

Experience

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben [David](fathers.html) (Greg Killian)



In this paper I would like to explore some of the experiences, in this [world](worlds.html), which relate to the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), the [World](worlds.html)-To-Come.

How can we “taste”, or experience, the following [five](five.html) things in this [world](worlds.html): Gehenom, manna, [Olam HaBa](futures.html), death, and prophesy? Our Sages tell us that we can experience 1/60th of these things, in this [world](worlds.html). They tell us the following:

[**Fire**](fire.html) **is a sixtieth of Gehenom[[1]](#footnote-1);**

**Honey, of the Manna;**

[**Shabbat**](sabbath.html)**, of** [**Olam HaBa**](futures.html)**;**

[**Sleep**](mashal.html)**, of death;**

**A** [**dream**](dreams.html)**, of prophesy.**

The proportion between perfect and imperfect versions of the same entity is embodied in the [number](nchart.html) *sixty*. “[Sleep](mashal.html) is [one](one.html) sixtieth of death.” “[Dreams](dreams.html) are [one](one.html) sixtieth of prophecy.” “Honey is [one](one.html) sixtieth of manna.[[2]](#footnote-2)” “[Shabbat](sabbath.html) is [one](one.html) sixtieth of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html).” These are but a few of the “sixties” which allude to completion and perfection.

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) speaks of these as ‘incomplete’:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XVII:5*** *R. Hanina [or, Hinena] b.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *said: There are* [*three*](three.html) *incomplete phenomena: the incomplete experience of death is* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*; an incomplete form of prophecy is the* [*dream*](dreams.html)*; the incomplete form of the next* [*world*](worlds.html) *is the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*. R. Abin added another* [*two*](two.html)*: the incomplete form of the heavenly light is the orb of the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*; the incomplete form of the heavenly wisdom is the Torah.*

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) is described as *“meeyn* [*olam haba*](futures.html)*”* - a small degree of the experience of the next [world](worlds.html).

There is an idea that all [spiritual](physical.html) realities have at least [one](one.html) tangible counterpart in the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) so that we can experience them.

It would be too difficult to relate to these abstract, [spiritual](physical.html) things, if we could never have any direct experience of it. So, [sleep](mashal.html) is a sixtieth of the death experience; a [dream](dreams.html) is a sixtieth of prophecy. [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is a sixtieth of the experience of the next [world](worlds.html). We have these experiences in order that we should understand those things that [HaShem](hashem.html) has promised.

Why specifically a sixtieth? What is unique about the proportion of [one](one.html) in sixty? [One](one.html) who has sensitive ear will [hear](mashal.html) something very beautiful here. [One](one.html) in sixty is that proportion which is on the borderline of perception: in the [laws](law.html) of *kashrut* (permitted and forbidden [foods](food.html)) there is a general rule that forbidden mixtures of [foods](food.html) are in fact forbidden only if the admixture of the prohibited component comprises more than [one](one.html) part in sixty. If a drop of milk accidentally spills into a meat dish that dish would not be forbidden if less than [one](one.html) part in sixty were milk, the milk *cannot be tasted* in such dilution. The [*halachic*](walking.html) borderline is set at that point where taste can be discerned.

The beautiful hint here is that [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is [one](one.html) sixtieth of the intensity of [Olam HaBa](futures.html), it is on the borderline of taste: if [one](one.html) lives [Shabbat](sabbath.html) correctly, [one](one.html) tastes the next [world](worlds.html). If not, [one](one.html) will not taste it at all.

[**Gan Eden**](eden.html)

***Ta’anith 10a*** *The* [*world*](worlds.html) *is* [*one*](one.html) *sixtieth of the Garden, the Garden* [*one*](one.html) *sixtieth of Eden.*

The place of [spiritual](physical.html) reward for the righteous is often referred to in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) as [Gan Eden](eden.html) (the [Garden of Eden](eden.html)). Specific descriptions of it vary widely from [one](one.html) source to another. [One](one.html) source says that the peace that [one](one.html) feels when [one](one.html) experiences [Shabbat](sabbath.html) properly is merely [one](one.html)-sixtieth of the pleasure of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). Other sources compare the bliss of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) to the sharp sense of arrival of [sex](marriageact.html) or the warmth of a sunny day.

The joy of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) is the joy of having intensely “arrived”. This is why it is likened to the ecstasy of love, the [first](one.html) hour of a long awaited vacation, or the rest of [Shabbat](sabbath.html). It is the same kind of joy we experience when we play games or engage in idle conversation. It is the sense of **arrival** with no requirement to go anywhere. Both of these activities distract us from what we are supposed to be doing in this [world](worlds.html), working, in order that we should “arrive” in the [Olam HaBa](futures.html).

[**Sleep**](mashal.html) **is** [**one**](one.html) **sixtieth of death.**

Rashba contends that when [one](one.html) sleeps, [one](one.html) is effectively re-[created](bara.html) (the [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[3]](#footnote-3) notes that [sleep](mashal.html) is considered to be [one](one.html)-sixtieth of death), and thus we wash so as to [purify](purity.html) and sanctify our “[new](new.html)” selves:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 10b*** *At the beginning of the day, when a man rises in the morning, it is his duty to bless his Master as soon as he opens his* [*eyes*](body.html)*. The pious men of old used to have by them a cup of water, and when they awoke in the night they washed their* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *and rose and occupied themselves in the* [*study*](study.html) *of the Torah, having* [*first*](one.html) *pronounced the appropriate blessing.*

[Sleep](mashal.html), like death, reflects a withdrawal of life-energy from the [body](body.html).

To explain this further, when we [sleep](mashal.html), we are in [one](one.html)-sixtieth of death. Our neshama, our souls, go up to [Heaven](heaven.html), where we give an accounting of the day. Of course, we are not aware of this. But as we leave our [bodies](body.html), an evil spirit comes to rest within our [bodies](body.html). If [HaShem](hashem.html) decides to return our souls to us in the morning, and consciousness takes over as we open our [eyes](body.html), the evil spirit departs from us, but not fully; there is a trace of it that stays on our [fingers](body.html) and toes (this is why we have “dead” nails which represent [physically](physical.html) the passing of these dead forces). In order to remove it entirely, we must do a ritual [hand](fourteen.html)-washing after Modeh Ani, which is called “Neggle Vasser”, literally, nail water.

In order to remove this dangerous [spiritual](physical.html) presence, our holy Hakhamim ordained for us the morning ritual washing of [hands](fourteen.html). This then is the procedure:

[One](one.html) should have a special laver just for this purpose of the morning [hand](fourteen.html) washing. The laver should be filled with water and then picked up with the right [hand](mashal.html). Your right [hand](mashal.html) passes the full cup of water to your left [hand](mashal.html). Then you pour the water over your right [hand](mashal.html). You then pass the cup to the right [hand](mashal.html) and pour the water over the left [hand](mashal.html).

This procedure is to be repeated until both right and left [hands](mashal.html) have been washed in this manner [three](three.html) times.

Death requires the ashes of the red [heifer](heifer.html) and [mikveh](forty.html) on the 3rd and 7th day, according to the Torah:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 19:9-12*** *And a man [that is]* [*clean*](purity.html) *shall* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the ashes of the* [*heifer*](heifer.html)*, and lay [them] up without the* [*camp*](stages.html) *in a* [*clean*](purity.html) *place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *for a water of separation: it [is] a purification for* [*sin*](sin.html)*. And he that* [*gathered*](gather.html) *the ashes of the* [*heifer*](heifer.html) *shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever. He that toucheth the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of any man shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. He shall* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself with it on the* [*third*](three.html) *day, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall be* [*clean*](purity.html)*: but if he* [*purify*](purity.html) *not himself the* [*third*](three.html) *day, then the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall not be* [*clean*](purity.html)*.*

This washing for death, and by intimation for [sleep](mashal.html), is also found in:

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*** *For the Lord himself shall descend from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *with a shout, with the* [*voice*](voice.html) *of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *shall rise* [*first*](one.html)*: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Here we see both [heaven](heaven.html) and clouds. [Heaven](heaven.html) is called shamayim in [Hebrew](hebrew.html). Shamayim is made up of [two](two.html) words:

Aish = [fire](fire.html)

Mayim = water

Passing through the [seven](seven.html) [heavens](heaven.html) is the reality typified by the ashes of the red [heifer](heifer.html) (red = [fire](fire.html), ashes = the result of [fire](fire.html)) which are mixed with water (Mayim) and sprinkled on those who have come in contact with the dead or with a grave. So passing through the [seven](seven.html) [heavens](heaven.html) is the same as being sprinkled by the ashes of the red [heifer](heifer.html).

Further, the [cloud](important.html) that the righteous are “in” is clearly an allusion to the [mikveh](forty.html) (ritual immersion - baptism):

***I Corinthians 10:2*** *And were all baptized unto Moses in the* [*cloud*](important.html) *and in the sea;*

After the sprinkling with the ashes of the red [heifer](heifer.html), the [one](one.html) who came in contact with the dead must be immersed in the [mikveh](forty.html).

So, those who have died, according to I Thessalonians 4:16-17, are given the same treatment by [HaShem](hashem.html) as the Torah required of all who came in contact with the dead.

Our Sages[[4]](#footnote-4) have said that [sleep](mashal.html) is 1/60th of death. Hakham Shaul also put [sleep](mashal.html) and death together:

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*** *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are* [*asleep*](mashal.html)*, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *died and rose again, even so them also which* [*sleep*](mashal.html) *in* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the* [*coming*](coming.html) *of the Lord shall not prevent them which are* [*asleep*](mashal.html)*.*

It stands to reason that there must, therefore, be a cleansing for those who [sleep](mashal.html).

[Sleep](mashal.html) requires [hand](fourteen.html) washing on each of the [seven](seven.html) days, of the week, and [Shabbat](sabbath.html) (the [seventh](seven.html) day) is the [mikveh](forty.html) for our [feet](heel.html). The [mikveh](forty.html), washing, and [Shabbat](sabbath.html) are our *earnest money* of the clouds of glory!

We should view every night as though we had died and every morning as though we had been [resurrected](techiyat.html). We must live [one](one.html) day at a [time](time.html).

So, after [resurrection](techiyat.html) we will pass through the [cloud](important.html) which is the [mikveh](forty.html) and the shamayim which is the ashes of the red [heifer](heifer.html) the [fire](fire.html) and the water.

The loss of consciousness during [sleep](mashal.html) is “a kind of” dying, which could deepen into complete death, G-d forbid!

If we really believe that we are dying each night when we [sleep](mashal.html), and resurrecting each morning when we awaken, then there will be great kavanah (intensity of feeling) in our [prayers](prayer.html) as we express our gratefulness to [HaShem](hashem.html). When we awaken from [sleep](mashal.html) it must be 1/60th of a [resurrection](techiyat.html).

The last words of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) were:

***Luqas 23:46*** *And when* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *had cried with a loud* [*voice*](voice.html)*, he said, Father, into thy* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

The last words of the last [prayer](prayer.html) (Adon Olam) we [pray](prayer.html) before we go to [sleep](mashal.html), concludes with these words:

“… Into His [hand](fourteen.html) I shall entrust my spirit when I go to [sleep](mashal.html) – and I shall awaken! With my spirit shall my [body](body.html) remain, [HaShem](hashem.html) is with me, I shall not [fear](fear.html).”

**A** [**dream**](dreams.html) **is** [**one**](one.html) **sixtieth of prophecy.**

The [Midrash](orallaw.html)[[5]](#footnote-5) tells us that prior to the erection of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) (the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) in the wilderness); prophecy existed among all the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html). Once the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) was built, prophecy was, with rare exception, found only among the [Jews](gen-jew.html). The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[6]](#footnote-6) relates that from the [time](time.html) of the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html), prophecy was removed from the domain of prophets but was not removed from the domain of the Sages. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) goes on to say that when prophecy was taken from the prophets it was given to children and fools:

***Baba Bathra 12b*** *R. Johanan said: Since the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from prophets and given to fools and children. How given to fools? — The case of Mar son of R. Ashi will illustrate. He was* [*one*](one.html) *day* [*standing*](mashal.html) *in the manor of Mahuza when he heard a certain lunatic exclaim: The man who is to be elected* [*head*](body.html) *of the Academy in Matha Mehasia* [*signs*](signs.html) *his* [*name*](name.html) *Tabiumi. He said to himself: Who among the Rabbis* [*signs*](signs.html) *his* [*name*](name.html) *Tabiumi? I do. This seems to show that my lucky* [*time*](time.html) *has come. So he quickly went to Matha Mehasia. When he arrived, he found that the Rabbis had voted to appoint R. Aha of Difti as their* [*head*](body.html)*. When they heard of his arrival, they sent a couple of Rabbis to him to consult him. He detained them with him, and they sent another couple of Rabbis. He detained these also, [and so it went on] until the* [*number*](nchart.html) *reached* [*ten*](ten.html)*. When* [*ten*](ten.html) *were assembled, he began to discourse and expound the Oral* [*Law*](law.html) *and the Scriptures, [having waited so long] because a public discourse [on them] should not be commenced if the audience is less than* [*ten*](ten.html)*. R. Aha applied to himself the saying: If a man is in disfavour [with* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*] he does not readily come into favour, and if a man is in favour he does not readily fall into disfavour.*

Commenting upon this, the [Zohar](orallaw.html) states that there are times when prophecy occurs in the [mouths](body.html) of children, they prophecy more than an adult prophet:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 170a*** *in order that while they fight,* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *may have a period of repose.’ And the young boy remarked: ‘This conflict has already begun, and much* [*blood*](body.html) *is being shed in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.’ Said R. Hiya: ‘How does this young boy* [*know*](daat.html) *this?’ R. Simeon replied: ‘Prophecy at times is lodged in the* [*mouths*](body.html) *of children, so that they prophesy even more than the prophets of old.’ And the boy said: ‘Why do you marvel that children have the spirit of prophecy, seeing that this is clearly foreshadowed in the Scriptures? It is written: “And all thy children shall be* [*taught*](teacher.html) *by the Lord.” And, truly, when they are* [*taught*](teacher.html) *by the Lord they prophesy. Of all peoples it is only* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *of whose children it says that they shall be* [*taught*](teacher.html) *by the Lord, therefore out of them prophecy comes forth.’* [*Hearing*](mashal.html) *this, R. Simeon came up to the boy and kissed him, saying: ‘I have never heard this idea till now.’*

This is borne out by the fact that at pivotal moments in many [Talmudic](orallaw.html) accounts, a child would be asked to recite passages he had recently learned. These passages would have prophetic bearing on the situation at [hand](fourteen.html).

The [Zohar](orallaw.html),[[7]](#footnote-7) in a general overview of the subject, explains: “In earlier times prophecy existed among mankind, which was [spiritually](physical.html) aware and focused in order to understand the Upper Glory. Once prophecy ceased to exist, mankind employed the heavenly [voice](voice.html) (bat [kol](voice.html)). Now that both prophecy and heavenly [voice](voice.html) have ceased to exist, mankind employs only [dreams](dreams.html). The [dream](dreams.html) is a lower level, being [one](one.html)-sixtieth of prophecy.”

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 238a*** *R. Jose discoursed on the verse: “And on the vine were* [*three*](three.html) *branches, and it was as though it budded and its blossoms shot forth.” ‘How little’, he said, ‘do men care for the glory of their Master or pay heed to the words of the Torah! At* [*first*](one.html) *prophecy was vouchsafed to men, and through it they* [*knew*](daat.html) *the glory of God. When prophecy ceased, they had a bath-*[*kol*](voice.html)*,[tr.note: t Lit. “daughter of a* [*voice*](voice.html)*”. According to the Rabbis, on certain occasions during the period of the Second* [*Temple*](temple.html)*, a* [*voice*](voice.html) *issued from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *to give the* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *people guidance or warning; and this was called by them bath-*[*kol*](voice.html)*.] but now they have nothing but* [*dreams*](dreams.html)*.* [*Dream*](dreams.html) *is a lower grade, being* [*one*](one.html)*-sixtieth of prophecy, and it is vouchsafed to everyone, since it comes from the left side. It comes down in various grades, and is shown even to sinners and even to* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*. Sometimes the* [*dream*](dreams.html) *is carried by evil* [*demons*](demons.html) *who make mock of men and show them false things; and sometimes it is sent to sinners and tells them things of importance. Now this sinner, Pharaoh’s butler, saw a true* [*dream*](dreams.html)*. The vine represented the* [*Community*](community.html) *of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, which was called by the psalmist “this vine” (Ps. LXXX, 15). The* [*three*](three.html) *branches have the same reference as the* [*three*](three.html) *flocks of sheep which* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *saw by the well. (Gen XXIX, 2). Its blossoming typifies the* [*time*](time.html) *of Solomon, when the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *was illumined. The buds represent the lower* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, or, according to another explanation, the grade which is over it and gives sustenance to it.*

Having said that prophecy ceased to exist in [Talmudic](orallaw.html) times we can look further down the line to the [time](time.html) of Maimonides (12th century) and see a seeming contradiction to this. Says Maimonides:

“[One](one.html) of the basic foundations of religion is that the Almighty empowers man with the prophetic vision. However, the spirit of prophecy rests only upon the wise man who is distinguished by great wisdom and strong moral character, whose passions never overcome him in anything whatsoever, rather, he is mentally in control over his passions always, and he possesses a broad and sedate mind. When an individual, filled with these characteristics and [physically](physical.html) sound, enters the [Spiritual](physical.html) Paradise and is continuously immersed in these great and abstruse themes, having the right mind capable of comprehending and grasping them; making himself holy, withdrawing from the ways of the ordinary masses who [walk](walking.html) in the obscurities of the times, constantly energizing himself to train his soul not to have any thought at all of the wasteful endeavors and vanities of the age and its intrigues, but his mind is rather always cleared of the extraneous in order to be focused on higher things as though bound beneath the [Celestial](celestal.html) Throne in order to comprehend the pure and holy forms of the [spiritual](physical.html) beings, gazing and contemplating upon the totality of the wisdom of The Holy [One](one.html) Blessed Be He as displayed by His creatures, from the [first](one.html) form to the very center of the Earth, learning from them His greatness, upon such an individual will the Holy Spirit immediately descend.

And when the Holy Spirit rests upon him his soul will mingle with the exalted [angels](angels.html) called Ishim and he will become a different person and he will realize that he is not the same as he was, rather he has been exalted above other wise men, as it is written concerning Saul:

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 10:6*** *And you shall prophecy with them, and you shall be turned into another man.[[8]](#footnote-8)*

Maimonides further states[[9]](#footnote-9):

“As you are aware, our Rabbis state that a [dream](dreams.html) is [one](one.html) sixtieth of prophecy; and you [know](daat.html), that it is inappropriate to make comparisons between [two](two.html) unrelated concepts or things...and they repeated this idea in [Midrash](orallaw.html) Bereshit Rabbah and said, ‘the buds of prophecy are [dreams](dreams.html)’. This is indeed a wonderful metaphor, for just as a bud is the actual fruit itself that has not yet developed fully; similarly, the power of the imagination at the [time](time.html) of [sleep](mashal.html) is exactly that which operates at the [time](time.html) of prophecy, in an incomplete and unperfected state.”

It is clear from Maimonides that man is capable of prophecy today.

I believe that we can resolve this difficulty. What the [Talmud](orallaw.html) and [Zohar](orallaw.html) meant by the fact that prophecy ceased was that it was a [two](two.html)-stage cessation from the general masses, but not from worthy individuals. The [first](one.html) stage of the cessation was a cessation of prophecy [coming](coming.html) “out of the blue” to members of the general masses. This was accompanied by a relegation of prophecy to children and fools. Then, even this [type](types.html) of prophecy ceased. But, prophecy never ceased from worthy individuals who could attain it (albeit, not easily) in the way described by Maimonides. That [type](types.html) of prophecy, I believe, did exist in the days of the second [Temple](temple.html) with [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) and Yochanan the Baptist, and it could exist among worthy individuals today.

\* \* \*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 183a*** *the Shechinah also went into* [*exile*](galuyot.html)*. It is true that the* [*exile*](galuyot.html) *was really the consequence of a divine decree; yet the proximate cause was the coat of many colours which he made for him specially. AND* [*JOSEPH*](joseph.html) *DREAMED A* [*DREAM*](dreams.html)*, ETC. On the subject of* [*dreams*](dreams.html)*, R. Hiya discoursed on the text: And he said:* [*Hear*](mashal.html) *now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord do make myself* [*known*](daat.html) *unto him in a vision, I do* [*speak*](mashal.html) *with him in a* [*dream*](dreams.html) *(Num. XII, 6). ‘God’, he said, ‘has brought into existence a series of grades,* [*one*](one.html) *higher than the other,* [*one*](one.html) *drawing sustenance from the other, some on the right, others on the left, all arranged in a perfect hierarchy. Now all the prophets drew their inspiration from* [*one*](one.html) *side, from the midst of* [*two*](two.html) *certain grades which they beheld in a “dull mirror”, as it says: “I do make myself* [*known*](daat.html) *unto him in a vision”, the word “vision” denoting, as has been explained, a medium reflecting a variety of colours; and this is the “dull mirror”. The* [*dream*](dreams.html)*, on the other* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, is a sixtieth part of prophecy, and so forms the* [*sixth*](six.html) *grade removed from prophecy, which is the grade of* [*Gabriel*](angels.html)*, the supervisor of* [*dreams*](dreams.html)*. Now a normal* [*dream*](dreams.html) *proceeds from that grade, and hence there is not a* [*dream*](dreams.html) *that has not intermingled with it some spurious matter, so that it is a mixture of truth and falsehood. Hence it is that all* [*dreams*](dreams.html) *follow their interpretation, as it is written: “And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was” (Gen. XLI, 13); for since the* [*dream*](dreams.html) *contains both falsehood and truth, the word has power over it, and therefore it is advisable that every* [*dream*](dreams.html) *should be interpreted in a good sense.’*

\* \* \*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 238a*** *R. Jose discoursed on the verse: “And on the vine were* [*three*](three.html) *branches, and it was as though it budded and its blossoms shot forth.” ‘How little’, he said, ‘do men care for the glory of their Master or pay heed to the words of the Torah! At* [*first*](one.html) *prophecy was vouchsafed to men, and through it they* [*knew*](daat.html) *the glory of God. When prophecy ceased, they had a bath-*[*kol*](voice.html)*,[tr.note: t Lit. “daughter of a* [*voice*](voice.html)*”. According to the Rabbis, on certain occasions during the period of the Second* [*Temple*](temple.html)*, a* [*voice*](voice.html) *issued from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *to give the* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *people guidance or warning; and this was called by them bath-*[*kol*](voice.html)*.] but now they have nothing but* [*dreams*](dreams.html)*.* [*Dream*](dreams.html) *is a lower grade, being* [*one*](one.html)*-sixtieth of prophecy, and it is vouchsafed to everyone, since it comes from the left side. It comes down in various grades, and is shown even to sinners and even to* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*. Sometimes the* [*dream*](dreams.html) *is carried by evil* [*demons*](demons.html) *who make mock of men and show them false things; and sometimes it is sent to sinners and tells them things of importance. Now this sinner, Pharaoh’s butler, saw a true* [*dream*](dreams.html)*. The vine represented the* [*Community*](community.html) *of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, which was called by the psalmist “this vine” (Ps. LXXX, 15). The* [*three*](three.html) *branches have the same reference as the* [*three*](three.html) *flocks of sheep which* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *saw by the well. (Gen XXIX, 2). Its blossoming typifies the* [*time*](time.html) *of Solomon, when the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *was illumined. The buds represent the lower* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, or, according to another explanation, the grade which is over it and gives sustenance to it.*

\* \* \*

Parsha Vayeitzei begins with a [dream](dreams.html) and ends with [one](one.html). It starts with [Jacob](israelja.html)’s famous [dream](dreams.html), at Beit El, in which he sees a ladder reaching from earth to [heaven](heaven.html) and the [angels](angels.html) going up and down. Toward the end of the parsha, Lavan, who was pursuing [Jacob](israelja.html) and his family, has a [dream](dreams.html) in which [HaShem](hashem.html) warns him not to harm [Jacob](israelja.html).

According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html),[[10]](#footnote-10) [dreams](dreams.html) may contain a vision of things to come (“[one](one.html) sixtieth of prophecy”). They also include “words of nonsense.” The [Talmud](orallaw.html) states that most [dreams](dreams.html) originate from a person’s thoughts during the day.

In [Talmudic](orallaw.html) [time](time.html) it was customary to fast the day after [one](one.html) had a bad [dream](dreams.html). According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html), [one](one.html) was even allowed to fast on [Shabbat](sabbath.html) to atone for a bad [dream](dreams.html) which [one](one.html) had Friday night. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) further states that the [dream](dreams.html)’s interpretation helps determine the outcome of the [dream](dreams.html). Therefore, says the [Talmud](orallaw.html), when [one](one.html) has a disturbing [dream](dreams.html), [three](three.html) friends should declare to him, “You have seen a good [dream](dreams.html), it is good and may it become good and may the Merciful [One](one.html) transform it to the good...”

Someone who had a bad [dream](dreams.html) can recite a special [prayer](prayer.html) called “Hatavat Chalom” (amelioration of a [dream](dreams.html)), which is said in the presence of [three](three.html) people. On the [festivals](festivals.html), the [Kohanim](priests.html) ([priests](priests.html)) bless the people. During their blessing, the congregation says a special [prayer](prayer.html) concerning [dreams](dreams.html); “Master of the Universe, I am Yours and my [dreams](dreams.html) are Yours. I have dreamed a [dream](dreams.html) but I do not [know](daat.html) what it indicates. May it be your will, my G-d and the G-d of my [fathers](fathers.html), that all my [dreams](dreams.html) about myself and about all of [Israel](gen-jew.html) be good ones, those I have dreamed about myself, those I have dreamed about others and those which others dreamed about me. If they are good, strengthen them and fortify them... But if they require healing, heal them... And just as you transformed the curse of the [wicked](wicked.html) Bilaam from a curse to a blessing, so may you transform all of my [dreams](dreams.html).. for goodness...”

The reason that we recite this [prayer](prayer.html) at the [time](time.html) of the blessings of the [Kohanim](priests.html) is as follows. In:

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 3:7-8*** *“The bed of Shlomo [King Solomon] had sixty mighty ones surrounding it, of the mighty ones of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*. All holding on to the sword, learned in warfare, each with his sword on his thigh from [King Solomon’s]* [*fear*](fear.html) *in the nights”.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) explains that the “sixty mighty ones” refers to the sixty [letters](letters.html) of the Birchat [Kohanim](priests.html) - “Priestly blessing” The priestly blessings gave King Solomon peace of mind from his bad [dreams](dreams.html) at night. Therefore, at the [time](time.html) of the priestly blessing, we too [pray](prayer.html) that bad [dreams](dreams.html) should be turned into good ones.

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells the following story. A woman once came to Rabbi Eliezer to interpret her [dream](dreams.html). “In my [dream](dreams.html) I saw that the ceiling of my house caved in, “ she told Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Eliezer said to her, “You will give [birth](birth.html) to a boy.” Indeed, Rabbi Eliezer’s interpretation came true. A while later, the woman again came to Rabbi Eliezer to interpret her [dream](dreams.html). This [time](time.html) however, Rabbi Eliezer was not there. Instead, she told Rabbi Eliezer’s students her [dream](dreams.html), “I again dreamed that the ceiling of my house caved in.” The students said to her, “Your [dream](dreams.html) means that your husband will die and be buried!”

When Rabbi Eliezer returned, the students told him about the [dream](dreams.html) and their interpretation of it. Rabbi Eliezer angrily told his students, “You made her lose her husband! For the outcome of the [dream](dreams.html) depends on its interpretation!”

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) is [one](one.html) sixtieth of the pleasure of the

[Olam HaBa](futures.html).[[11]](#footnote-11)

“It is good to thank G-d” -- you better believe it! As [Adam](adam.html) and mankind have learned the hard way:

Because [Adam](adam.html) blamed Chava for breaking the [command](cmds613.html) not to [eat](eating.html) of the Tree of the [Knowledge](knowledge.html) of Good and Evil, and, in the process, denied the good that [HaShem](hashem.html) had done for him, the decree of expulsion resulted. Expulsion from [Gan Eden](eden.html) was the [first](one.html) ever [exile](galuyot.html) of mankind, and the “root” of all [exiles](galuyot.html) and oppression to follow, especially for the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. Therefore showing [HaShem](hashem.html) gratitude is a crucial key to ending this [exile](galuyot.html).

This is why [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is likened to [one](one.html)-sixtieth of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), a [time](time.html) when we shall be able to fully appreciate [HaShem](hashem.html)’s gift of life to us. On [Shabbat](sabbath.html), by abstaining from certain “creative activities”, we are compelled to sit back and look at all that [HaShem](hashem.html) does to keep us going, and if we don’t do that, then we deny both the opportunity of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and [HaShem](hashem.html)’s good, just as [Adam](adam.html) did.

Hence, the Sages are telling us that, as much as [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is like the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) (and it is), still, the experience is so minimal that it is as if it is not there at *all?* In other words, even if [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is the most wonderful experience, still, the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) will become infinitely better.

Visiting a [sick](illness.html) person takes away

[one](one.html)-sixtieth of his suffering.[[12]](#footnote-12)

It says in the Tractate Berachot in the [Ninth](nine.html) Chapter, [One](one.html) who visits the [sick](illness.html) takes away [one](one.html) sixtieth of his sickness from him. The Vilna Gaon shows through Gematria (numerical equivalence), how we can find that principle in practice. When [Joseph](joseph.html) is told that his father [Jacob](israelja.html) is [sick](illness.html), it says “Behold your father is [sick](illness.html)”.[[13]](#footnote-13) The word for behold in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) is *Henei*, formed by the [letters](letters.html): Hay, Nun, and Hay. This, in Gematria, is valued at sixty. In the next sentence, when [Jacob](israelja.html) heard that his son [Joseph](joseph.html) had come to visit him, it says, “And Yisrael ([Jacob](israelja.html)’s other [name](name.html)) strengthened and sat on the bed.” The word for *on the bed,* in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), is Hamitah: Hay, Mem, Tet, Hay. This, in Gematria, has the value of 59. This, according to the Vilna Gaon, shows the principle from the [Gemara](orallaw.html). If someone goes to visit the [sick](illness.html), they will help relieve [one](one.html) sixtieth of his sickness.

Bikkurim is [One](one.html) Sixtieth of the crop

The Sages advised farmers to give [one](one.html)-sixtieth of their crops as *Bikkurim*,[[14]](#footnote-14) farmers gave according to their means.

The [Mishna](orallaw.html) specifies that while there is no upward limit to the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of pe’ah (the unharvested edge), there is a floor: no less than [one](one.html)-sixtieth of the crop may be given.[[15]](#footnote-15)

\* \* \*

Although, as the [Mishna](orallaw.html) tells us, the Torah does not specify a value for the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of Bikkurim, the Rabbanan instituted a statutory minimum: [one](one.html) sixtieth of [one](one.html)’s entire crop of any of the [seven](seven.html) species.[[16]](#footnote-16) Rashi explains that the [Mishna](orallaw.html) does not list Terumah as a [mitzva](cmds613.html) for which no value was mentioned in the Torah since its value is hinted at in the Torah. This implies that no such hint in the words of the Torah can be found for the value of Bikkurim.

\* \* \*

The [fourth](four.html) day of [creation](bara.html) produced the [sun](hachama.html), the [moon](chodesh.html), and the [stars](mazaroth.html). These heavenly spheres were not actually fashioned on this day; they were [created](bara.html) on the [first](one.html) day, and merely were assigned their places in the [heavens](heaven.html) on the [fourth](four.html). At [first](one.html) the [sun](hachama.html) and the [moon](chodesh.html) enjoyed equal powers and prerogatives.

The [moon](chodesh.html) [spoke](mashal.html) to God, and said: “O Lord, why didst Thou create the [world](worlds.html) with the [letter](letters.html) Bet?”

God replied: “That it might be made [known](daat.html) unto My creatures that there are [two](two.html) [worlds](worlds.html).”

The [moon](chodesh.html): “O Lord: which of the [two](two.html) [worlds](worlds.html) is the larger, this [world](worlds.html) or the [world](futures.html) to come?”

God: “The [world](futures.html) to come is the larger.”

The [moon](chodesh.html): “O Lord, Thou didst create [two](two.html) [worlds](worlds.html), a greater and a lesser [world](worlds.html); Thou didst create the [heaven](heaven.html) and the earth, the [heaven](heaven.html) exceeding the earth; Thou didst create [fire](fire.html) and water, the water stronger than the [fire](fire.html), because it can quench the [fire](fire.html); and now Thou hast [created](bara.html) the [sun](hachama.html) and the [moon](chodesh.html), and it is becoming that [one](one.html) of them should be greater than the other.”

Then spake God to the [moon](chodesh.html): “I [know](daat.html) well, thou wouldst have me make Thee greater than the [sun](hachama.html). As a punishment I decree that thou mayest keep but [one](one.html)-sixtieth of thy light.”

The [moon](chodesh.html) made supplication: “Shall I be punished so severely for having spoken a single word?”

God relented: “In the [future](future.html) [world](worlds.html) I will restore thy light, so that thy light may again be as the light of the [sun](hachama.html).”

\* \* \*

This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben [David](fathers.html)

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: gkilli@aol.com

Web page: http://www.betemunah.org/

(360) 918-2905

Return to The WATCHMAN home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: gkilli@aol.com

1. Berachot 57b [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Rashi Commentary for: ‎ Shemot (Exod.) 16:35** forty years Now were not thirty days missing? The manna first fell on the fifteenth of Iyar, and on the fifteenth of Nissan it stopped, as it is said: “And the manna ceased on the morrow” (Josh. 5:12). Rather [this] tells [us] that in the cakes the Israelites took out of Egypt they tasted the flavor of manna.-[from Kid. 38a]. Author’s comments: This suggests that the matza that they ate for the first thirty days also had the same qualities as the manna. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Berachot 57b [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Berachot 57b [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Vayikra Rabbah [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Baba Bathra 12a [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Vayechi 238a [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Maimonides (Rambam): Yesodei HaTorah, Chapter 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed 2:36 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Berachot 57b [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shabbat 57b [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Nedarim 39b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Bereshit (Genesis) 48:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bikkurim = ‘first fruits’. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Peah 1:1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Yerushalmi Bikkurim 3:1; Rambam Bikkurim 2:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)