrum , and their fragrance like the fragrance of incense .
8. Those who dwelt in its shade shall return; they shall revive [like] corn and blossom like the vine ; its fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon .	8. They will be gathered from among their exiles , they will dwell in the shade of the Anointed One. The dead will be resurrected and goodness will increase in the land. The mention of their goodness will go in and not cease, like the memorial of the blast of the trumpets made over the matured wine when it was poured out in the Sanctuary.
9. Ephraim; What more do I need the images? I will answer him and I will look upon him: I am like a leafy cypress tree ; from Me your fruit is found.	9. The House of Israel will say, "Why should we worship idols anymore?" I, by My Memra will hear the prayer of Israel and have compassion on them. I, by My Memra, will make them like a beautiful cypress tree , because forgiveness for their waywardness is found before Me.
10. Who is wise and will understand these, discerning and will know them; for the ways of the LORD are straight, and the righteous/generous shall walk in them, and the rebellious shall stumble on them.	10. Who is wise and will consider these things? Who is prudent and will take note of them? For the ways of the LORD are right, and the righteous/generous who walk in them will live in everlasting life through them, but the wicked (lawless) will be delivered to Gehinnom because they have not walked in them.
1. The word of the LORD, which came to Joel son of Pethuel.	1. The word of prophecy from the LORD which was with Joel son of Pethuel.
2. Hear this, you elders, and hearken, all you inhabitants of the land. Did this come about in your days or in the days of your forefathers?	2. Hear this, O elders; listen, all you inhabitants of the land! Has the like of this happened in your days or in the days of your fathers?
3. Tell your children about it, and your children to their children, and their children to another generation.	3. Tell your children about it, and let your children tell their children, and their children the next generation.
11. And the LORD gave forth His voice before His army, for His camp is great, for he who performs His word is mighty, for the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can abide it?	11. The LORD has raised His Memra before His army, for His army is immense indeed; for those who carry out His Memra are mighty. For great is the day which will come from the LORD, and exceedingly terrible, who can bear it?
12. And even now, says the LORD, return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with lamentation.	12. "Even now", says the LORD, "return to My worship with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning."
13. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and return to the LORD your GOD, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He repents of the evil.	13. Remove the wickedness (lawlessness) of your heart, but not with tearing of your garments, and return to the worship of the LORD your GOD, for He is gracious and merciful. He removes anger, and multiplies blessings, and He draws back His Memra from bringing evil.

Rashi's Commentary for: Hos 14:6-10 + Joel 1:1-3 + 2:12-13

Hosea Chapter 14

2 Return, O Israel You, who are in the land of Judah, lest what happens to Samaria happens to you. Therefore, the topics are juxtaposed. This can be compared to a king against whom a province rebelled. The king sent a general and commanded him to destroy it. That general was expert and deliberate. He said to them, "Take for yourselves days (sic); otherwise, I will do to you as I have done to such-and-such a province and to its allies, and to such-and-such a prefecture and to its allies." Therefore it says, "Samaria shall be accounted guilty," and then Scripture says: "Return, O Israel." As is found in Sifrei in the section commencing. (Num. 25:1), "And Israel abode in Shittim."

to the Lord your God One taught in the name of Rabbi Meir: Return, O Israel, while He is still יהוה, with the Divine Attribute of Mercy; otherwise, He is אֱלֹהֵיךָ with the Divine Attribute of Justice, before the defense becomes the prosecution. [from Pesikta d'Rav Kahana, p. 164a]

for you have stumbled in your iniquity Obstacles have come to you because of your iniquity.

3 You shall forgive all iniquity Heb. כָּל-תְּשֻׁאֵינוּ עֲוֹן. Forgive all our iniquities.

and teach [us the] good [way] Heb. וְתִלְמַדְנוּ. And teach us the good way. Another explanation: The few good deeds in our hands take in Your hand and judge us accordingly. And so does David say (Psalms 17:2): "Let my sentence come forth from before You, may Your eyes behold the right." Another explanation: And accept good And accept confession from us, as it is said (Psalms 92:2): "It is good to confess to the Lord."

and let us render [for] bulls that we should have sacrificed before you, let us render them with the placation of the words of our lips.

4 Assyria shall not save us Say this also before Him, "We no longer seek the aid of man, neither from Assyria nor from Egypt."

we will not ride on horses This is the aid from Egypt, who would send them horses, as they said to Isaiah (30: 16), "No, but on horses will we flee... And on swift steeds will we ride."

nor will we say any longer to the work of our hands that they are our gods.

for in You alone shall our hope be, You Who grant mercy to the orphans.

5 I will remedy their backsliding Said the prophet: So has the Holy Spirit said to me. After they say this before Me, I will remedy their backsliding, and I will love them with My charitable spirit. Although they do not deserve the love, I will love them charitably since My wrath has turned away from them.

6 and it shall strike I.e. the dew shall strike its roots and cause them to prosper.

like the Lebanon like the roots of the trees of the Lebanon, which are large.

7 Its branches shall go forth Sons and daughters shall increase.

and it shall be Their beauty shall be like the beauty of the menorah of the Temple, and their fragrance like the fragrance of the incense.

like the Lebanon Like the Temple.

8 Those who dwelt in its shade shall return Those who already dwelt in the shade of the Lebanon, to which He compared Israel and the Temple, and now were exiled there from, shall return to it.

its fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon Jonathan renders: Like the remembrance of the blasts of the trumpets over the old wine poured for libations in the Temple. For they would blow the trumpets over the libations when the Levites would recite the song.

9 Ephraim will say, "What more do I need to follow the images?" And they will turn away from idolatry.

I will answer him I will answer him from his trouble.

and I will look upon him I will look upon his affliction.

I am like a leafy cypress tree I will bend down for him to hold his hand on Me as the leafy cypress which is bent down to the ground, which a man holds by its branches; i.e., I will be accessible to him.

from Me your fruit is found Am I not He? For all your good emanates from Me.

10 Who is wise and will understand these Who among you is wise and will ponder to put his heart to all these and return to Me?

and the rebellious shall stumble on them i.e., because of them, because they did not walk in them. Jonathan renders in this manner.

Joel Chapter 1

1 to Joel son of Pethuel -The son of Samuel the prophet who persuaded God with his prayer (פְּתָה לְאֵל). Some say that this prophecy was said in those seven years in which Elisha said: "For the Lord has decreed a famine etc." and they took place during the days of Jehoram son of Ahab.

2 Did this come about -I.e., what is mentioned below.

Chapter 2

13 and not your garments -for I do not pay heed to the rending of your garments. Another explanation: Rend your hearts and you will not need to rend your garments because of mourning.

and He repents of the evil -I.e., He turns to another thought.

NAZAREAN TALMUD

SIDRA OF B'RESHEET (GENESIS) 27:28 – 28:9
"VAYITEN L'KHA" "AND GIVE YOU"

BY: H. EM. RABBI DR. ELIYAHU BEN ABRAHAM &
HAKHAM DR. YOSEF BEN HAGGAI

HAKHAM SHAUL'S SCHOOL OF
TOSEFTA
(LUKE 6:19) MISHNAH N:N

HAKHAM TSEFET'S SCHOOL OF PESHAT
(MARK 3:1 1-12)
MISHNAH N:N

¶ And everyone in the congregation was trying to touch him (Yeshua), because healing virtue came from him and he healed everyone.

¶ And the spirits (shedim) of uncleanness, when they saw him, would fall down before him, giving him⁴³ honour saying — "You are a Ben Elohim (a Son of GOD = a Torah Judge)"; but he charged them not make his identity (as Messiah) known.

HAKHAM SHAUL'S SCHOOL OF REMES
(2 LUQAS ACTS 5:42)
PEREQ N:N

¶ And they ceased not to teach the Mesorah of Yeshua the Messiah daily in the Bet HaMikdash, and from house to house.

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

Gen. 27:28 – 28:9	Ps. 22:1-32	Hos 14:6-10 + Joel 1:1-3 + 2:12-13	Mk 3:11-12	Lk 6:19	Acts 5:42
-------------------	-------------	------------------------------------	------------	---------	-----------

COMMENTARY TO HAKHAM TSEFET'S SCHOOL OF PESHAT

A SON OF G-D

It should be evident now to our readers that Yeshua was first of all "Jewish."⁴⁴ Secondly, as Messiah his title is the "King of Yisrael" and therefore "a Son of G-d" (i.e., a Judge). EVERY King of Yisrael was titled the (a) "Son of G-d."⁴⁵ Furthermore, we must remember that Kings were often anointed as an act of consecration to their office as "King of Yisrael. Thus the King like the Kohanim was seen as a Messianic, anointed figure. Consequently, Yeshua does not have to be "Deity" in order to qualify as Messiah, and King of Yisrael a "Son of G-d" (i.e., a Judge). Another key point that we must assert here is that we do NOT accept shedim (demons) as any type of authority on any particular subject matter. In other words, just because a shadé says something does not mean that he has admitted the truth. WE do not believe that the shedim were wrong on this particular account. Our point is that the shedim are not a source of authority on any subject. This bears a great deal of commentary and elucidation but, we will abbreviate our thoughts here.

1 Pe. 1:12 It was not revealed to them, but to us, they for whom they ministered the things, which are now reported to you by those who have handed down the Mesorah to you in the Ruach HaKodesh, breathings of the Oral Torah sent from the Heavens; which things the holy messengers (angels) desired to understand.

⁴³ This verbal tally shows that the shedim "gave" Yeshua honor as A son of G-d.

⁴⁴ Yochanan (John) 4:9

⁴⁵ See 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7-9

Angels – the heavenly messengers are entrusted with a mission and a message. That is the sum of their duties per se. Therefore, the shedim are no different. They may see the spiritual dimension from a different perspective but we cannot take their words to be “theologically” sound.

However, for some the question still lingers as to where in Scripture do we find support for the interpretation that a “ben Elohim” can be interpreted as “a son/disciple of the Torah Judge/s” or simply a “Torah Judge.” The Hebrew term **בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים** (“**B’ne HaElohim**”) appears for the first time in the Torah in Genesis 6:2, where we read:

וַיִּרְאוּ בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם, כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה; וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים, מִכָּל אִשָּׁר בָּחָרוּ.
“that the **sons of God** saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives, whomsoever they chose.”⁴⁶ [The Keter Crown Bible has “**sons of the powerful.**”⁴⁷]

Rashi translates this term as “sons of the nobles” but he admits in his commentary on Gen 6:2 –

the sons of the nobles Heb. **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים**, the sons of the princes (*Targumim*) and **the judges** (*Gen. Rabbah* **26:5**). Another explanation: **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** are the **princes who go as messengers of the Omnipresent**. They too mingled with them (*Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 22). Every **אֱלֹהִים** in Scripture is an expression of authority, and the following proves it (Exod. 4:16): “And you shall be to him as a lord (**לְאֱלֹהִים**)”; (ibid. 7:1): “See, I have made you a lord (**אֱלֹהִים**).”

Rabbi Ya’aqov ben Rabbenu Asher (R’osh) comments on this title:

“**The sons of GOD saw, etc.**” The expression “B’ne HaElohim”, refers to the elite of the society in those days, **the law enforcers and judges.**”⁴⁸

Note also that in Psalm 82:1, we read:

אֱלֹהִים, נִצַּב בְּעֵדֹת-אֵל; בְּקִרְבַּ אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט.
“GOD stands in the congregation of GOD; in the midst of **the gods (i.e., judges)** He judges.”

And Rashi comments:

GOD stands in the congregation of GOD to see whether they [the judges] judge fairly, and you judges, how long will you judge unjustly?

By this rational we can see that the Messiah as “chief Torah judge/legislator” and “chief Torah law enforcer” receives the title of “Ben HaElohim” (“son/disciple of the judges”) par excellence!⁴⁹

He charged them not make his identity (as Messiah) known - The Messianic Secret

The above passage deals with the so called “messianic secret.”⁵⁰ Scholars have tried to make heads or tails of the enigma for ages. They are no closer to understanding this great “secret” today than they were yesterday. Why is it

⁴⁶ *The Tanakh*, 1917, Jewish Publication Society.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Mordechai Breuer, 2006, *The Keter Crown Bible*, Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers.

⁴⁸ Rabbi Ya’aqov ben Rabbenu Asher, 2005, *TUR on the Torah*, Translated by ELiyahu Munk, Jerusalem: Lambda Publishers, Vol. I, p. 46.

⁴⁹ According to our Sephardi customs and nomenclature, a chief Rabbi of distinction is called a “Gaon” (Aramaic for “prince”, pl. “Geonim”). However, the Messiah is a degree higher than a “prince (“Gaon”), for he is the King of Israel. From this we derive that all Rabbis and Hakhamim are embodiments not only of the Written and Oral Torah, but an embodiment of the Messiah, King of Israel, peace be upon him!

⁵⁰ **Mk 1:21-28, 29-34, 40-45; 3:7-12; 4:10-12, 33-34; 5:21-43; 7:31-37; 8:22-26, 27-30; 9:2-13, 30-32; and 13:3-4.**

that they are unable to discern simple Peshat? They call it a mystery or an enigma. These are not the words of Peshat. As we have learned, they “see men as trees.” When you label a Peshat pericope with the title “Mystery,” you have already lost the battle of interpretation. This is tantamount to reading the “Revelation” from a Peshat, literal perspective. Furthermore, if it was such a great “secret” why do we know about it. Yes, we perfectly understand that Yeshua expelled *shedim*, (demons/spirits) from those who were miraculously healed and even his talmidim were warned not to tell the “secret.” In every case where Yeshua commands someone not to tell the secret, they have come in close personal contact with the Master and are perfectly aware of his spiritual identity. Whenever the Master’s identity as Messiah, “G-d’s Anointed King” is revealed he silences the revelation.

Scholars erroneously believe that Yeshua told them to be silent as reverse psychology. We cannot accept the thought that the Master would need to stoop to such aberrant means. If we resort to making the Master play mind-games with his talmidim and others we have berated him. Furthermore, we would fall into the trap of not being able to discern his words and true intent.

Firstly, the Master was not a petty pseudo-prophet who needed to resort to these devious methods. His commands are sincere. Do not tell anyone in Peshat terms means, “do not tell anyone” not the reverse. As a true Tsaddiq – Hakham his true piety was in his study of the Torah and the traditions passed down by his ancestors. As “Ben HaElohim” (Son of the Judges) his life and mission was the “Sum of the Judges.” In other words, Yeshua could only be what the Sages of blessed memory made of him. His personification of the Torah, specifically the Oral Torah governed every moment of his life. When Hakham Tsefet records that he arose a great while before day⁵¹ to seclude himself in prayer, it was because the Hakhamim ordered him (and all our Jewish brethren) to recite the Shema early in the morning.

Mk 1:35-37 And early in the morning, long before daylight⁵² he (Yeshua) got up⁵³ and went out to an isolated place and prayed there. And Shim'on (Hakham Tsefet) and those (talmidim) who were with him (Hakham Tsefet) followed⁵⁴ him (Yeshua). And having discovered⁵⁵ from him [the true halakhic practice concerning the recital morning Shema and Amidah], they said to him, “everyone is searching⁵⁶ for you.”

m. Ber 1:2 From what time do they recite the Shema in the morning? From the hour that one can distinguish between [the colors] blue and white. R. Eliezer says, “Between blue and green.” And one must complete it before sunrise. R. Joshua says, “Before the third hour. “For it is the practice of royalty to rise [at] the third hour. [Thus we deem the third hour still to be ‘morning.’]” One who recites later than this [i.e., the third hour] has not transgressed [by reciting a blessing at the wrong time, for he is viewed simply] as one who recites from the Torah.⁵⁷

b. Ber 2b *It has been taught on Tannaite authority along these same lines:* The old-timers would complete the

⁵¹ **Mk 1:25-39**

⁵² From three to six a.m. The temporal expression echoes Mark 1:32 where Yeshua must have recited the Habdalah. Now we see Yeshua “early in the morning, long before daylight” reciting the Morning Shema and The Amidah. see Mark 1:32, Luke 6:12, 11:1 and others where it seems that temporal markers suggest either halakhic practices or halakhah concerning prayer, i.e. Zemanim

⁵³ Verbal connection to Psa 12:5

⁵⁴ **καταδιώκω** (*katadioko*) v. From 2596 and 1377; GK 2870; AV translates as “follow after” once. 1 to follow after, follow up.

⁵⁵ “The term may sometimes apply to ordinary earthly and possibly contingent facts, but its reference is predominantly to the surprising discovery and mysterious understanding of human existence and historical occurrence in their hidden relationships as seen from the standpoint of and with an ultimate view to the kingdom of God.” *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. (2:769). The Lukan text, Luke 11:1 could be an elucidation of this passage. **Luke 11:1** It happened that while Yeshua was praying in a certain place, after he had finished, one of his talmidim said to Him, “master, teach us to pray just as Yochanan (the immerser) also taught his talmidim.”

⁵⁶ The Greek term clearly indicates that people are looking for Yeshua. We have two things to note. 1. They must be looking for him “early in the morning.” And, they must be looking for him to determine the true halakhic practice concerning recital of the morning Shema.

⁵⁷ Neusner, J. (1988). *The Mishnah: A new translation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 3

recitation of Shema exactly at dawn so as to place the prayer for redemption⁵⁸ [with which the Shema closes] right next to the Prayer [of supplication], and one will turn out to say the Prayer in daylight.”⁵⁹

Consequently, we can see that the Master was the sum of the Hakhamim. To qualify as “Messiah” he must be a walking Torah Scroll. Hakham Tsefet reveals the true crux of the dilemma in saying “**everyone is searching⁶⁰ for you.**” The question is then raised, what or who were they looking for? It was not a man that they were looking for. They were looking for the quintessential expression of the Torah. What does the talmid of the Master want to know the most? What we desire the most is how to fulfill the expectations of G-d as expressed in the Torah. How do we learn to be a living expression of the Torah? By following a Hakham who is a living Torah.

We have been reading in the Torah Seder repetitive accounts of the Mishkan’s (Tabernacle) construction. Why does the Torah devote some 50 chapters to tell us about the construction and operation of the Mishkan? The Mishkan is a detailed description of:

1. Communion with G-d
2. Abodah – worship and service
3. Halakhah – how we are to walk

While we will offer only a partial list of what it means to be in “service” (*abodah*) to HaShem we will note that these aspects speak of a greater whole.

1. Berakhot
2. Birkat Ha-Mazon (Bendigamos)
3. **K’riat Shema**

We have selected these specific items because they represent an organic whole, furthermore they are the beginning point for service as described in the Mishnah. Our fascination is with the K’riat Shema. This because the recital of the Shema is not the simple recital of a few verses of the Torah associated with D’barim (Deut) 6:4. The Shema as an organic whole stands for commitment to the whole of the Torah, Oral and Written and subjection to the Malkuth HaShamayim.⁶¹ Therefore, “K’riat Shema” represents complete commitment to talmud Torah (Torah Study). As an act of worship, K’riat Shema stands for prayer. Therefore, the Shema represents a life that is devoted to talmud Torah and Prayer. Through K’riat Shema and talmud Torah we rectify the damage we have committed against the earth.

Arriving at the conclusion that Yeshua is the Messiah is not a great revelation. Those who Yeshua silenced were those who either saw him as a Messianic King, who would overthrow the Roman regime, put an end to the angelic rage and rebellion or be the quintessential Torah Scholar that would bring Y’mot HaMashiach, (the days of Messiah). Interestingly Yeshua was none of the above. He was a Hakham, a living Torah. His Mesorah/message was to emulate his life of Mesorah observance. Through this lifestyle, the world would find healing that would indeed produce the Messianic Age. Yeshua demonstrates a powerful truth. The truth that the Messianic figure we

⁵⁸ “Our Redeemer! Adonai, [Master] of Hosts is His Name, Holy One of Israel. Blessed are You Adonai, who redeems Israel.

⁵⁹ Neusner, J. (2005). *The Babylonian Talmud, A Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 1 Berakhot). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers. p. 54

⁶⁰ The Greek term clearly indicates that people are looking for Yeshua. We have two things to note. 1. They must be looking for him “early in the morning.” And, they must be looking for him to determine the true halakhic practice concerning recital of the morning Shema.

⁶¹ **Kingdom/governance** (sovereignty) of G-d through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings and presidents, whereas until that time Israel had been under kings appointed by G-d, a new dispensation, for lack of a better word, of the governance of G-d was about to be inaugurated after the fall of the Temple and the discontinuance of the Sanhedrin whereby G-d’s people would be ruled by judges and Rabbinic tribunals as it was after Joshua. This system of Judges and Rabbinic Tribunals (Bate Din) required a legal tradition (body of oral Law) which is the “good news” that Yeshua was proclaiming.

have conjured will not be a “Messiah” to usher in the “Days of Messiah” as we would expect is daunting. While we have oversimplified the whole idea, the title to Rabbi Levine’s books says it all, “**there is no Messiah and you’re it.**” We are not promoting his work; we are simply stating a powerful truth. Each of us has a seed of Messiah. If we have to cry Messiah with every breath, again we have missed the point. What we need to learn from this thought is that collectively we are Messiah.

So what lesson do we learn from Yeshua silencing those who seem to know who he is? The wrong Messianic picture needs to be hushed. If this wrong message is not terminated, we will be left with a “false Messiah.”

REMES COMMENTARY TO HAKHAM SHAUL

m. Aboth 1:4 Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah and Jose b. Johanan of Jerusalem received (the Law – Oral Torah) from them. Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah said: Let thy house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst.

1 Luqas 10:38 Now as they departed, he entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister named Miriam, who also sat at the feet of the Master and was listening to his teaching (of the Oral Torah). But Martha was distracted with much serving, so she approached the Master and said, “Master, is it not a concern to you that my sister has left me alone to serve? Then tell her then she should help me!” But the Master answered and said to her, calling her “Martha, Martha, you are anxious¹ and distressed about many things! But one thing is necessary, and Miriam has chosen the good portion, that cannot be taken away from her.”

THEY CEASED NOT TO TEACH THE MESORAH OF YESHUA AS MESSIAH FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

The message that Yochanan taught in the “wilderness” of Yisrael procured the attention of all of the Jewish populace in Yehudah. As we have learned this must have been an overwhelming sight. Thousands went to see and hear Yochanan and his message of Teshuba. One of the things that we miss is that his message would have been during or at the approach of the Yamim Noraim (days of Awe). Why did Yehudah turn out in mass to see Yochanan? Camel hair tallit, and such sign tell us that the Jewish people of that day knew how to read the “signs” per se. However, we must not miss another sign that is often obscured. Yeshua came on the heels of this grand revival with a complementary message. He announced the year of Yubal. The mass throng surrounding Yochanan and Yeshua was partially due to the messianic expectations of the Jewish people during this time. Unfortunately, just as the wrong Messianic picture must be hushed. And wrong picture of Messiah will be a “false Messiah.” The Messiah that the Am HaAretz expected was not the Messianic agenda of G-d at that time. Even many of the scholars, Sages of Yeshua’s day failed to comprehend the mission and role Yeshua played as Messiah.

THE “KINGDOM OF G-D”

Yeshua was the quintessential Torah Scholar that would bring Y’mot HaMashiach, (the days of Messiah) in a sense. However, his “days of Messiah” should be understood as the introduction to the “Kingdom of G-d.”

Kingdom/governance (sovereignty) of G-d through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings and presidents, whereas until that time Israel had been under kings appointed by G-d, a new dispensation, for lack of a better word, of the governance of G-d was about to be inaugurated after the fall of the Temple and the discontinuance of the Sanhedrin whereby G-d’s people would be ruled by judges and Rabbinic tribunals as it was after Joshua. This system of Judges and Rabbinic Tribunals (Bate Din) required a legal tradition (body of Oral Law) which is the “good news” (Mesorah) that Yeshua was proclaiming. The “kingdom” can only flourish when we

realize that Messiah was re-establishing a system whereby the Hakhamim would come to power and guide the Jewish people through the greatest exile they could experience. Albeit very literal, it is nevertheless very abstract. Not only was this message a message of restoration and return. The Mesorah of Messiah was establishing a system whereby men could live by a societal rule that would be the key to realizing the Messianic era.

For there to be a “Perfect Community”⁶² there must be a perfect “law” (Torah – Nomos). This “Perfect Law” needs agents that will explain its inner workings, applications and carry out its “judgments.

Ya’aqob (James) 1:25 But whoso looks into the perfect Torah (law) of liberty, and continues in it, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

It is evident that there must be an Oral Torah (Mesorah) readily available to those who would follow the instructions of the “Perfect Torah.” However, the “Perfect Torah” is not that which is written on tables of stone, skins or paper. The perfect Torah is the Mesorah of the Master who is a living expression of the Torah, i.e. the “Perfect Torah.”

THE “WRITTEN TORAH”

We have laboured at length to establish the importance of the Oral Torah – Mesorah in our writings and teachings. Unfortunately, those who reject the Oral Torah miss the very thing they are looking for. If they would scrutinize the life of the Master, they would clearly see the point and power of the Audible Torah. Here we pause to ask a question that we have fostered for some time. Why did G-d give a written Torah when there was an Oral Torah in place already? As a matter of fact, the “written Torah” seems to be sandwiched between two aspects of the Oral Torah. The Torah of Shem was an Oral Law passed down from his forefathers. However, when Yisrael leaves Mitzrayim they come to Har Sinai to receive a Torah written on tablets of stone. Why? Was the Oral Torah in any way deficient? G-d forbid!

THE ORAL TORAH REQUIRES A SPECIAL PRIESTHOOD

Historically it would appear to be evident that the Oral Torah requires a special Priesthood. What Priesthood would that be other than the Priesthood of the Firstborn. However, it is not a Firstborn that will despise the birthright. It is a Priesthood of those who care about their siblings allegorically speaking. Here in a Remes commentary we must realize that we are speaking in terms of a “hint.” The Priesthood of Aaron, a firstborn made use of the Levitical caste, which would administer the “Written Torah.” This Priesthood would rely on the Priesthood of the Firstborn to teach the Oral Law while they taught they attended to their Levitical duties. This did not preclude them from teaching the Oral Torah. The Levitical Priesthood demonstrated a very powerful truth. That truth is that the Oral Torah is in fact the Perfect Law of liberty. That Priesthood demonstrated the power and accuracy of the Hakhamim in elucidating the Oral Torah. In other words, before the Written Torah was presented on Har Sinai, we learned the will of G-d by sitting at the feet of the Sages drinking in their words.⁶³

m. Aboth 1:4 Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah and Jose b. Johanan of Jerusalem received (the Law) from them. Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah said: Let thy house be a meeting-house for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst.

Learning should the Oral Torah should be the chief goal in the life of the Nazarean. The Yeshivah is thus brought directly into a talmid’s personal domicile, that home becomes an academy, even the physical surroundings of the

⁶² Luzzatto, Moshe Hayyim. *Derekh Hashem / = the Way of God / by Moshe Chaim Luzzatto ; Translated and Annotated by Aryeh Kaplan; Emended by Gershon Robinson.* Jerusalem; New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1998. p.95

⁶³ Aboth 1:4

Sages (dust of their feet) become precious, the desire for Torah wisdom becomes a consuming thirst. Here is the whole ideology of the Rabbis in nutshell.

However, when there is nothing “written in stone” the scoffers will always contend with the Hakhamim asking for some “literal” document to judge the words of these Hakhamim. Therefore, G-d gave man the “Written Torah” as a way of demonstrating the veracity of the teachings of the Sages, i.e. the Oral Torah. In other words, the “Written Torah” is G-d’s stamp of approval on the Mesorah of the Sages. Yet HaShem’s great providence makes men pursue truth from a “Written Torah” that can only be understood by being a student of a Sage learning his Oral Torah. Here we are reminded of a Psalm, “God that sits in the heavens laughing: He, the LORD has them in derision.” Their confusion is perpetuated in the absence of Hakhamim to elucidate the “Written Torah.” One key truth we must discern from the “Written Torah” is that the Sages were right to begin with even without a “written Torah.” And we are dependent on them and the eternal truth of the Eternal Nomos – Torah of the cosmos used by G-d in creation.

Note the similarity between the above cited Mishnah Aboth and the Gemara of Hakham Shaul.

Mishnah Aboth

Aboth 1:4 Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah and Jose b. Johanan of Jerusalem received (the Law) from them. Jose b. Joezer of Zeredah said: Let thy **house be a meeting-house** for the Sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and **drink in their words with thirst.**

2 Luqas (Acts) 5:42

And they ceased not to teach the Mesorah of Yeshua the Messiah daily in the Beit HaMikdash, and from **house to house.**⁶⁴

Hakham Shaul shows us clearly that the Nazareans were a living expression of the Oral Torah. They opened their houses as Yeshivoth for the Hakhamim to Teach their Oral Torah, the Mesorah of the Master. Thus the residence of the talmid who opens his doors to the Hakham is in essence establishing a Bet Midrash (house of study). Here we can also suggest that he has made his home a place of prayer (Synagogue - Esnoga). How so? Because the allegory of opening the “Hekhál” (Aron Kodesh) is tantamount to opening our hearts to listen to the words that were written on the fleshly tables of the Hakham’s heart,⁶⁵ the “Hekhál.” The glory (kibod and Shekinah) of G-d is closer than you think!

m. Kiddushin 1:10 He that has a knowledge (intimate knowledge - Da’at) of Scripture (Written Torah) and Mishnah (Oral Torah) and right conduct will not soon fall into Sin. But he that has no knowledge (intimate knowledge - Da’at) of Scripture (Written Torah) and Mishnah (Oral Torah) and right conduct has no part in the habitable world.

Why did G-d give a “Written Torah”? **To validate the teachings of the Sages!**

It is our moral obligation as Nazareans to open our houses to the Hakhamim so that we may **drink in their words with thirst!**

AMEN V’AMEN

⁶⁴ See also **Luqas 10:38** Now as they departed, he entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. **And she had a sister named Miriam, who also sat at the feet of the Master and was listening to his teaching (of the Oral Torah).** But Martha was distracted with much serving, so she approached the Master and said, “Master, is it not a concern to you that my sister has left me alone to serve? Then tell her then she should help me!” But the Master answered and said to her, calling her “Martha, Martha, you are anxious⁶⁴ and distressed about many things! But one thing is necessary, and Miriam has chosen the **good portion, that cannot be taken away from her.**”

⁶⁵ Ezek. 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

Questions for Understanding and Reflection

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat which verse or verses impressed your heart and fired your imagination?
2. What question/s (no more than two questions) about the Torah Seder for this Shabbat arose for which Hakham Tsefet's Mishnah and Hakham Shaul's Gemarah provide adequate answers?
3. Taking into consideration all the readings for this Shabbat what is the prophetic statement 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: "Vayetse Ya'aqov" - "And left Jacob"

Shabbat	Torah Reading:	Weekday Torah Reading:
ויצא יַעֲקֹב		
"Vayetse Ya'aqov"	Reader 1 – B'resheet 28:10-15	Reader 1 – B'resheet 29:31-33
"And left Jacob"	Reader 2 – B'resheet 28:16-22	Reader 2 – B'resheet 29:33-35
"Y salió Jacob"	Reader 3 – B'resheet 29:1-3	Reader 3 – B'resheet 29:31-35
B'resheet (Gen.) 28:10 – 29:30	Reader 4 – B'resheet 29:4-9	
Ashlamatah: Hos 12:13 – 13:5 + 14:9-10	Reader 5 – B'resheet 29:10-12	
	Reader 6 – B'resheet 29:13-17	Reader 1 – B'resheet 29:31-33
Psalms 23:1-6	Reader 7 – B'resheet 29:18-30	Reader 2 – B'resheet 29:33-35
	Maftir – B'resheet 29:27-30	Reader 3 – B'resheet 29:31-35
N.C.: Mk. 3:13-19a; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 6:1-6	Hos 12:13 – 13:5 + 14:9-10	

שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹמִים

Shabbat Shalom!

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai
Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David
Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham