

BS"D (B'Siyata D'Shamaya)
Aramaic: With the help of Heaven

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

Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings	Fourth Year of the Reading Cycle
Ab 09, 5779– August 9/10, 2019	Fourth Year of the Shmita Cycle

Candle Lighting and Habdalah Times:

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For their regular and sacrificial giving, providing the best oil for the lamps, we pray that G-d's richest blessings be upon their lives and those of their loved ones, together with all Yisrael and her Torah Scholars, amen ve amen!

Also a great thank you and great blessings be upon all who send comments to the list about the contents and commentary of the weekly Torah Seder and allied topics.

If you want to subscribe to our list and ensure that you never lose any of our commentaries, or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to benhaggai@GMail.com with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!

**Shabbat: “V’HaElohim Nisah” & Shabbat: Shim’u
Sabbath: “And G-d tested” & Sabbath: “Hear”**

Shabbat	Torah Reading:	Weekday Torah Reading:
וְהֶאֱלֹהִים, נִסָּה		
“V’HaElohim Nisah”	Reader 1 – B’resheet 22:1-6	Reader 1 – B’resheet 24:1-3
“And G-d tested”	Reader 2 – B’resheet 22:7-12	Reader 2 – B’resheet 24:4-6
“Y Dio probó”	Reader 3 – B’resheet 22:13-19	Reader 3 – B’resheet 24:1-6
B’resheet (Gen.) 22:1 – 24	Reader 4 – B’resheet 22:20-25	
Ashlamatah: I Kings 10:1-9 + 23-24	Reader 5 – B’resheet 23:1-7	
Special Jer. 2:4-28 + 4:1-2	Reader 6 – B’resheet 23:8-12	Reader 1 – B’resheet 24:1-3
Psalms 18:21-43	Reader 7 – B’resheet 23:13-20	Reader 2 – B’resheet 24:4-6
	Maftir – B’resheet 23:17-20	Reader 3 – B’resheet 24:1-6
N.C.: Mark 2:18-20 Luke 5:33-35 & Acts 11:1-21	Jer. 2:4-28 + 4:1-2	

Blessing Before Torah Study

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

Please Ha-Shem, our G-d, 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 desire. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel. Amen!

Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our G-d, 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 doing 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 Binding of Isaac – Genesis 22:1-19
- Genealogy of Rebekah – Genesis 22:20-24

Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: B’resheet 22:1 – 24

Rashi’s Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
1. And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Abraham, and He said to him, "Abraham," and he said, "Here I am."	1. And it was after these things that Izhak and Ishmael contended; and Ishmael said, It is right that I should inherit what is the father's because I am his firstborn son. And Izhak said, It is right that I should inherit what is the father's, because I am the son of Sarah his wife, and you are the son of Hagar the handmaid of my mother. Ishmael answered and said, I am more righteous/generous than you, because I was circumcised at thirteen years; and if it had been my will to hinder, they should not have delivered me to be circumcised; but you were circumcised a child eight days; if you had had knowledge, perhaps they could not have delivered you to be circumcised. Izhak responded and said, Behold now, today I am thirty and six years old; and if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to require all my members, I would not delay. These words were heard before the LORD of the world, and the Word of the LORD at once tried Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me. JERUSALEM: And it was after these things that the LORD tested Abraham with the tenth trial, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me.
2. And He said, "Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, yea, Isaac, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you."	2. And He said, Take now your son, your only one whom you love, Izhak, and go into the land of worship, and offer him there, a whole burnt offering, upon one of the mountains that I will tell you. JERUSALEM: At Mount Moriah.
3. And Abraham arose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey, and he took his two young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for a burnt offering, and he arose and went to the place of	3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two young men with him, Eliezer and Ishmael, and Izhak his son, and cut the small wood and the figs and the palm, which are

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
which God had told him.	provided for the whole burnt offering , and arose and went to the land of which the LORD had told him.
4. On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.	4. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld the cloud of glory fuming on the mount, and it was discerned by him afar off.
5. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder, and we will prostrate ourselves and return to you."	5. And Abraham said to his young men, Wait you here with the ass, and I and the young man will proceed yonder, to prove if that which was promised will be established:--So will be your sons:--and we will worship the LORD of the world, and return to you.
6. And Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and he placed [it] upon his son Isaac , and he took into his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went together.	6. And Abraham took the wood of the offering and laid it upon Izhak his son , and in his hand he took the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.
7. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and he said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"	7. And Izhak spoke to Abraham his father and said, My Father! And he said, I am. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: where is the lamb for the offering?
8. And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And they both went together.	8. And Abraham said, The LORD will choose for Himself a lamb for the offering. And they went both of them in heart entirely as one. JERUSALEM: And Abraham said, The Word of the LORD will prepare for me a lamb; and if not, then you are the offering, my son! And they went both of them together with a contrite heart.
9. And they came to the place of which God had spoken to him, and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and he bound Isaac his son and placed him on the altar upon the wood.	9. And they came to the place of which the LORD had told him. And Abraham built there the altar which Adam had built, which had been destroyed by the waters of the deluge, which Noah again built, and which had been destroyed in the age of divisions; and he set the wood in order upon it, and bound Izhak his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.
10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife, to slaughter his son.	10. And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And Izhak answered and said to his father, Bind me properly (aright), lest I tremble from the affliction of my soul, and be cast into the pit of destruction, and there be found profanity in your offering. (Now) the eyes of Abraham looked on the eyes of Izhak; but the eyes of Izhak looked towards the angels on high, (and) Izhak beheld them, but Abraham saw them not. And the angels answered on high, Come, behold how these solitary ones who are in the world kill the one the other; he who slays delays not; he who is to be slain reaches forth his neck. JERUSALEM: And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay Izhak his son. Izhak answered and said to Abraham his father, My father, bind my hands rightly, lest in the hour of my affliction I tremble and confuse you, and your offering be found

Rashi's Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
	<p>profane, and I be cast into the pit of destruction in the world to come. (Now) the eyes of Abraham reached unto the eyes of Izhak; but the eyes of Izhak reaching to the angels on high. And Izhak beheld them, but Abraham saw them not. In that hour came forth the angels on high, and said, these to these, Come, behold two righteous/generous ones alone in the midst of the world: the one slays, the other is slain. He who slays defers not, and he who is to be slain stretches out his neck.</p>
<p>11. And an angel of God called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."</p>	<p>11. And the Angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens, and said to him, Abraham! Abraham! And he said, Behold me. JERUSALEM: And He said, Abraham! Abraham! And Abraham answered in the language of the sanctuary, and said, Behold me.</p>
<p>12. And he said, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a God fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me."</p>	<p>12. And He said, Stretch not out your hand upon the young man, neither do him any evil; for now it is manifest before Me that you fear the LORD; neither have you withheld your son the only begotten from Me.</p>
<p>13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and he saw, and lo! there was a ram, [and] after [that] it was caught in a tree by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.</p>	<p>13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and, behold, a certain ram which had been created between the evenings of the foundation of the world, was held in the entanglement of a tree by his horns. And Abraham went and took him, and offered him an offering instead of his son.</p>
<p>14. And Abraham named that place, The Lord will see, as it is said to this day: On the mountain, the Lord will be seen.</p>	<p>14. And Abraham gave thanks and prayed there, in that place, and said, I pray through the mercies that are before You, O LORD, before whom it is manifest that it was not in the depth of my heart to turn away from doing Your decree with joy, that when the children of Izhak my son will offer in the hour of affliction, this may be a memorial for them; and You may hear them and deliver them, and that all generations to come may say, In this mountain Abraham bound Izhak his son, and there the Shekina of the LORD was revealed unto him. JERUSALEM: And Abraham prayed in the name of the Word of the LORD, and said, You are the LORD who sees, and are not seen. I pray for mercy before You, O LORD. It is wholly manifest and known before You that in my heart there was no dividing, in the time that You did command me to offer Izhak my son, and to make him dust and ashes before You; but that forthwith I arose in the morning and performed Your word with joy, and I have fulfilled Your word. And now I pray for mercies before You, O LORD God, that when the children of Izhak offer in the hour of</p>

Rashi’s Translation	Targum Pseudo Jonathan
	need, the binding of Izhak their father You may remember on their behalf, and remit and forgive their sins, and deliver them out of all need. That the generations who are to arise after him may say, In the mountain of the house of the sanctuary of the LORD did Abraham offer Izhak his son, and in this mountain of the house of the sanctuary was revealed unto him the glory of the Shekinah of the LORD.
15. And an angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven.	15. And the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham the second time from the heavens,
16. And he said, "By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, that because you have done this thing and you did not withhold your son, your only one ,	16. and said, By My Word have I sworn, says the LORD, forasmuch as you have done this thing, and has not withheld your son, your only begotten ,
17. That I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies.	17. that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your sons as the stars of the heavens, and they will be as the sand which is upon the shore of the sea, and your sons will inherit the cities before their enemies.
18. And through your children shall be blessed all the nations of the world , because you hearkened to My voice."	18. And all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through the righteousness/generosity of your son , because you have obeyed My word.
19. And Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer sheba; and Abraham remained in Beer sheba.	19. And the angels on high took Izhak and brought him into the school (Bet Midrash) of Shem the Great; and he was there three years . And in the same day Abraham returned to his young men; and they arose and went together to the Well of the Seven, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-desheva.
20. And it came to pass after these matters, that it was told to Abraham saying: "Behold Milcah, she also bore sons to Nahor your brother.	20. And it was after these things, after Abraham had bound Izhak, that HaSatan came and told unto Sarah that Abraham had killed Izhak. And Sarah arose, and cried out, and was strangled, and died from agony. But Abraham had come, and was resting in the way. And it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcha also has borne; she has enlargement, through the righteousness/generosity of her sister, for bring forth sons unto Nachor your brother:
21. Uz, his first born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel, the father of Aram.	21. Uts, his firstborn, and Booz, his brother, and Kemuel, master of the Aramean magicians, and
22. And Kesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.	22. Keshed, and Chazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.
23. And Bethuel begot Rebecca." These eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother.	23. And Bethuel begat Rivkah. These eight bare Milcha to Nachor the brother of Abraham.
24. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, had also given birth to Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.	24. And his concubine, whose name was Rëuma, she also bare Tebach, and Gacham, and Tachash, and Maacha.

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 eḥad:** Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question.
4. **Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages.
5. **Kelal u-Perat and Perat u-kelal:** Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general.
6. **Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.
7. **Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

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. 309-378

Rashi's Commentary for: B'resheet (Genesis) 22:1 – 24

1 after these things Some of our Sages say (Sanh. 89b) [that this happened]: after the words [translating "devarim" as "words"] of Satan, who was accusing and saying, "Of every feast that Abraham made, he did not sacrifice before You one bull or one ram!" He [God] said to him, "Does he do anything but for his son? Yet, if I were to say to him, 'Sacrifice him before Me,' he would not withhold [him]." And some say, "after the words of Ishmael," who was boasting to Isaac that he was circumcised at the age of thirteen, and he did not protest. Isaac said to him, "With one organ you intimidate me? If the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me, 'Sacrifice yourself before Me,' I would not hold back." - Cf. Gen. Rabbah 55:4.

Here I am **This is the reply of the pious. It is an expression of humility and an expression of readiness.** - [from Tan. Vayera 22]

2 Please take Heb. $\aleph, \iota \pi, \rho$ is only an expression of a request. He [God] said to him, "I beg of you, pass this test for Me, so that people will not say that the first ones [tests] had no substance." - [from Sanh. ad loc.]

your son He [Abraham] said to Him, "I have two sons." He [God] said to him, "Your only one." He said to Him, "This one is the only son of his mother, and that one is the only son of his mother." He said to him, "Whom you love." He said to Him, "I love them both." He said to him, "Isaac." Now why did He not disclose this to him at the beginning? In order not to confuse him suddenly, lest his mind become distracted and bewildered, and also to endear the commandment to him and to reward him for each and every expression. - [from Sanh. 89b, Gen. Rabbah 39:9, 55:7]

the land of Moriah Jerusalem, and so in (II) Chronicles (3:1): “to build the House of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah.” **And our Sages explained that [it is called Moriah] because from there [religious] instruction (הוֹרָאָה) goes forth to Israel. Onkelos rendered it [“the land of service”] as alluding to the service of the incense, which contained myrrh [“mor” is phonetically similar to Moriah], spikenard, and other spices.**

bring him up He did not say to him, “Slaughter him,” because the Holy One, blessed be He, did not wish him to slaughter him but to bring him up to the mountain, to prepare him for a burnt offering, and as soon as he brought him up [to the mountain], He said to him, “Take him down.”-[from Gen. Rabbah 56:8]

one of the mountains **The Holy One, blessed be He, makes the righteous/generous wonder (other editions: makes the righteous/generous wait), and only afterwards discloses to them [His intentions], and all this is in order to increase their reward.** Likewise, (above 12:1): “to the land that I will show you,” and likewise, concerning Jonah (3:2): “and proclaim upon it the proclamation.”-[from Gen. Rabbah 55:7]

3 And...arose early **He hastened to [perform] the commandment** (Pes. 4a).

and he saddled **He himself, and he did not command one of his servants, because love causes a disregard for the standard [of dignified conduct].**-[from Gen. Rabbah 55:8]

his two young men **Ishmael and Eliezer, for a person of esteem is not permitted to go out on the road without two men, so that if one must ease himself and move to a distance, the second one will remain with him.**-[from Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 31; Gen. Rabbah ad loc., Tan. Balak 8]

and he split Heb. וַיַּצֵּלְהוּ. The Targum renders הַלְצֵהוּ, as in (II Sam. 19:18): “and they split (וַיַּצֵּלְהוּ) the Jordan,” an expression of splitting, fendre in Old French.

4 On the third day Why did He delay from showing it to him immediately? So that people should not say that He confused him and confounded him suddenly and deranged his mind, and if he had had time to think it over, he would not have done it.-[from Gen. Rabbah 55:6]

and saw the place He saw a cloud attached to the mountain.-[from Gen. Rabbah 56:1, Tan. Vayera 23]

yonder Heb. הַיְכָנְחָה, lit. until there, i.e., a short way to the place that is before us. And the Midrashic interpretation (Tan. ad loc.): I will see where is [the promise] that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me (above 15:5): “So (כִּי) will be your seed.”

and return He prophesied that they would both return.-[from Avoth d’Rabbi Nathan, second version, ch. 43; Rabbah and Tan. ad loc.] i.e., **Abraham prophesied without realizing it.**

6 the knife Heb. הַמְאָכְלֶת, so called because it consumes (אוֹכְלֶת) the flesh, as it is stated (Deut. 32:42): “and My sword will consume (תֹּאכְלוּ) flesh,” and because it renders meat fit for consumption (אוֹכְלֶת). Another explanation: This [knife] was מְאָכְלֶת because the people of Israel still eat (אוֹכְלִים) the reward given for it.- [from Gen. Rabbah 56:3]

and they both went together Abraham, who knew that he was going to slaughter his son, was going as willingly and joyfully as Isaac, who was unaware of the matter.-

8 will provide for Himself the lamb i. e., He will see and choose for Himself the lamb (Targum Jonathan), and if there will be no lamb, my son will be for a burnt offering. And although Isaac understood that he was going to be

slaughtered, ”they both went together,” with one accord (lit. with the same heart). -[from Gen. Rabbah 56:4]

9 and he bound his hands and his feet behind him. The hands and the feet tied together is known as עֲקִידָה (Shab. 54a). And that is the meaning of עֲקִידָיִם (below 30: 39), that their ankles were white; the place where they are bound was discernible (Beresheet Rabba).

11 “Abraham! Abraham!” This is an expression of affection, that He repeated his name.-[from Tos. Ber. ch. 1, Sifra Vayikra ch. 1]

12 Do not stretch forth to slaughter [him]. He [Abraham] said to Him, ”If so, I have come here in vain. I will inflict a wound on him and extract a little blood.” He said to him, ”Do not do the slightest thing (הַמְּאִי־מְאִי) to him.” Do not cause him any blemish (מוֹם) !-[from Gen. Rabbah 56:7]

for now I know Said Rabbi Abba: Abraham said to Him, ”I will explain my complaint before You. Yesterday, You said to me (above 21:12): ‘for in Isaac will be called your seed,’ and You retracted and said (above verse 2): ‘ Take now your son.’ Now You say to me, ‘ Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad.’” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him (Ps. 89:35): “I shall not profane My covenant, neither shall I alter the utterance of My lips.” When I said to you, ”Take,” I was not altering the utterance of My lips. I did not say to you, ”Slaughter him,” but, ”Bring him up.” You have brought him up; [now] take him down.-[from Gen. Rabbah 56:8]

for now I know From now on, I have a response to Satan and the nations who wonder what is My love towards you. Now I have a reason (lit. an opening of the mouth), for they see ”that you fear God.”-

13 and lo! there was a ram It was prepared for this since the six days of Creation.-[from Tan. Shelach 14]

after After the angel said to him, ”Do not stretch forth your hand,” he saw it as it [the ram] was caught. And that is why the Targum translates it: ”And Abraham lifted his eyes after these [words], i.e., after the angel said, ”Do not stretch forth your hand.” (Other editions: and according to the Aggadah, ”after all the words of the angel and the Shechinah and after Abraham’s arguments”).

in a tree Heb. בְּטֵבֵל , a tree.-[from Targum Onkelos]

by its horns For it was running toward Abraham, and Satan caused it to be caught and entangled among the trees.-[from Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 31]

instead of his son Since it is written: “and offered it up for a burnt offering,” nothing is missing in the text. Why then [does it say]: “instead of his son”? Over every sacrificial act that he performed, he prayed, “May it be [Your] will that this should be deemed as if it were being done to my son: as if my son were slaughtered, as if his blood were sprinkled, as if my son were flayed, as if he were burnt and reduced to ashes.”-[from Tan. Shelach 14]

14 The Lord will see Its simple meaning is as the Targum renders: The Lord will choose and see for Himself this place, to cause His Divine Presence to rest therein and for offering sacrifices here.

as it is said to this day that [future] generations will say about it, “On this mountain, the Holy One, blessed be He, appears to His people.”

to this day the future days, like [the words] “until this day,” that appear throughout Scripture, for all the future generations who read this verse, will refer “until this day,” to the day in which they are living. The Midrash Aggadah (see Gen. Rabbah 56:9) [explains]: The Lord will see this binding to forgive Israel every year and to save them from

retribution, in order that it will be said “on this day” in all future generations: “On the mountain of the Lord, Isaac’s ashes shall be seen, heaped up and standing for atonement.”

17 I will surely bless you Heb. אֶבְרַכְךָ בְּרַךְ, one [blessing] for the father and one for the son.- and I will greatly multiply Heb. וְהִרְבֵּה אֲרִבָּה , one for the father and one for the son.-[from Gen. Rabbah 56:11]

19 and Abraham remained in Beer-sheba This does not mean permanently dwelling, for he was living in Hebron. Twelve years prior to the binding of Isaac, he left Beer-sheba and went to Hebron, as it is said (above 21:34): “And Abraham dwelt in the land of the Philistines for many days,” [meaning] more numerous than the first [years] in Hebron, which were twenty-six years, as we explained above.-[from Seder Olam ch. 1]

20 after these matters, that it was told, etc. When he returned from Mount Moriah, Abraham was thinking and saying, “Had my son been slaughtered, he would have died without children. I should have married him to a woman of the daughters of Aner, Eshkol, or Mamre. The Holy One, blessed be He, announced to him that Rebeccah, his mate, had been born, and that is the meaning of aafter these matters,” i.e., after the thoughts of the mattethat came about as a result of the “akedah.”-[from Gen. Rabbah 57:3]

she also She had [a number of] families equal to the [number of] the families of Abraham. Just as Abraham [engendered] the twelve tribes who emerged from Jacob-eight were the sons of the wives and four were the sons of maidservants-so were these also, eight sons of the wives and four sons of a concubine.-[from Gen. Rabbah 57:3] 23

And Bethuel begot Rebecca All these genealogies were written only for the sake of this verse.- [based on Gen. Rabbah 57:1,3]

Ketubim: Psalms 18.21-43

21. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He recompensed me.	21. The LORD will requite me according to my merit; according to the cleanness of my hands He will answer me.
22. For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from [the commandments of] my God.	22. For I have kept the proper ways in the LORD's presence; and I have not walked in evil before the LORD.
23. For all His ordinances were before me; and His statutes I will not remove from myself.	23. For all His judgments are revealed in my sight, to do them; and His covenants I will not remove from me.
24. And I was single-hearted with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.	24. And I was blameless in fear of Him; and I kept my soul from sins.
25. And the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands before His eyes.	25. And the LORD rewarded me according to my merit; according to the cleanness of my hands in the presence of His word.
26. With a kind one, You show Yourself kind, with a sincere man, You show Yourself sincere.	26. With Abraham, who was found pious in your presence, You showed much mercy; with his seed, Isaac, who was complete in fear of You, you completed Your favorable word.
27. With a pure one, You show Yourself pure, but with a crooked one, You deal crookedly.	27. With Jacob, who was pure in Your presence, You chose his sons from all the Gentiles, and separated his seed from all that is unfit; but with Pharaoh and his seed, and the Egyptians who thought evil thoughts against Your people, You confounded them in their thoughts.

28. For You deliver a humble people, and You humble haughty eyes.	28. Because You are going to redeem the people, the house of Israel, who are esteemed among the peoples in exile; and by Your word You will abase the mighty nations who prevail over them.
29. For You light my lamp; the Lord, my God, does light my darkness.	29. For You will light the lamp of Israel that was extinguished in the exile, for You are the lord of the light of Israel. The LORD my God will bring me out of darkness into light; He will show me His eternal consolation which is to come to the righteous/generous.
30. For by You I run upon a troop, and by my God I scale a wall.	30. For by Your word I will pass through armies; and by the word of my God I will subdue mighty citadels.
31. [He is] the God Whose way is perfect; the word of the Lord is refined; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.	31. God is he whose ways are true; the Torah of the LORD is pure; he is a shield to all who trust in him.
32. For who is God save the Lord? And who is a Rock, save our God?	32. For because of the miracle and deliverance that You will perform for your Messiah, and for the remnants of Your people who will remain, all the Gentiles, nations, and tongues will confess and say, There is no God but the LORD, for there is none besides You; and Your people will say, There is none mighty except our God.
33. The God is He Who girds me with strength; and He makes my way perfect.	33. God, who girds on me a belt in strength, and makes blameless my way.
34. He makes my feet like hinds, and sets me upon my high places.	34. Who makes my feet like hinds'; and He will sustain me in my stronghold.
35. He trains my hands for war so that a copper bow is bent by my arms.	35. Who teaches my hands to do battle, and who makes my arms as strong as a bronze bow.
36. You have given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has supported me, and You have treated me with great humility.	36. And you have given me strength and redemption; and Your right hand will help me; and by Your word You have multiplied me.
37. You have enlarged my step[s] beneath me, and my ankles have not slipped.	37. You have broadened my steps in my place, and my knee has not buckled.
38. I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them, never turning back until they were consumed.	38. I will pursue my enemies; now have I destroyed them, and I did not return until I finished them off.
39. I have crushed them so that they cannot rise; yea, they are fallen under my feet.	39. I will destroy them, and they are unable to rise; and the slain have fallen under the soles of my feet.
40. For You have girded me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those that rose up against me.	40. And you have girded me with strength as a belt to do battle; You have defeated beneath me the Gentiles who rise up to do me harm.
41. And of my enemies, You have given me the back of their necks; those that hate me, that I may cut them off.	41. And my foes You have broken in my presence; You have made them turn tail; thus my enemies I will destroy.
42. They pray but no one saves them; [even] to the Lord, but He answered them not.	42. They seek help, but they have no redeemer; they pray in the presence of the LORD, but He does not accept their prayer.
43. Then I ground them as dust before the wind; as the mud in the streets I did pour them.	43. I have crushed them like clods of earth before the storm-wind; and like the mud of the streets I have trodden them.

Rashi's Commentary on Psalm 18.21-43

21 according to my righteousness According to the righteousness of my following Him in the desert.

according to the cleanness Heb. כבד , an expression of cleanness, as (below 24: 4), “and pure of heart.” Another explanation: He sent forth from on high [and] He took me. [David] said this about himself, concerning the angel who came to the Rock of the Divisions (I Sam. 23:27) to turn Saul away from him, as it is stated: “And an angel came to Saul, etc.”

according to my righteousness that I did not slay him when I sliced off the skirt of his coat. [Obviously, Rashi explains verses 8-17 as referring to Israel's departure from Egypt. Only in verse 17 does he suggest the explanation that David refers to his own experiences.]

23 For all His ordinances were before me I always placed them before my eyes.

26 With a kind one, You show Yourself kind Because so are His ways, to pay a measure for a measure. Kind...sincere...pure, corresponding to the three patriarchs.

27 With a pure one a faithful one.

but with a crooked one alluding to Pharaoh.

29 For You light my lamp when he fought at night with the Amalekite troop that attacked Ziklag, as it is stated (in I Sam. 30:17): “And David smote them from evening until evening to their morrow.”

30 For by You By Your assurance.

and by my God I scale a wall When he came to wage war against Jebus, and he said (in I Chron. 11:6): “Whoever smites the Jebusites, etc. shall be a leader and a prince.” Joab brought a green juniper tree, bent it over, suspended himself on it, and scaled the wall. Said David (in Ps. 141:5): “May a righteous man smite me with loving-kindness,” and the Holy one, blessed be He, lowered the wall, and he scaled it (Mid. Ps. 18:24).

31 refined Pure. He promises and He does.

33 and He makes my way perfect He removed all obstacles from my way until it became perfect and paved.

34 He makes my feet like hinds The feet of the females stand straighter than those of the males.

35 so that a copper bow is bent by my arms Heb. ונחתה , an expression of treading the bow, as (below 38:3): “Your arrows were driven (נחתו) into me.” Its radical [or its active voice] is נחת . When it is used in the passive voice, a dagesh comes and causes the “nun” to drop out. Hence נחתה is derived from נחתה as (below 69:4): “My throat is dried (נחר) ,” derived from נחר as (in Jer. 6:29): “The bellows is heated (נחר)”; נדף , rattling (in Lev. 26:36) is derived from נדף ; “My eyes stream (נגרה) ” (in Lam. 3:49), is like נגרה ; “was given (נתנה) ” (Gen. 38:14) is like נתנה ; “they were smitten (נגף) ” (II Sam. 10:15) is derived from נגף . We cannot interpret it as being of the radical חתה , for then it would say נחתה , as [it says] נעשתה , was done, from עשה ; נענתה , was answered, from ענה . Another explanation: and a copper bow is bent by my arms: חיה is an expression of treading a bow, as (below 38:3): “Your arrows were driven (נחתו) .” The “nun” is not of the radical but it is like נחלו “gave for inheritance” (in Jos. 14:1), and the copper bow was bent by my arms. Copper bows were hanging in David's house. The kings of the nations would see them and say to each other, “Do you think that David has the strength to bend them? This is only to frighten us.” But he would hear [them] and bend the bows before them.

36 and You have treated me with great humility You have dealt with me with great humility.

37 You have enlarged my step[s] beneath me One who widens his steps does not fall easily. Similarly, Scripture states (in Prov. 4:12): **“When you walk, your steps will not be hampered (יצייר).”**

slipped Heb. מעדו aluverjert in Old French, to slip.

my ankles Heb. קרסלי . They are the feet from the ankle which is called keville (cheville) in Old French and below [to the heel].

41 You have given me the back of their necks They would turn the back of their necks to me and flee.

42 They pray to their idols.

but no one saves them Because it [their prayer] has no power, and they return and call upon the Lord, but He does not answer them.

43 Then I ground them Heb. ואשחקם , an expression of crushing.

Meditation from the Psalms Psalm 18:21-43

By: H. Em. Rabbi Dr Hillel ben David

August 10, 2019 - Ab 9, 5779

Bereshit (Genesis) 22:1-24

Tehillim (Psalms) 18:21-43

Melachim alef (I Kings) 10:1-9 + 23-24

Mk 2:13-15, Lk 5:27-28, Acts 5:17-28, Acts 11:1-21

I'll repeat my intro from the beginning of this chapter of Psalms.

This extraordinary Psalm popularly known as שירת דוד, 'the Song of David' was composed in his old age after a life full of trial and tribulation.¹ Specifically, it was recited on the day that David's army swore that their old and venerable king would no longer be allowed to expose himself to the dangers of the battlefield with them.²

This Psalm has the distinction of being the only chapter in Scriptures which is recorded twice: here and in II Shmuel Chapter 22. Abarbanel, in his commentary to Samuel, is of the opinion that David originally composed this song in his youth when he was still deeply enmeshed in his many problems and misfortunes. He created this song to be an all-inclusive one which would relate to every woe which could possibly occur in his life. Throughout his long life David kept this psalm at hand, reciting it on every occasion of personal salvation.

The original version appears in Samuel. This version, composed at the end of David's life, differs from the original in a number of minor variations enumerated in Soferim 18.

¹ Rashi

² II Shmuel 21:17 (Ibn Ezra)

This second version is not a triumphant song of personal victory. David made a gift to Israel of his personal feelings as a prayer and a consolation in times of distress. He who seeks to meditate in solitude, he who seeks private communion with his Maker, he who seeks to pour out his anguished soul in fervent prayer, all of these will find in it the precise words with which to express the depths of his feelings.

The Vilna Gaon³ designates this psalm as the שיר של יום, 'Song of the Day', for the *Seventh Day of Passover*.

On the seventh night of Passover, known as Shvi'ee shel Pesach, the Israelites passed through the parted Reed Sea. Towards morning, the Sea rolled over on the Egyptian army, and shortly afterwards the Jews sang the *Az Yashir*, the song of praise which is today part of our daily morning prayers.

This holiday marks the final conclusion of the Egyptian bondage. As long as their Egyptian taskmasters were alive, the Jews could not rid themselves of the fear that perhaps one day the Egyptian army would overpower them and force them back into slavery. While this irrational trepidation may be difficult for us to comprehend, we cannot relate to the psyche of a nation which had been dominated, brutally enslaved and humiliated for many generations. Only after the Egyptians were totally annihilated were the Jews truly a free nation, in spirit as well as in body.

HaRav Gifter⁴ explains that the universal and eternal nature of this psalm is particularly suited to the Seventh Day of Passover when HaShem split the Sea representing the climax of redemption and the forerunner of all future redemptions.⁵

I'd like to look at a few interesting parts of this section of our chapter of Psalms. Let's start by looking at the 'shield of salvation'. In v.36, David speaks about the shield of salvation.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 18:36** Thou hast also given me Thy shield of salvation, and Thy right hand hath holden me up; and Thy condescension hath made me great.*

This 'shield of salvation' is used in multiple places in our prayers, which suggests that we need to remind ourselves and internalize HaShem's protection. Perhaps a better way of looking at this is to ask, "am I looking intently to HaShem to protect me, or am I relying on my job, my wealth, my family, my friends, or indeed my things to protect me?"

The Sages, in addition to composing the "Shield of David" blessing after the Haftorah, also introduced the notion of HaShem being a shield of salvation into the daily prayers. As mentioned above, the conclusion of the first blessing of the Amidah is "Blessed are You God, Shield of Abraham," and the concept is also mentioned towards the end of the Amidah as well. Furthermore, in the blessings, recited before and after the morning Shema, the cardinal statement of Jewish faith, this idea is repeated several times. It also appears in the blessings recited after the evening Shema. Thus, the Jewish people recite numerous times a day the conviction that HaShem is truly a shield and protector. The

³ Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman, known as the Vilna Gaon, Elijah of Vilna, by his Hebrew acronym HaGra ("HaGaon Rabbenu Eliyahu"), or Elijah Ben Solomon, (Vilnius April 23, 1720 – Vilnius October 9, 1797), was a Talmudist, halakhist, kabbalist, and the foremost leader of mitnagdic (non-Hasidic) Jewry of the past few centuries. He is commonly referred to in Hebrew as ha-Gaon he-Chasid mi-Vilna, "the saintly genius from Vilnius".

⁴ Rabbi Mordechai Gifter (October 15, 1915 - January 18, 2001) was the rosh yeshiva of the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland and among the foremost religious leaders of Orthodox Jewry in the late 20th century. He studied in yeshivas in Lithuania and held several rabbinical positions in the United States of America.

⁵ This introduction was excerpted and edited from: The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman.

fact that the Jewish people has survived and even thrived despite the many attempts to destroy it testifies to HaShem’s protection and the eternal covenant He first made with Abraham.

This phrase “shield of salvation” has multiple meanings. Most often it is expounded along with the other words in our pasuk. The Midrash, in multiple places, explains our phrase. (When two midrashim contain similar explanations, one must pay attention to the differences to understand what this midrash is offering to help us understand.)

Midrash Tanchuma Yelammedenu for: Shemot (Exodus) 31:15. And He gave unto Moses when He had made an end of speaking (Exod. 31:18). ... Another explanation of *And He gave unto Moses* is contained in the verse: *You have also given me Your shield of salvation, and Your right hand has held me up; and Your condescension hath made me great.*⁶

1. *You have given me Your shield of salvation* refers to the Israelites, who trust in the Holy One, blessed be He;
2. *Your right hand has held me up* alludes to the Torah, as it says: *At His right hand a fiery law unto them;*⁷
3. *And Your condescension has made me great* relates to the condescension of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Midrash Rabbah - Exodus 41:4 Another explanation of *AND HE GAVE UNTO MOSES*, etc. Thus it says, *Thou hast also given me*

1. *Thy shield of salvation.*⁸ *This refers to Israel who trust in God, and He is their shield, as it is written, He is a shield unto all them that take refuge in Him.*⁹
2. *And Thy right hand hath holden me up*¹⁰ --*this refers to the Torah, for it says, At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.*¹¹ *And*
3. *Thy condescension hath made me great*¹² -- [*this refers to God*]; *for is there anyone more humble than He?*¹³

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 48:1 AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM (18:1). *It is written, Thou hast also given me Thy shield of salvation, and Thy right hand hath holden me up, and Thy condescension hath made me great.*¹⁴

1. *‘Thou hast also given me Thy shield of salvation’* alludes to Abraham;¹⁵
2. *‘And Thy right hand hath holden me up’* - *in the fiery furnace, in famine, and in [my battle with] the kings;*
3. *‘And Thy condescension hath made me great’*: *with what condescension did the Lord make Abraham great? In that he sat while the Shechinah stood; thus it is written, AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM... AS HE SAT.*¹⁶

Our psalm uses this word ‘shield - גָּן־לְיָד ’ three times, in v.3, 31, and 36.

Now, I would like to look at another interesting pasuk.

Tehillim (Psalms) 18:24 *And I was single-hearted with Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity* (עָרַבְתִּי לֵבִי).

⁶ Tehillim (Psalms) 18:26

⁷ Debarim (Deuteronomy) 33:2

⁸ Tehillim (Psalms) 18:36

⁹ ibid. 31

¹⁰ ibid. 36

¹¹ Debarim (Deuteronomy) 33:2

¹² Ps. loc. cit.

¹³ A daring thought, probably inspired by the idea that even in this God may serve as a model.

¹⁴ Tehillim (Psalms) 18:26

¹⁵ Radal and Rash.: as it is written, I am thy shield (Gen. XV, 1).

¹⁶ God did not permit him to rise on account of his age and the weakness caused by circumcision.

יְגַדְלֵנִי indicates my personal sin. Every person is different and is tempted with a particular sin for which he has a weakness. He is challenged to overcome his own shortcoming.¹⁷ This idea caused me to meditate on David’s shortcoming (I have no shortcoming to meditate on ... NOT!). I asked myself, where did David fail. I started by looking at the affair with Batsheba. Let me briefly refresh your memory of this affair. As you read, bear in mind what Chazal say:

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

Did King David commit adultery? The Tanakh says *no*.

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

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

Kethuboth 9b *Everyone who goes out into the war of the House of David writes for his wife a deed of divorce¹⁸, for it is written, And to thy brethren shalt thou bring greetings, and take their pledge¹⁹. What [is the meaning of], ‘and take their pledge’? R. Joseph learnt: Things which are pledged between him and her²⁰.*

We know that Uriyya had given his wife a “get” and was legally divorced. Chazal ask whether it was a permanent or a conditional get.²¹ David required a conditional get.²² The get is automatically revoked if the soldier returns from battle. In Uriah’s case, we see that Uriah did not give a conditional get. Uriah gave a permanent get. The fact that Uriah was a rebel might explain why Batsheba demanded a permanent get. At any rate, the permanent get meant that Uriah could NOT obey the King’s order to go home and sleep with his wife. The fact that he refused the King’s orders – twice, suggests that King David wanted to show the world that Uriah had given a permanent get and could never go back to Batsheba. This shows that the Christian perspective, that King David was trying to cover up his illicit affair, is a lie.

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

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

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

Did King David lust, sexually, after Batsheba? No! King David did NOT lust after Batsheba. He had entirely conquered that evil inclination. The story makes it sound like Batsheba was taking a bath on her roof without any covering. Nothing could be further from the truth. Batsheba was coming out from the mikveh, the ritual immersion

¹⁷ Hirsch

¹⁸ [So that in case he falls in battle his wife should be free to marry without the necessity of halizah. The Get would in that case take effect retrospectively from the date of its writing (Rashi). Tosafot: He writes a Get without any conditions to take effect immediately]

¹⁹ Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 17:15.

²⁰ I.e., the betrothals, these thou shalt take from them by a deed of divorce (Rashi).

²¹ Get al tenai

²² Ketubah 9a-b

that women must perform every month. As she exited the mikveh house, her exalted spiritual state attracted King David.²³ He prophetically saw that he was to father Solomon with this women.²⁴ That is why he took her.

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

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

Soncino Zohar, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 82a David further said to God: “Sovereign of the Universe, wherefore do not the Israelites conclude one of their blessings with my name as they do with the name of Abraham, [Tr. note: The first blessing of the Amidah.] of whom it is written ‘I am thy shield’ (Gen. XV, 1)?” God replied: “Abraham I have already tried and tested and found to be wholly steadfast.” Said David: “If so, ‘examine me, O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart’ (Ps. XXVI, 2).” When he sinned in the matter of Batsheba, David remembered what he had said, and he exclaimed “ ‘Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me and hast not found, my thoughts should not have passed my mouth’ (Ps. XVII, 3). I said, Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and thou hast proved my heart; I said, Try

²³ The sages say that Batsheba was meant to be with David from the six days of creation, but that he took her prematurely. In fact, the Torah’s first word, “In the “beginning”, (בְּרֵאשִׁית) equals “Batsheba to King David”, (בַּת שֶׁבַע לְדָוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ). The Torah’s first word is related in all other places in the Tanach to kingdom and sovereignty. So there is a distinct connection here between Batsheba and the kingdom and between David and Batsheba. In spite of all the evil inclination involved in this act, David sensed their predestination and so did Batsheba.

²⁴ Mashiach comes from the union between David and Batsheba and not any other of David’s wives.

my reins, and thou hast tried me; but thou hast not found me as I should be; would that what was in my mind had not passed my lips.” (And with all this the Israelites do conclude a blessing with his name. [Tr. note: The third blessing after the Haftarah.]) Therefore David said: “‘Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory and the lifter up of my head’: this grade assuredly is my glory with which I am crowned.” ‘

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

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

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

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

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

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

King David knows that Uriah has an evil heart,²⁵ never the less, one MUST obey the King no matter what. Not wishing to publicly shame Uriah, King David has him killed in battle in an honorable manner. Notice that Joab does not protest in the least. Joab knew that the order of the King, as the chief justice, must be obeyed.

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

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

2 Shmuel (Samuel) 11:26 *And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased HaShem. And HaShem sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich [man] had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor [man] had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man*

²⁵ The understanding is that he was fomenting a rebellion.

that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, [As] HaShem liveth, the man that hath done this [thing] shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is apparent that King David was destined to marry Batsheba. It seems that his timing was off a bit, as the Zohar tells us:

Soncino Zohar, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 73b ... although a woman is destined for a certain man, He first allows her to be the wife of another man until his time arrives. As soon as that time arrives, he departs from the world to make way for the other, although the Holy One, blessed be He, is loth to remove him from the world to make way for the other man before his time arrives. This is the inner reason why Bath-Sheba was given to Uriah first.

So, if David acted hastily in the matter of Batsheba, perhaps we can see this same trait being manifest when David cut off the cloak of King Shaul’s garment.

The Ohr HaChaim (based on the Midrash) says an amazing thing. Adam COULD have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge as well. However, the permission to eat from that tree was only on Shabbat. In fact, the Ohr HaChaim says he was supposed to go ahead and make Kiddush²⁶ on Shabbat from the wine made from the grapes of the Eitz haDaat.²⁷ His sin was merely that he jumped the gun. The world changed forever and ever because of that hastiness on his part.

A student of the Ari z”l points out that the prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge was given on the ninth hour of the Sixth Day of Creation. Rather than waiting just three more hours, Adam ate from it right away. The Kabbalistic works explain this is why Orlah²⁸ is prohibited the first three years. Since the first man could not wait three more hours, the Torah gives us a lesson in waiting – three years to atone for the sin of Adam not waiting three hours!

The Chatam Sofer asks, “What was his rush?” More to the point, if in fact on Shabbat, this same tree would have been permitted, how could it be so terrible if he ate it a couple of hours earlier? The Chatam Sofer explains that when

²⁶ Blessing over wine

²⁷ Eitz haDaat = Tree of Knowledge

²⁸ **Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:23** When you come to the Land and plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as orlah (uncircumcised); for three years it shall be orlah (uncircumcised) to you, they shall not be eaten.

Adam was created, he did not have an Evil Inclination.²⁹ There was no "fight". There was no struggle with conscience. Adam just naturally did that which was good. He knew that when he would eat from the Eitz haDaat, life would change: "You would be like Elohim who knows good and evil." He would have free choice and could choose good or evil, which is ultimately the purpose of human beings in this world, to choose the good.

Adam's attitude was "I so much want to do the Will of G-d out of my own free choice that I cannot wait for this opportunity." However, the Almighty Knew better. He knew that in order to choose the right decisions and to choose good rather than evil, Adam still needed another element – that was the sanctity of Shabbat. Had Adam waited those three extra hours and had gone into Shabbat suffused with the sanctity that Shabbat provides, he would have been able to withstand the temptations of life. This is what the Almighty wanted. That is why the Tree of Life suddenly became permitted on Shabbat.

We asked, "What changed (after those 3 hours would have passed)?" What changed is that Adam still needed a component – Kedushat Shabbat.³⁰ He did not have that yet. He was not strong enough to resist.

As a 'tikkun' [correction] for that, as a way to learn the lesson of "A thing in its proper time – how good" [Mishlei 15:23], the Torah gives us a prohibition called Orlah. For three years, WAIT. The lesson of Orlah is WAIT. Not everything needs to be enjoyed or taken as soon as it is physically available. As a 'tikkun'³¹ for Adam, for the three hours he could not wait, we keep the mitzvah of Orlah for three years.³²

The Arizal tells us that David was an incarnation of Adam in the triad"

גְּשִׁיחַ – דָּוִד – אָדָם = אָדָם
Adam = Adam, David, Mashiach

Just as Adam had a problem with waiting, so also did David have a problem with waiting. I wonder if Mashiach will 'jump the gun' too?

Tehillim (Psalms) 18:24 And I was single-hearted with Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity (עֲוֹנִי).

Ashlamatah: 1 Kings 10.1-9

1 When the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, because of the name of the Lord, and she came to test him with riddles.

2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him all that was in her heart.

3 And Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was hidden from the king that he did not tell her.

4 And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom and the house that he had built.

5 And the food of his table, and the seating of his servants and the station of his attendants and their attire and his cupbearers and his ascent by which he would go up to the Temple of the Lord, she was breathless.

6 And she said to the king; "It was a true report that I heard in my country of your deeds and of your wisdom.

7 However, I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes, and I have beheld that not even a half had been told to me. You have wisdom and goodness in excess of that which I have heard.

8 Fortunate are your men; fortunate are these your servants who always stand before you and listen to your profound wisdom.

²⁹ Yetzer haRah

³⁰ The holiness of the Sabbath

³¹ Correction

³² This section was written by Rabbi Yissocher Frand.

9 Blessed be the Lord Your God, who preferred to place you on the throne of Israel; because of the Lord's love for Israel forever, He appointed you as king to do justice and righteousness.

23 Now King Solomon transcended all the kings of the earth in affluence and wisdom.

24 And all the [inhabitants of] the earth sought Solomon's presence to hear the wisdom with which God had endowed him.³³

NAZAREAN TALMUD

Sidra Of B’resheet (Gen.) 22:1 – 24

Shabbat: “V’HaElohim Nisah” & Shabbat: Shim’u

Sabbath: “And G-d tested” & Sabbath: “Hear”

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

HAKHAM SHAUL’S SCHOOL OF
TOSEFTA (Luke 5:27-32)

HAKHAM TSEFET’S SCHOOL OF PESHAT
(Mark 2:13-17)

And after these things He went out and saw a tax-collector named Levi ben Chalfai, sitting near the tax-office.³⁴ And he said to him, “Follow Me.” And immediately leaving all, he

And he went out again³⁶ by the seaside of the Kinneret. And as he walked, he visited, saw Levi³⁷ ben Chalfai sitting near the tax-office.³⁸ And He said to him, “Follow me³⁹ (come and be trained as a Hakham).”⁴⁰ And he (Levi) immediately⁴¹ arose (stood)⁴² and

³³ Rashi’s Translation

³⁴ Thematic connection with Ps 15:5 (money)

³⁶ Here we notice that the text tells us that he was beside the sea, Kinneret again. The previous account of walking by the “sea” was with the calling of the first talmidim. Cf. Mk 1:16. Scholars such as Guelich note the abrupt changes in the texts from pericope to pericope. Guelich, R. A. (1989). *Word Biblical Commentary, Mark 1-8:26*,. Nelson Reference, Word Incorporated. p. 99 This being an attestation of the synchronizations which were designed to connect with the Torah Seder. Walking by the seaside “again” causes us to connect with the previous enlistment of the first four talmidim.

³⁷ Arguments are made by some scholars that the name “Levi” is a tribal association. This is most likely true. However, there is no reason why his name cannot be “Levi.” Cf. France, R. (2002). *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, The Gospel of Mark*. Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 131. His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai notes... The Nazarean Codicil informs us about three Chalfai brothers (cousins of Yeshua) and their mother (Yeshua’s aunt) – [Charity surely starts at home!]:

1. Matityahu ben Chalfai HaLevi (this is the same as the author of the Midrash of Sefer Matityahu (Gospel of Matthew) and the Levi ben Chalfai mentioned in our present pericope of Mark)
2. “Little Ya’aqob” ben Chalfai HaLevi (cf. Matt. 10:3)
3. Yosef ben Chalfai HaLevi (brother of the above two, cf. Matt. 27:56)
4. Myriam Chalfai HaLevi (sister of Myriam mother of Yeshua –cf. John 19:25; Matt. 27:56)

³⁸ While we have the word “tax-collector” we are not given exactly what “tax” was collected. This is also a thematic connection with Ps 15:5

³⁹ The gospel (Mesorah) is not something merely spoken but lived, an *incarnation* (living personification). Hence Jesus is not sitting home taking calls but actively out making them. Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament commentary (81). Grand Rapids, Mich; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁴⁰ Cf. Abot 4:1; B.M 2:11

⁴¹ The text is missing the usual εὐθὺς – *euthus* but is here implied by the immediate action of **Levi ben Chalfai**. **Levi ben Chalfai** being the **fifth** talmid called by Yeshua.

⁴² Metaphor for the Amidah, becoming a Hakham and the resurrection along with becoming a “standing” talmid who develops into a Hakham.

rose up³⁵ and followed him.

followed him. And the entire multitude gathered⁴³ around him, and he taught them halakhic applications of the Oral Torah.

**HAKHAM SHAUL'S SCHOOL OF REMES
(2 Luqas - Acts 11:1-21)**

Acts 11:1-18

Now the Emissaries – Nazarean Hakhamim/Rabbis and the Jewish brothers who were throughout Y'hudah heard that the Gentiles also had received the Torah⁴⁴ of God. So, when Hakham Tsefet went up to Yerushalayim, the circumcision party brought him before the Bet Din,⁴⁵ saying, “You went to uncircumcised Gentile men and ate with them.” But Hakham Tsefet began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Yafo praying, and in a prophetic trance⁴⁶ I saw a vision, a certain vessel like a Talit coming down to me, being let down from the heavens by its four corners, and it came down to me. Examining it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the heavens.⁴⁷ And I heard a Bat Kol (a daughter of a voice)⁴⁸ saying to me, ‘Rise, Tsefet; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means, Master; I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’ But the Bat Kol (a daughter of a voice) answered a second time from heavens, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into the heavens. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Ruach HaKodesh (spirit of Prophecy)⁴⁹ told me to go with them, without discrimination⁵⁰ towards Gentiles. These six Jewish brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen a holy messenger stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Yafo and bring Shim'on who is called Tsefet; he will declare to you the Oral Torah by which you will be saved (made whole),⁵¹ you and all your household.’ As I began to speak, the Nefesh Yehudi fell on them just as we experienced at (Har Sinai) as its principle recipients.⁵² And I remembered the word of our Master (Yeshua), how he said, ‘Yochanan immersed in water, but you will be immersed with the Nefesh Yehudi (Spirit of Holiness).’⁵³ If then

³⁵ Verbal connection to B' resheet 21:14, 18,32. The phrase “he rose up” allegorically implies that the by obeying the calling of the Master to become a Hakham, elevated this Talmid in status before men and G-d.

⁴³ Verbal connection with 1 Sa. 2:22, 27

⁴⁴ Oral and Written

⁴⁵ The Greek word **διακρίνοντο** means he was singles out or brought out for judgment.

⁴⁶ **ἔκστασις** – *ekstasis* here connects us thematically with the Marqan secret – Sod. **ἔκστασις** – *ekstasis* here sets the normal mental state in a mode of suspension. This does NOT mean that he was “out of his mind.” It means that he was in a heightened state of spiritual awareness, Sod whereby he was able to access higher levels of spiritual information. I.e. Hohkmah, which in the present revelation of Sod is very important because the vision extends the “Kingdom/Governance of G-d” to the Gentiles. This universalistic idea was purported by the Prophets such as Amos, Yesha'yahu and Zechari'yah. Neusner purports the notion that Judaism always had these universalistic notions. And that the “Governance of G-d “through the Hakhamim was in fact the mechanism for the final tikun and return to Eden. Cf. Neusner, J. (2001). *Recovering Judaism, The Universal Dimension of Judaism*. Fortress Press.

⁴⁷ Verbal connection to Mk 4:32

⁴⁸ And a [daughter of a] voice (bat kol) The concept of a “voice from heaven” exists in Judaism in the Bat Kol (or “Bath Kol”), meaning “daughter of a voice” (i.e., Mark 1:9-11). Its feminine attribution is similar to that of the Shekinah (“Divine Presence”) and Ruach HaKodesh (“Holy Spirit”). This is a voice of Prophecy lesser in force than Sinai. I.e. Daughter of the “Voice”(Kol) (G-d's Voice) at Har Sinai. Kol. It is the eighth attribute of the thirteen attributes. See Ramban Exodus 34:6. The thirteen Midot (attributes) according to the Ramban are as follows: (1) HaShem; (2) HaShem; (3) G-d; (4) Merciful; (5) Gracious; (6) Longsuffering; (7) Abounding in goodness; (8) Abounding in truth; (9) Keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation; (10) Forgiving iniquity; (11) Forgiving transgression; (12) Forgiving sin; (13) That will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity, etc.

⁴⁹ The Ruach – Voice of Prophecy can be none other than G-d.

⁵⁰ διακρίνω - *diakrinō* contains the notion of discrimination and separation. While there are places where the Jewish people and Gentiles must be separated, we cannot discriminate against them. It also contains the idea of hesitation. Therefore, Hakham Tsefet is sent immediately, without hesitation and without making a distinction between Jew and Gentile as far as superficial interaction. This excludes ideas of table fellowship etc.

⁵¹ The concept of being made “whole” is that of having received the Nefesh Yehudi and growing to balanced maturity.

⁵² cf. Yesha'yahu 44:3

⁵³ cf. Ch. 1:5

God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when they became faithfully obedient⁵⁴ in union with the Master Yeshua HaMashiach, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” When they⁵⁵ heard these words, the question was settled.⁵⁶ And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to the Olam HaBa.”

Acts 11:19-26

Now those who were dispersed (sown) because of the persecution that arose over (the account with) Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word (Oral Torah i.e. the Master’s Mesorah) to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Master Yeshua. And the hand of the God was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Master

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

Gen 22:1-34	Ps. 18.21-43	I Kings 10:1-9 + 23-24	Mk 2:13-17	Lk 5:27-32	Acts 11.1-21
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COMMENTARY TO HAKHAM TSEFET’S SCHOOL OF PESHAT

Hakham Tsefet has taken notice of various halakhic issues that were highly debated in the first century. It should also be noted that the language of this pericope is halakhic. The question presented by the Soferim and P’rushim is authentically halakhic. While many translators render *γογγύζω* – *gogguzo* as “murmur” (Cf Lk. 5:30) the true meaning is one of legalities, i.e., halakhah. In other words, the question they ask is genuinely halakhic in nature rather than “grumbling or protesting.” The so called “murmuring” is related to the Mishnah by means of repetition. Thus they are not “murmuring” they are repeating the Mishnaic halakhot taught by the Master. Hakham Tsefet has presented these halakhic issues in narrative form for easy memorization. Halakhic issues in the present pericope are listed as follows.

HALAKHIC ISSUES NOTED IN PRESENT PERICOPE

1. Ritual Purity
2. Table fellowship
3. Am HaAretz ("the people of Land" i.e. the uneducated Jews in the Torah) – considered “sinners” and “wicked” by certain groups
4. Tax-collector
5. Yeshua’s and Hillel’s view of Am HaAretz ("the people of Land" i.e. the uneducated Jews in the Torah)

We have footnoted how some of these issues relate to the Mesorah – Oral Torah below. Many if not all of these issues have been hijacked by so-called scholars who would reinterpret them in some convoluted way to support their own private doctrines. Hakham Tsefet’s words use halakhic language to illustrate his points. Many times, Hakham Tsefet will use oppositional language so that we can see that there were conflicting views concerning certain halakhic issues. Hakham Shaul, being the faithful talmid of Hakham Tsefet further elucidates these points in his Remes commentary.

⁵⁴ When we come to the noun, we have the meaning of “faith and confidence, fidelity and faithfulness.” The adjective gives us “faithful and trustworthy.” Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader* (Eph 1:1). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁵⁵ The emissaries – Nazarean Hakhamim/Rabbis and the Jewish brothers who were throughout Y’hudah.

⁵⁶ *ἡσυχάζω* – *hesuchazo* is rooted in *ἕδραιος* – *hedraios* “settled.”

THE FIRST FIVE

Levi ben Chalfai is the fifth talmid Yeshua selected by Marcan count. The terminology of Mordechai 1:16 is replicated here in the selection of Levi ben Chalfai with the exception of “I will make you fishers of men.” However, because we see Yeshua “walking by the seaside” we see the connotations of making Levi ben Chalfai a “counter of fish.” We might have imagined Yeshua to say something in the manner of “I will make you a collector of fish (souls) rather than monies.”

TAX – COLLECTOR AND IGNORANT SINNERS (AM HAARETZ - "the people of Land" i.e. uneducated Jews in the Torah)

While we have the word “tax-collector” we are not given exactly what “tax” was collected. We can only speculate as to what “toll” or “tax” Levi ben Chalfai collected.⁵⁷ Most of these “taxes,” if it was not the half – shekel Temple tax, would have been given, at least in part to Herod. This would have inadvertently afforded some of the monies to go to the aggrandizement of the Second (Herodian) Temple. We note below some of the possible taxes which Levi ben Chalfai might have collected.

1. Roman Tax along the Via Maris
2. Half-Shekel Temple tax

However, we must note that Levi ben Chalfai **immediately** leaves behind the work of “tax-collecting” implying that this was not the collection of the Temple tax – or half shekel. More specifically, we note that the “occupation” is not the point here. The point is that Levi ben Chalfai leaves his occupation like Hakham Tsefet and the previous summoning of the first four talmidim to become a talmid who seeks to become a Hakham.

Hakham Tsefet uses specific language to demonstrate the difficulty of halakhic complications which Yeshua faced as a Hakham and Messiah.

Hooker and others suggest that the “tax” gatherers and ignorant sinners refer to those who the P’rushim (Pharisees) called “Am HaAretz” who did not follow the P’rushim in their standard of ritual purity etc.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the P’rushim referred to the Am HaAretz on the whole as “ignorant sinners.” Hakham Tsefet determines that what some of the P’rushim had called “unclean” or possibly “ignorant sinners” were not seen as such by G-d.⁵⁹ The present text addresses Yeshua’s perspective with regard to the “Am HaAretz.” Yeshua came to bring this group to teshubah like those who were exiled from Babylon and had returned to Eretz Yisrael not fully being aware of their tribal ancestry.

RECLINING – A FESTIVAL?

The word recline would indicate “eating at the table.” However, it is more frequently associated with reclining at a Festival, specifically Pesach (Passover). This would fit the story as it followed the Torah Seder of B’resheet 18 – 19 where the scene is that of the Pesach (Passover) season. It further fits the traditional Jewish idea that Yitzchaq was born on Pesach. Here we see the cunning of Hakham Tsefet as he plays with specific words to make allusion that he is connecting to the Torah Seder. Here we also see a reference to the Bi-modality of the Triennial Torah reading cycle. Even though the language and situation seem ambiguous, it is in all actuality very precise. It appears from the Lucan text that Levi throws a party for Yeshua for the following possible reasons...

⁵⁷ Guelich, R. A. (1989). *Word Biblical Commentary, Mark 1-8:26*, . Nelson Reference and Electronic, Word Incorporated. p. 101

⁵⁸ Hooker, M. D. (1991). *Black’s New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd. p. 95

⁵⁹ Cf. Acts 10 – Hakham Tsefet’s vision

1. Yeshua is in fact the Messiah
2. Levi ben Chalfai is on the road to becoming a Hakham
3. It is Pesach and Levi ben Chalfai is hosting the Seder.

As pointed out from our last commentary we should **NOT** always see the difference between Yeshua and the P’rushim as debate or stark conflict. The fact that the P’rushim are “in the house” means that they are there with the “Am HaEretz” as well! Therefore, we see Yeshua addressing the halakhic issues in the following way.

1. **RITUAL PURITY**⁶⁰

By the hermeneutic principle of Rov and Chazakah⁶¹ we determine that ritual purity is absolutely upheld and taught. The very fact that the P’rushim are “**in the house**” is testimony to this hermeneutic conclusion. Therefore we deduce that before Yeshua and the P’rushim entered Levi ben Chalfai’s house, he is taught the laws of ritual purity. Perhaps he was taught in a “hands on” lesson per se. Furthermore, we are not informed about the amount of time that lapsed between the enlistment and the feast.

2. **TABLE-FELLOWSHIP**⁶²

Again by the hermeneutic principle of Rov and Chazakah we determine that before any table-fellowship can take place between Jews, other Jews and Gentiles or any other absolute kosher must be upheld. Therefore we must believe the lesson of ritual purity must have extended to Kashrut.

3. **AM HAERETZ** (“*the people of Land*” i.e. *the uneducated Jews in the Torah*) – considered by some “ignorant sinners” and “wicked.”

Through the hermeneutic principles of *Midrash Hameskish* and precedent we determine that Yeshua and the House of Hillel did not see “ignorant sinners” and “Gentiles” as wicked or unclean. While the Shammite School would most likely have held contempt for the Am HaAretz, the School of Hillel, Yeshua and his talmidim did not. This is attested in the precedential case in the narrative of 2 Luqas chapter 10. There must be a distinction made between the Jewish people of Eretz Yisrael (land of Israel) and the “Gerim” (resident aliens) who dwelt in the land. The B’ne Yisrael (children of Israel) as “Am HaAretz” (“the people of Land” i.e. the uneducated Jews in the Torah) must be redeemed through Teshubah (repentance) – “**return to G-d and His Torah.**” The redemption of the Gerim (resident aliens) must need teshuba (repentance) as a “**turning towards G-d and His Torah.**” While we see G-d bringing Gentiles to teshubah, we can in no way accept that this implied that table fellowship was acceptable before the Gentile embraced a kosher diet and halakhah of his own free will.

4. **OCCUPATION AND TORAH STUDY**⁶³

We cannot fully comment on Yeshua’s view of the profession of the “tax-collector” other than to say that Yeshua calls his talmidim to the highest occupation we can possibly pursue. While there are some unscrupulous trades in the world today it is the highest trade to study Torah and become a Hakham. Torah study and an honorable trade are the mark of a true talmid.

PERORATION

⁶⁰ Ritual purity is covered in many tractates of the Mishnah. However, we can briefly look at the following tractates. Nega’im, Zabim and Niddah. More specifically the entire Seder – Tohorot.

⁶¹ Cf. Cardozo, N. T. (1997). *The Witten and Oral Torah*. Jason Aronson Inc. pp. 123 – 130

⁶² Special interest should be paid to the following tractates of the Mishnah, Seder Tohorot mentioned above Hagigah, Ma’aser Sheni and Bikkurim

⁶³ Cf. Abot 2:2 below

Neusner notes that the “Gospels” match the “Tradition—*massoret*—as a fence to the Torah.”⁶⁴

Abot 3:13 R. Aqiba says, “Tradition [the Mesorah] is a fence for the Torah.”⁶⁵

Here we interpret the comment made by Neusner to say that the “Gospels” as Tradition i.e. Mesorah are a fence for the Torah. He further notes that the “Gospels” are in harmony with the different aspects of the Oral Torah – Mesorah.

*The Gospel literature arose in the first century C.E. from a Jewish movement that accepted the Bible (Tanakh) as its reference: for Christians, the Bible is also the Word of God. At that moment the Mishnah was not yet written down, but many of its traditions were alive,*⁶⁶

He also notes that the “Gospels” are halakhic in nature.

***Halakhot:** Especially in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus appears as a “Master of the Law.” The famous sermon of the mount (Matt. 5–7) is set by the Evangelist as a formal and solemn session in the bet ha-midrash: the master in session, the disciples and people around at his feet, all attentively listening. The words of the master remind us of the proclamation on Mount Sinai: Jesus is remembering and interpreting the commandments of Moses. Jesus’ teaching could be interpreted like the Oral Torah that so many masters—before and after him—have handed down explaining the Written Torah.*⁶⁷

Consequently, we should note that the materials of the “Gospels” are a Mesorah of the Master which are a “Fence around the Torah.” This being said, we must note that the teaching in the present text must conform to the halakhic norms of that Mesorah. And, we as talmidim of the Master must conform to the halakhic norms of the Torah and its Oral traditions. **Therefore, it is the halakhic duty of the Nazarean Jew to accept and teach all those who would follow the master, to accept and practice these traditions.** As we accept the “King of the Jews” and become Nazareans, we must inevitably also accept the Oral Torah – traditions of our Jewish forefathers!

HAKHAM SHAUL’S COMMENTARY TO REMES

THE GENTILES ALSO HAD RECEIVED⁶⁸ THE TORAH

Firstly, we note that it is impossible to have one Torah (Oral or Written) without the other. Thus, to accept the Torah is not a Gentile thing. It IS a Jewish thing. And a Gentile cannot simply read and understand without help. Study, acceptance and practice of Torah means to sit at the feet of a Torah Teacher. This is not for the sake of aggrandizing the Torah Scholar. It is, however, a plain simple fact. As we will see this relates to the Gentiles who are “[Turning Towards G-d](#).” Here there is no coercion or evangelism. Cornelius turned his heart towards G-d before he had a vision of an angelic messenger. It is evident that he had already been to Synagogue. This is obviously because he had some measure of interaction with the Jewish community.

⁶⁴ Neusner, J., Neusner, J., Avery-Peck, A. J., Green, W. S., & Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York, N. Y. (2000). *The encyclopedia of Judaism*. "Published in collaboration with the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York." (1:340).

⁶⁵ Neusner, J. (1988). *The Mishnah: A new translation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 680

⁶⁶ Neusner, J., Neusner, J., Avery-Peck, A. J., Green, W. S., & Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York, N. Y. (2000). *The encyclopedia of Judaism*. "Published in collaboration with the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York." 1:340.

⁶⁷ Ibid (5:2129).

⁶⁸

The phrase Gentiles also had “received the Torah” in Hebrew would read “*kibal*⁶⁹ *et haTorah*” (קיבל את התורה). Now this does not mean that they were able to go to the Bible Book store and pick up a copy of the Torah and take it home to read it, and therefore, understand what they read. The facts are better understood when we realize that a copy of the Torah was equal to a man’s (scribe) wages for almost an entire year. Consequently, we see that a copy of the Torah was not readily available to common folks. It may have been possible to have copies of a verse or possibly even a chapter, but not the Torah. I would have been accessible at the Beit Midrash (house of study) but not readily available for Gentiles to read and understand without the help of a guide. Furthermore, it would have defied Gentile understanding. Only in contemporary times can we see the butchery that befalls us when ignorant men think that they are qualified, without training to understand its pages. The Gentiles were not handed a copy of the Torah and then shoved out the door with a hearty “good reading.” The Gentiles received the Torah by the teachings of the Torah teachers from the Synagogue.

Acts 15:19-21

Therefore, my judgment⁷⁰ is that we should not cause difficulty for those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, but we should write a letter to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood. For the rest you have Moshe who has those proclaiming him in every city from ancient generations, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

When did, when do the Gentiles receive the Torah? They received the Torah through attendance of the Synagogue EVERY week, i.e. Shabbat. Therefore, Gentiles “turning towards G-d” did so because they had been to the Synagogue and had a measure of interaction with the Jewish people. Thus, the Gentiles received the Torah by attendance of the Synagogue. The Torah by and large was in Hebrew and read from Hebrew in the Synagogue. However, the Hebrew words would have been translated into whatever vernacular by the Meturgaman, the translator or interpreter. As can be seen the idea of “receiving the Torah” is not a simple phrase and by no means a simple task. It required a great deal of time and investment on the part of the Gentile. In the case of Cornelius, we can see that he had invested a great measure of time and effort to have arrived at a level worthy of a heavenly messenger. Some conjecture could opine that the servant of the Centurion⁷¹ in the Book of Luke was the servant of Cornelius. This might account for the extensive knowledge he possesses about Jewish practice. We might see that in Luke the “Centurion” was Cornelius in a semi-embryonic state. In both cases the men are “Centurions” which may not necessarily be a big point of contention. Both men are G-d fearers. Both men have intricate interactions with the Jewish Congregation. Both men have some understanding and periphery association with Yeshua. Both Centurions have close associations with the Jewish people.

I HAVE NEVER EATEN ANYTHING THAT IS COMMON OR UNCLEAN

Hakham Tsefet further asserts that he has never eaten anything common or unclean, i. e. not fit for Jewish consumption. This statement is not simply a rehearsal of the words he stated during the Bat Kol. These words reiterate what any Jewish soul would say in his defence before other Jewish brothers. The fact that Hakham Tsefet’s “Bat Kol” is at the source of his experience is enough of an argument that G-d was not tempting him to eat what is טִרְפָּה (terefah) unfit for Jewish consumption. How do we know this? A “Bat Kol” means the “daughter of the Voice.” The Jewish people understand that this “Voice,” Bat Kol in no way undermines the Torah. A Bat Kol has been described as an

⁶⁹ **And as it is said: “Mosheh received (Moshe Kibal haTorah) the Torah from Sinai and gossiped (handed) it down to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua gossiped it down to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gossiped it down to the Men of the Great Assembly. They (the Men of the Great Assembly) emphasized three things; Be deliberate in judgment, make stand many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah” (P. Abot 1:1).**

⁷⁰ Verbal connection to Shmot 21:1. This is the “judgment” (שֹׁפֵט) of Hakham Ya’aqob or his expression of desire to the Bet Din - noun first person singular, in “**my judgment**,” this cannot be a legal halakhic decision. This is because a single Judge (Hakham) cannot make a halakhic ruling. Judgments are the result of a Bet Din [i.e.. multiple judges (Hakhamim)].

⁷¹ Cf. Luke 7

Echo from Har Sinai etc. However, a Bat Kol is NOT an Echo from Har Sinai. A Bat Kol is second to the Voice of Har Sinai i.e. the giving of the Torah (Cf. Shemot – Ex 20:1). Therefore, a Bat Kol can never undermine the words of the Torah. And, as such, it can never be valid for the sake of saying the something contrary to the Torah is acceptable.

THEN TO THE GENTILES ALSO GOD HAS GRANTED REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO THE OLAM HABA.

Repentance for Jew is not “salvation” or being made ready for the reception of the Olam HaBa. Repentance for the Jewish people means to “return” to G-d. Repentance that leads to the Olam HaBa i.e. “Salvation” for the Gentile is ...

1. The Reception of the Torah
2. The Turning towards G-d

Thus, “Turning towards G-d must also mean te receiving of the Torah from the teachings of a Jewish teacher and Torah Scholar.

אמן ואמן סלה

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 questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:1?
3. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:2?
4. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:3?
5. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:4?
6. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:13?
7. What questions were asked of Rashi regarding Gen. 22:14?

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!”

Coming Fast:
Fast of the 9th of Ab celebrated on the 10th of Ab
(Sunday July 28/29, 2012)

For further study and information see:
<http://www.betemunah.org/tishabav.html>

**Fast of the 9th of Ab celebrated on the 10th of Ab
(Sunday August 10, 2019)**

Evening Service:

Torah: No Torah Reading Service
Prophets: Lamentations 1:1 – 5:22

Morning Service:

Torah: Deuteronomy 4:25-41
Reader 1 – Deut. 4:25-29
Reader 2 – Deut. 4:30-34
Reader 3 – Deut. 4:35-41
Prophets: Jeremiah 8:13 - 9:23

Afternoon Service:

Torah: Exodus 32:11-15; 34:1-11
Reader 1 - Ex. 32:11-15
Reader 2 - Ex. 34:1-4
Reader 3 - Ex. 34:5-11
Prophets: Hosea 14:2-10 & Micah 7:18-20
Nazarean Codicil: Matityahu (Matthew) 9:14-17

Shabbat Shalom!
Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai
Rosh Paqid Adon Hillel ben David
Paqid Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham