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| **Esnoga Bet Emunah**  **12210 Luckey Summit**  **San Antonio, TX 78252**  **United States of America**  **© 2022**  [**https://www.betemunah.org/**](https://www.betemunah.org/)  **E-Mail:** [**gkilli@aol.com**](mailto:gkilli@aol.com) | **Menorah 5** | **Esnoga Bet El**  **102 Broken Arrow Dr.**  **Paris TN 38242**  **United States of America**  **© 2016**  [**https://torahfocus.com/**](https://torahfocus.com/)  **E-Mail:** [**waltoakley@charter.net**](mailto:waltoakley@charter.net) |

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

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **First Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Nisan 10, 5783 / March 31 - April 1, 2023** | **First Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

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

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

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

**If you want to subscribe to our list and ensure that you never lose any of our commentaries, or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to** [gkilli@aol.com](mailto:gkilli@aol.com%20) **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**Shabbat HaGadol : “Isaac sowed in that land” - “Va yezra Yitzhak” וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“Va yezra Yitzhak”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 26:12-15 | Reader 1 – Shemot 33:12-16 |
| **“Isaac sowed in that land”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 26:16-19 | Reader 2 – Shemot 33:17-19 |
|  | Reader 3 – B’resheet 26:20-22 | Reader 3 – Shemot 33:20-23 |
| B’resheet (Genesis) 26:12-35 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 26:23-26 |  |
| Special Ashlamata: Malachi 3:4-24 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 26:27-29 | **Monday and Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – B’resheet 26:30-32 | Reader 1 – Shemot 33:12-16 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 22:1-22 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 26:33-35 | Reader 2 – Shemot 33:17-19 |
| Mk 3:5-6, Luke 6:10-11 | Maftir: B’resheet 26:33-35  Malachi 3:4-24 | Reader 3 – Shemot 33:20-23 |

**Blessings 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 delight. 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 performing acts of kindness; and there is no maximum amount of Torah that a person must study.**

**These are the Laws whose benefits a person can often enjoy even in this world, even though the primary reward is in the Next World: They are: Honoring one's father and mother; doing acts of kindness; early attendance at the place of Torah study -- morning and night; showing hospitality to guests; visiting the sick; providing for the financial needs of a bride; escorting the dead; being very engrossed in prayer; bringing peace between two people, and between husband and wife; but the study of Torah is as great as all of them together. Amen!**

**A Prayer for Israel**

Our Father in Heaven, Rock, and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel, the first manifestation of the approach of our redemption. Shield it with Your lovingkindness, envelop it in Your peace, and bestow Your light and truth upon its leaders, ministers, and advisors, and grace them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our holy land, grant them deliverance, and adorn them in a mantle of victory. Ordain peace in the land and grant its inhabitants eternal happiness.

Lead them, swiftly and upright, to Your city Zion and to Jerusalem, the abode of Your Name, as is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses: “Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And the Lord your God will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it, and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.” Draw our hearts together to revere and venerate Your name and to observe all the precepts of Your Torah, and send us quickly the Messiah son of David, agent of Your vindication, to redeem those who await Your deliverance.

**A Prayer for our Beloved Hakhamim**

We would like to ask for prayers on behalf of our three Hakhamim, Hakham Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai, Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David, and Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham for their health, as well as for this work, that it may prosper, be of great benefit to all, and that it may be well supported, and we all say, Amen ve Amen!

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* Yitschaq sowed
* Yitschaq becomes great
* Wells and trouble from the Philistines

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’resheet ‎‎‎‎‎(Genesis) 26:12-35‎**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 12. And Isaac sowed in that land, and he found in that year a hundred fold, and the Lord blessed him. | 12. And Izhak sowed unto righteousness/generosity in that land, and found in that year a hundred for one, according to his measure. And the LORD blessed him, |
| 13. And the man became great, and he grew constantly greater until he had grown very great. | 13. and the man increased, and went forward increasing until he was very great. |
| 14. And he had possessions of sheep and possessions of cattle and much production, and the Philistines envied him. | 14. And he had flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, and great cultivation; and the Philistaee envied him. |
| 15. And all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father the Philistines stopped them up and filled them with earth. | 15. And all the wells which the servants of his father had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistaee stopped up and filled with earth. |
| 16. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you have become much stronger than we." | 16. And Abimelek said to Izhak, Go from us; for you are stronger than we in riches very much. |
| 17. And Isaac went away from there, and he encamped in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there. | 17. And Izhak went thence, and sojourned in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. |
| 18. And Isaac again dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of his father, Abraham, and the Philistines had stopped them up after Abraham's death; and he gave them names like the names that his father had given them. | 18. And Izhak dug again the wells of water which the servants of his father had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and which the Philistaee had stopped after Abraham was dead; and he called them by the names his father had called them. |
| 19. And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and they found there a well of living waters. | 19. And the servants of Izhak dug in the border of the valley, and found there a well of flowing water. |
| 20. And the shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's shepherds, saying, "The water is ours"; so he named the well Esek, because they had contended with him. | 20. And the shepherds of Gerar contended with Izhak's shepherds, saying, The water is ours. And it was the will of Heaven, and it dried. But when they returned to Izhak, it flowed. And he called the name of the well (Esek) Contention, because (etheseku) they had quarrelled with him on account of it. |
| 21. And they dug another well, and they quarreled about it also; so he named it Sitnah. | 21. And they dug another well; and they contended for it also; and it dried, and did not flow again. And he called the name of it (Sitnah) Accusation. |
| 22. And he moved away from there, and he dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, and he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land." | 22. And he removed from thence and dug another well, and for that they did not contend as formerly, and he called the name of it (Ravchatha) Spaciousness; for he said, Now has the LORD given us space to spread us abroad in the land. |
| 23. And he went up from there to Beer sheba. | 23. And he went up from thence unto Beersheba. |
| 24. And the Lord appeared to him on that night and said, "I am the God of Abraham, your father. Fear not, for I am with you, and I will bless you and multiply your seed for the sake of Abraham, My servant." | 24. And the LORD appeared to him that night, and said, I am the God of Abraham your father: fear not; for My Word is for your help, and I will bless you, and multiply your sons for the righteousness'/generosity’s sake of Abraham My servant. |
| 25. And he built an altar there, and he called in the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there, and Isaac's servants dug a well there. | 25. And he built there an altar, and prayed in the name of the LORD. And he spread his tabernacle there, and the servants of Izhak dug there a well. |
| 26. And Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and a group of his companions and Pichol, his general. | 26. And when Izhak went forth from Gerar the wells dried up, and the trees made no fruit; and they felt that it was because they had driven him away, all these things had befallen them. And Abimelek went to him from Gerar, and took his friends to go with him, and Phikol the chief of his host. |
| 27. And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me, and you sent me away from you?" | 27. And Izhak said to them, Why come you to me that I should pray for you, when you have hated me, and driven me from you? |
| 28. And they said, "We have seen that the Lord was with you; so we said: Let there now be an oath between us, between ourselves and you, and let us form a covenant with you. | 28. And they answered, Seeing, we have seen, that the Word of the LORD is for your help, and for your righteousness’/generosity’s sake all good has been to us; but when you went forth from our land the wells dried up, and our trees made no fruit; then we said, We will cause him to return to us. And now let there be an oath established between us, and kindness between us and you, and we will enter into a covenant with you, |
| 29. If you do [not] harm us, as we have not touched you, and as we have done with you only good, and we sent you away in peace, [so do] you now, blessed of the Lord." | 29. lest you do us evil. Forasmuch as we have not come near you for evil, and as we have acted with you only for good, and have indeed sent you away in peace; you are now blessed of the LORD. |
| 30. So he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. | 30. - - |
| 31. And they arose early in the morning, and they swore one to the other, and Isaac escorted them, and they went away from him in peace. | 31. And they arose in the morning, each man with his brother; and he broke off from the bridle of his ass, and gave one part to them for a testimony. And Izhak prayed for them, and they were enlarged. And Izhak accompanied them, and they went from him in peace. |
| 32. And it came to pass on that day, that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug, and they said to him, "We have found water." | 32. And on that day the servants of Izhak came and told him concerning the well they had dug, and said to him, We have found water; |
| 33. And he named it Shibah; therefore, the city is named Beer sheba until this very day. | 33. and he called it Sheba (the Swearing); therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day. |
| 34. And Esau was forty years old, and he married Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. | 34. And Esau was the son of forty years; and he took to wife Yehudith daughter of Beari the Hittah, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittah. |
| 35. And they were a vexation of the spirit to Isaac and to Rebecca. | 35. And they bowed in strange worship, and set themselves to rebel in their evil conduct against Izhak and against Rivekah.  JERUSALEM: **And they were refractory, swelling in spirit with strange worship, and would not receive instruction either from Izhak or Rivekah.** |

**Welcome to the World of P’shat Exegesis**

In order to understand the finished work of the P’shat mode of interpretation of the Torah, one needs to take into account that the P’shat is intended to produce a catechetical output, whereby a question/s is/are raised and an answer/a is/are given using the seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel and as well as the laws of Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew expression.

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

[cf. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=472&letter=R>]:

**1. Ḳal va-ḥomer:** "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori.

**2. Gezerah shavah:** Argument from analogy. Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications.

**3. Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad:** Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question.

**4. Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages.

**5. Kelal u-Peraṭ and Peraṭ u-kelal:** Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general.

**6. Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.

**7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

**Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

Thirteen rules compiled by Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha for the elucidation of the Torah and for making halakic deductions from it. They are, strictly speaking, mere amplifications of the seven Rules of Hillel, and are collected in the Baraita of R. Ishmael, forming the introduction to the Sifra and reading a follows:

**1. Ḳal wa-ḥomer**: Identical with the first rule of Hillel.

**2. Gezerah shawah**: Identical with the second rule of Hillel.

**3. Binyan ab**: Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel.

**4. Kelal u-Peraṭ**: The general and the particular.

**5. u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The particular and the general.

**6. Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The general, the particular, and the general.

7. The general which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general.

8. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular.

9. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application.

10. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application.

11. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it.

12. Deduction from the context.

13. When two Biblical passages contradict each other the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage.

Rules seven to eleven are formed by a subdivision of the fifth rule of Hillel; rule twelve corresponds to the seventh rule of Hillel, but is amplified in certain particulars; rule thirteen does not occur in Hillel, while, on the other hand, the sixth rule of Hillel is omitted by Ishmael. With regard to the rules and their application in general. These rules are found also on the morning prayers of any Jewish Orthodox Siddur.

**Reading Assignment:**

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| **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. 475 - 485** | **Ramban: Genesis Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1971)  **pp. 333 - 338** |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎** **B’resheet (Genesis) ‎‎‎‎26:12-35‎**

**12 in that land** [The land yielded an abundant harvest] even though it was not considered as esteemed as the Land of Israel itself, i.e., as the land of the seven nations (Gen. Rabbah 64:6).

**in that year** Even though it was not as it should have been, for it was a year of famine (Gen. Rabbah ad loc.).

**in that land... in that year** Why both of them? To tell us that the land was hard and that the year was a hard one.

**a hundred fold** For they had estimated how much it [the land] was fit to produce, and it produced for each measure that they had estimated, one hundred [measures], and our Rabbis said that the purpose of this estimate was for tithing. [Gen. Rabbah 64:6]

**13 he had grown very great** For they would say, “Rather the manure of Isaac’s mules than Abimelech’s silver and gold” (Gen. Rabbah 64:7).

**14 and much production** Heb. וַעֲבֻדָּה רַבָּה , much activity, in Old French ouvrene (enterprises). עֲבוֹדָה means one job, whereas עֲבֻדָּה means much production.

**15 the Philistines stopped them up** Because they said, “They are a danger to us due to the armies that will come upon us.” [Onkelos renders:] טְמוּנוּן פְּלִשְׁתָּאֵי an expression of stopping up, and in the language of the Talmud, “stops up (מְטַמְטֵם) the heart.”

**17 in the valley of Gerar** far from the city.

**18 And Isaac again dug** [Meaning] the wells that they had dug in the days of his father Abraham and that the Philistines had stopped up—before Isaac traveled from Gerar, he went back and dug them.

**20 Esek** Contention.

**because they had contended with him** They engaged with him about it with strife and contention.

**21 Sitnah** - nuysemant in Old French (harm, wrong, injury).

**22 and we will be fruitful in the land** Heb. וּפָרִינוּ בָאָרֶץ , as the Targum translates it: וְנִיפוּשׁ בְּאַרְעָא , “and we will be fruitful in the land.”

**26 and a group of his companions** Heb. וַאֲחֻזַת מֵרֵעֵהוּ , as the Targum renders: וְסִיעַת מֵרַחֲמוֹהִי , a group of his friends [the “mem” meaning “of”] (Gen. Rabbah 64:9). Some interpret that in the word מֵרֵעֵהוּ , the “mem” is [part of] the root of the word, like (Jud. 14:11): “the thirty companions” (מֵרֵעִים) of Samson, in order that the word וַאֲחֻזַת should be in the construct state [i.e., the group of his friends]. However, it is not polite to speak of royalty in this manner, i. e., “his group of companions,” because this would imply that he brought his entire group of companions, and that he had only one group of companions. Therefore, it should be interpreted in the previous manner, [i.e., that אֲחֻזַת is not construct]. And do not be puzzled about the letter “thav” of אֲחֻזַת . Although the word is not in the construct state, there are similar cases in Scripture (Ps. 60:13): “help against the adversary” עֶזְרָת מִצָּר (Isa. 51:21): “drunk, but not from wine” (וּשְׁכֻרַת וְלֽא מִיָּיִן) .

**a group** Heb. אֲחֻזַת , an expression of a gathering or a band [of people] who are held (שֶׁנֶאֱחָזִין) together.

**28 And they said, “We have seen** Heb. רָאוֹ רָאִינוּ , [a double expression meaning:] We saw it regarding your father; we saw it regarding you. [From Gen. Rabbah 64:10]

**Let there now be an oath between us, etc.** Let the oath that has existed between us from the days of your father be now also between us and you. [From Targum Onkelos]

**29 we have not touched you** when we said to you, “Go away from us.” you You too, (other editions: now too) do to us likewise.

**33 Shibah** Because of the covenant [shevuah in Hebrew means oath].

**34 forty years old** Esau was compared to a swine, as it is said (Ps. 80:14): “The boar from the forest gnaws at it.” This swine, when it lies down, stretches out its hooves, as if to say, “See, I am a clean (kosher) animal.” So do these [the chiefs of Esau] rob and plunder and then pretend to be honorable. During the entire forty years, Esau kidnapped wives from their husbands and violated them. When he was forty years old, he said: “My father married at forty; I, too, will do the same.” [From Gen. Rabbah 65:1]

**35 a vexation of the spirit** Heb. מֽרַת רוּחַ , an expression of defiance of spirit הַמְרָאַתרוּחַ like (Deut. 9:24): “You have been rebellious מַמְרִים .” All their deeds were to provoke and to grieve. [From Targum Onkelos]

**to Isaac and to Rebecca** for they worshipped idols. [From Midrash Tanchuma, Toledoth 8]

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎22:1-22**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. For the conductor, on the ayeleth hashachar, a song of David. | 1. For praise; concerning the strength of the regular morning sacrifice; a psalm of David. |
| 2. My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? [You are] far from my salvation [and] from the words of my moaning. | 2. My God, my God, why have you left me far from my redemption, are the words of my outcry. |
| 3. My God, I call out by day and You do not reply, and at night I do not keep silent. | 3. O God, I call by day and You will not accept my prayer; and by night I have no quiet |
| 4. But You are holy; You await the praises of Israel. | 4. But You are holy, who make the world rest on the psalms of Israel. |
| 5. Our ancestors trusted in You; they trusted and You rescued them. | 5. Our fathers hoped in You; they hoped/were consoled in Your word, and You saved them. |
| 6. They cried out to You and they escaped; they trusted in You and they were not shamed. | 6. In Your presence they prayed and were saved; and on You they relied, and were not disappointed. |
| 7. But I am a worm and not a man; a reproach of man, despised by peoples. | 7. But I am a feeble worm, not a rational man; the reproach of the sons of men, and the butt of the Gentiles. |
| 8. All who see me will mock me; they will open their lips, they will shake their head. | 8. All who see me will gloat over me, attacking with their lips; they will shake their heads. |
| 9. One should cast his trust upon the Lord, and He will rescue him; He will save him because He delights in him. | 9. Let him give praise in the presence of the LORD; and He has delivered him, He saved him because He favoured him. |
| 10. For You drew me from the womb; You made me secure on my mother's breasts. | 10. Because You took me out of the womb; You gave me hope/consolation on my mother's breasts. |
| 11. Upon You, I was cast from birth; from my mother's womb You are my God. | 11. By your aid I was pulled forth from her bowels; from my mother's womb You are my God. |
| 12. Do not distance Yourself from me, for distress is near; for there is none to help. | 12. Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is no redeemer. |
| 13. Great bulls have surrounded me; the mighty ones of Bashan encompassed me. | 13. The Gentiles have surrounded me, who are like many bulls; the princes of Mathnan have hemmed me in. |
| 14. They opened their mouth against me [like] a tearing, roaring lion. | 14. They open their mouths at me like a roaring and ravaging lion. |
| 15. I was spilled like water, and all my bones were separated; my heart was like wax, melting within my innards. | 15. Like water I am poured out; all my bones are crushed; my heart is melting like wax within my bowels. |
| 16. My strength became dried out like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my palate; and You set me down in the dust of death. | 16. My strength has dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue is stuck to my palate; and You have brought me to the grave. |
| 17. **For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me, like a lion, my hands and feet.** | 17. **Because the wicked have surrounded me, who are like many dogs; a gathering of evildoers has hemmed me in, biting my hands and feet like a lion.** |
| 18. I tell about all my bones. They look and gloat over me. | 18. I will tell of all the wounds of my bones; those who see me despise me. |
| 19. **They share my garments among themselves and cast lots for my raiment.** | 19. **They divide my clothing for themselves; and for my cloak they will cast lots.** |
| 20. But You, O Lord, do not distance Yourself; my strength, hasten to my assistance. | 20. You, O LORD, do not be far off; O my strength, hurry to my aid. |
| 21. Save my soul from the sword, my only one from the grip of the dog. | 21. Save my soul from those who slay with the sword; from the power of the dog save the breath of my body. |
| 22. Save me from the lion's mouth, as from the horns of the wild oxen You answered me. | 22. Redeem me from the mouth of the lion; and from kings who are strong and tall as a bull You have received my prayer. |

**Rashi’s Translation and Commentary on Psalms ‎‎22:1-22**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**13 Great bulls:** Mighty kingdoms.

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

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

**14 a tearing lion:** Nebuchadnezzar.

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

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

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

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

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

**18** **I tell about all my bones:** The pain of my bones.

**They look:** They rejoice at my misfortune.

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

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

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

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎22:1-22**

By: Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

**Psalms chapter 22** although entitled, 'A song of David' primarily deals with events which were destined to occur hundreds of years after David's time. David, with his 'holy spirit' foresaw the bleak Babylonian and Persian exiles in general, and in particular, the terrible threat of Haman and Achashverosh against the entire Jewish nation, personified by Queen Esther. Although there are countless events in Jewish history which David does not discuss in the Book of Psalms, Alshich explains that David dedicated a Psalm to Esther because he personally had a hand in the salvation of Israel in her days. When David fled from Absalom, Shimi ben Gera of the tribe of Benjamin went out to viciously curse David. Yet, David would not allow his men to kill Shimi although he deserved death for blaspheming the king.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Talmud[[2]](#footnote-2) says that David foresaw that Mordecai [and Esther] was destined to descend from Shimi ['Mordecai, son of Yair, son of Shimi'[[3]](#footnote-3)] and being that the salvation of Israel was at stake, David forfeited his own dignity for the sake of saving his people.

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

The superscription of Psalms 22 declares that it was written by David. Since Psalms chapter 22 was designated by the Vilna Gaon as the song for Purim, let’s look a bit more closely at Purim. (Passover is coming in a few days. There is an intimate connection between Purim and Passover. These two are always 30 days apart.)

The first half of the first chapter, of the book of Esther, seems to be superfluous. It starts off by telling us, briefly, that king Achashverosh gave a six-month feast for the nobles. It does not tell us what happened at this feast. Then it describes a feast that lasted seven days and was given for everyone in Susa.[[5]](#footnote-5)

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

Jeremiah the prophet had reported, in HaShem’s name, that following the destruction of the first Temple, the Jews would be in exile for seventy (70) years.[[6]](#footnote-6) According to Achashverosh’s calculations, the seventy years had been completed, meaning that HaShem Himself had been permanently defeated. It turns out that Achashverosh, and Belshazzar before him, had miscalculated the seventy years. He thought that it began with the exile of the first Jews. In reality, Jeremiah’s prophecy was figured from the time of the destruction of the Temple, some two years later. In fact, the exile did end, as prophesied, after seventy years!

At the feast, Achashverosh denigrated HaShem, and the Jews, by wearing the special clothes of the High Priest and by displaying the Temple vessels.[[7]](#footnote-7) The entire purpose of this feast was to denigrate the holy objects and, in effect, celebrating the end of the Jewish people.

So, who went to this party where Vashti ends up dead? Were there any Jews there? Somehow this first half of chapter one does not seem necessary, yet it plays a crucial role in understanding the rest of the scroll of Esther. Since HaShem is in control even while He is concealed in this story, we can assume that the decree to destroy the Jews, which was advanced by Haman, was something that HaShem allowed. The question is: What did the Jews do to deserve this awful decree? The Talmud sheds some light on this:

***Megillah 12a*** *R. Simon b. Yohai was asked by his disciples, Why were the enemies of Israel[[8]](#footnote-8) in that generation deserving of extermination? He said to them: Do you answer. They said: Because they partook of the feast of that wicked one.[[9]](#footnote-9) [He said to them]: If so, those in Susa should have been killed, not those in other parts?[[10]](#footnote-10) They then said, Give your answer. He said to them: It was because they bowed down to the image.[[11]](#footnote-11) They said to him, Did HaShem then show them favoritism?[[12]](#footnote-12) He replied: They only pretended to worship,[[13]](#footnote-13) and He also only pretended to exterminate them; and so it is written, For he afflicted not from his heart.[[14]](#footnote-14) In the court of the garden of the king’s palace.[[15]](#footnote-15) Rab and Samuel gave different interpretations of this — One said that those who had the entree[[16]](#footnote-16) of the court were [entertained] in the court, and those who had the entree of the garden in the garden, and those who had the entree of the palace in the palace. The other said: He first put them in the court, and it did not hold them — Then he took them into the garden and it did not hold them; and finally he had to take them into the palace, and he found room for them. In a Baraita it was taught: He took them into the court and opened two doors for them, one into the garden and one into the palace.*

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

Haman, the Agagite, is a descendant of Amalek.[[17]](#footnote-17) Amalek’s theology is that there is no G-d Who works both naturally and supernaturally. Amalek has a philosophy that everything “just happens”. Amalekites see only the natural law. They do not acknowledge the hand of HaShem. This explains why an Amalekite appears on the scene to bring punishment to the Jews who were acting like Amalekites.

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

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

At first glance it appears as though the lecherous king has made a wicked request of an innocent woman. If we consider ‘who’ and ‘what’ Vashti was, we might think a little differently.

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

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

Natural law had taken its course. What Esther least wanted, that is what she got. Mordechai, Esther’s cousin and husband, was a descendant of King Saul (a son of Kish)[[18]](#footnote-18) and that makes Esther also of royal blood. Natural law dictates that those of royal blood should be king and queen. The Talmud explains:

***Megillah 12b*** *There was a certain Jew in Shushan the castle, etc. a Benjamite.[[19]](#footnote-19) What is the point of this verse? If it is to give the pedigree of Mordecai, it should trace it right back to Benjamin![[20]](#footnote-20) [Why then were only these specified?] — A Tanna taught: All of them are designations [of Mordecai]. ‘The son of Jair’ means, the son who enlightened [he’ir] the eyes of Israel by his prayer. ‘The son of Shimei means, the son to whose prayer HaShem hearkened [shama’]. ‘The son of Kish’ indicates that he knocked [hikkish] at the gates of mercy and they were opened to him. He is called ‘a Jew’ [yehudi] which implies that he came from [the tribe of] Judah, and he is called ‘a Benjamite’, which implies that he came from Benjamin. [How is this]? — R. Nahman said: He was a man of distinguished character.[[21]](#footnote-21) Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: His father was from Benjamin and his mother from Judah. The Rabbis, however, said: The tribes competed with one another [for him]. The tribe of Judah said: I am responsible for the birth of Mordecai, because David did not kill Shimei the son of Gera, and the tribe of Benjamin said: He is actually descended from me. Raba said: The community of Israel explained [the two designations] in the opposite[[22]](#footnote-22) sense: ‘See what a Judean did to me and how a Benjamite repaid me!’ What a Judean did to me viz., that David did not kill Shimei from whom was descended Mordecai who provoked Haman. ‘And how a Benjamite repaid me’, viz., that Saul did not slay Agag from whom was descended Haman who oppressed Israel. R. Johanan said: He did indeed come from Benjamin. Why then was he called ‘a Jew’? Because he repudiated idolatry. For anyone who repudiates idolatry is called ‘a Jew’, as it is written, There are certain Jews[[23]](#footnote-23) etc.*

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

***Megillah 13b*** *In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king’s gate, Bigthan and Teresh were wroth.[[24]](#footnote-24) R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, [once] caused a master to be wroth with his servants in order to fulfill the desire of a righteous man, namely Joseph, as it says, And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, etc.;[[25]](#footnote-25) and servants with their master in order to perform a miracle for a righteous man, namely, Mordecai, as it is written, ‘And the thing was known to Mordecai etc. ‘ R. Johanan said: Bigthan and Teresh were two Tarseans[[26]](#footnote-26) and conversed in the Tarsean language. They said: From the day this woman came we have been able to get no sleep.[[27]](#footnote-27) Come, let us put poison in the dish so that he will die. They did not know that Mordecai was one of those who had seats in the Chamber of Hewn Stone,[[28]](#footnote-28) and that he understood seventy languages.[[29]](#footnote-29) Said the other to him, But are not my post and your post different?[[30]](#footnote-30) He replied: I will keep guard at my post and at yours. So it is written, And when inquisition was made, he was found,[[31]](#footnote-31) that is to say, they were not [both] found at their posts.*

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

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

***Esther 2:21-23*** *During the time Mordecai was si2tting at the king’s gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Achashverosh. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.*

This event is rather odd. Would you plot against the king in the earshot of one of his ministers? Obviously no! So, what’s going on here? The answer relates to Mordechai’s ability to speak seventy languages. The guards did not expect Mordechai to understand since he was not one of their country men. Mordechai is wearing his kipah[[32]](#footnote-32) and his tzitzith[[33]](#footnote-33) were hanging out. His white beard and obvious Jewish attire were not what the guards were wearing. Mordechai was different.

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

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

It is now time to turn our attention to Haman. Who is Haman? Haman is a descendant of Agag the Amalekite![[34]](#footnote-34) The Talmud, which we read earlier, has described Haman as a descendent of Agag who was conceived because of king Saul’s misplaced mercy. The Amalekites were dedicated to the destruction of the Children of Israel:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Esther 4:12-17*** *When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, He sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther’s instructions.*

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

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

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

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

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

***Midrash Rabbah - Esther VIII:7*** *7.THEN ESTHER BADE THEM RETURN ANSWER UNTO MORDECAI (ib. 15). She said to him: GO, GATHER TOGETHER ALL THE JEWS THAT ARE PRESENT IN SHUSHAN, AND FAST YE FOR ME, AND NEITHER EAT NOR DRINK THREE DAYS (ib, 16): these were the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth of Nisan. He sent back word to her: But these include the first day of Passover? She replied: Elder of Israel, why is there a Passover?[[35]](#footnote-35) Mordecai thereupon acceded to her request, as it says, SO MORDECAI WENT HIS WAY, AND DID ACCORDING TO ALL AT ESTHER HAD COMMANDED HIM (ib. 17). In Babylon they say that this[[36]](#footnote-36) means that he spent the festival of Passover in fasting on account of that calamity. Mordecai prayed to the Lord and said: ‘ It is fully known before the throne of Thy glory, O Lord of all worlds, that it was not from pride of heart or vain gloriousness that I acted in not bowing down to Haman, but through fear of Thee I did thus, not to bow down to him, for I was in fear of Thee lest I should assign Thy honour to flesh and blood, and I was not willing to bow down to any beside Thee. For who am I that I should not bow down to Haman for the salvation of Thy people Israel? For that I would even kiss his shoe-latchet. Now therefore, our G-d, deliver us, we pray Thee, from his hand and let him fall into the pit which he has dug and let him be caught in the snare which he has hidden for the feet of Thy saints, and let this sinner know that Thou hast not forgotten the promise*

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

Queen Esther enters Achashverosh’s palace just as the High Priest gingerly and reverently steps into the Holy of Holies to atone for the Jewish people. Whereas the High Priest wears simple, modest clothing upon his reverent penetration into the Holy of Holies, the queen wears lavish, seductive attire in her attempt to appease the gluttonous king. The High Priest enters twice, first to produce the thick cloud of the incense to cover the Ark, and thereafter to actually perform the service of sprinkling the blood to obtain atonement. Correspondingly, Esther first enters the royal chamber to invite the king to her feast, the purpose of which is to confuse and blur the king’s perception. Thereafter, after Haman is hung, she enters once again to plead with the king to annul the threatening decree.

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

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

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

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

After this incident, Haman returns home “with his head covered”.[[37]](#footnote-37) The Midrash explains the meaning of this phrase: When the parade route passed by Haman’s house, his daughter saw them coming and had a great idea: She would take a chamber pot up to the second floor window, and pour its contents on Mordechai’s head! The only problem is that the girl assumed it was her wonderful father being honored on horseback, with that lowly Jew Mordechai pulling him along. So when the parade passed by, she timed it perfectly and, splash! The one pulling the horse got it right on the head.

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

To make matters worse, Haman found little encouragement at home: His wife Zeresh tells him: “If this is how things are going, you’re going to lose your fight against the Jewish People!”[[38]](#footnote-38)

**The King can’t sleep**

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

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

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

At the second wine feast, she recounts the story of Passover from the first person, including herself as part of the Exodus from Egypt, as we are commanded to do. Esther’s words are allusions to the story of Passover: “The Jews were sold to be destroyed, slain, and exterminated”.[[39]](#footnote-39) Esther now reveals that she is Jewish and that genocide is planned against her people.

Outraged, the king demands to know who would dare threaten the Queen and her relatives[[40]](#footnote-40). Esther points to none other than Haman! Haman is aghast and while pleading with Esther, accidentally falls on “the couch upon which Esther was”[[41]](#footnote-41). This is an allusion to the custom to lean during the seder rather than sit.

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

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

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

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

Tehillim 22 opens with the famous phrase:

***Tehillim (Psalm) 22:1*** *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [why art thou so] far from helping me, [and from] the words of my roaring?*

The Gemara puts this pasuk in Queen Esther’s mouth:

***Megillah 15b*** *And stood in the inner court of the king’s house. R. Levi said: When she reached the chamber of the idols, the Divine Presence left her. She said, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me. Dost thou perchance punish the inadvertent offence like the presumptuous one, or one done under compulsion like one done willingly? Or is it because I called him ‘dog’, as it says. Deliver my soul from the sword, mine only one from the power of the dog? She straightway retracted and called him lion, as it says. Save me from the lion’s mouth.*

The Nazarean Codicil puts this pasuk in Mashiach ben Yosef’s mouth:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 27:46*** *And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Esther is thus seen in allegory as Mashiach ben Yosef.

Esther was the daughter of AviChayil.[[42]](#footnote-42) AviChayil is a Hebrew word that has a meaning of: “My Father is strong”. This is most appropriate as a remez, or a hint, to HaShem, the Mashiach ben Yosef’s Heavenly Father:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 18:35*** *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.*

Another pasuk from Megillat Esther that has strong Messianic overtones is:

***Esther 5:1*** *Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther donned royalty, and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, over against the king’s house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.*

As His Majesty King Yeshua rose on the third day, so also did Queen Esther rise on the third day. As His Majesty presented Himself to HaShem The King in the Holy of Holies in the heavens, so queen Esther presented herself to the king in the inner court. As HaShem sits on His throne, so the king sat on his.

Thus, we see that Psalms chapter 22 is full of hints and lots of intrigue.

**Special Ashlamatah for Shabbat HaGadol: Malachi 3:4-24**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 4. And then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old and former years. | 4. And the offering of the people Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be accepted before the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. |
| 5. And I will approach you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely; and also against those who withhold the wages of the day laborers, of the widow and fatherless, and those who pervert [the rights of] the stranger, [and those who] fear Me not, says the Lord of Hosts. | 5. And I will reveal Myself against you to exercise judgement, and My Memra will be for a swift witness among you, against the sorcerers and adulterers, and against those who swear falsely and those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and who pervert the judgement of the stranger, and have not feared from before Me, says the LORD of hosts. |
| 6. For I, the Lord, have not changed; and you, the sons of Jacob, have not reached the end. | 6. For I the Lord have not changed my covenant which is from of old; but you, O house of Israel, you think that if a man dies in this world his judgement has ceased. |
| 7. From the days of your fathers you have departed from My laws and have not kept [them]. **"Return to Me, and I will return to you,"** said the Lord of Hosts, but you said, "With what have we to return?" | 7. From the days of your fathers you have wandered from My statutes and have not observed (them). Return to My service **and I will return by My Memra to do good for you**, says the LORD of hosts. And if you say, 'How will we return?’ |
| 8. Will a man rob God? Yet you rob Me, and you say, "With what have we robbed You?"-**With tithes and with the terumah-levy.** | 8. Will a man provoke before a judge? But you are provoking before Me. And if you say, 'How have we provoked before You? - **in tithes and offerings!** |
| 9. You are cursed with a curse, but you rob Me, the whole nation! | 9. You are cursed with a curse, and you are provoking before Me, the whole nation of you. |
| 10. Bring the whole of the tithes into the treasury so that there may be nourishment in My House, and test Me now therewith, says the Lord of Hosts, [to see] if I will not open for you the sluices of heaven and pour down for you blessing until there be no room to suffice for it. | 10. Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse and there will be provision for those who serve in My Sanctuary. and make trial now before Me in this, says the LORD of hosts, to see whether I will not open to you the windows of heaven and send down blessing to you, until you say, 'Enough! |
| 11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and he will not destroy the fruits of your land; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before its time in the field, says the Lord of Hosts. | 11. And I will rebuke the destroyer for you and it will not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor will the vine in the field fail to bear fruit for you, says the LORD of hosts. |
| 12. And then all the nations shall praise you, for you shall be a desirable land, says the Lord of Hosts. | 12. And all the Gentiles will praise you, for you will be dwelling in the land of the house of My Shekinah and will be fulfilling My will in it, says the LORD of hosts. |
| 13. "Still harder did your words strike Me," says the Lord, but you say, "What have we spoken against You?" | 13. Your words have been strong before Me, says the LORD. And if you say, 'How have we multiplied words before you?' |
| 14. You have said, "It is futile to serve God, and what profit do we get for keeping His charge and for going about in anxious worry because of the Lord of Hosts? " | 14. You have said, 'He who serves before the LORD is not benefited, and what gain do we earn for ourselves, because we have kept the charge of His Memra and because we have walked in lowliness of spirit before the LORD of hosts? |
| 15. And now we praise the bold transgressors. Yea, those who work wickedness are built up. Yea, they tempt God, and they have, nevertheless, escaped. | 15. And now we praise the wicked; yes, evil-doers are established. and, moreover, they make trial before the LORD and are delivered. |
| 16. Then the God-fearing men spoke to one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and for those who valued His name highly. | 16. Then those who feared the LORD spoke each with his companion, and the LORD hearkened and it was revealed before him and was written in the book of records before Him, for those who feared the LORD and for those who thought to honour His name. |
| 17. And they shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, for that day when **I make a treasure (Heb. S’gulah)**. And I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. | 17. And they will be before me. says the LORD of hosts, on the day when I will make up **(My) special possession (Heb. S’gulah)**, and I will have mercy upon them just as a man has mercy upon his son who has served him. |
| 18. And you shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who has not served Him. | 18. And you will again distinguish between the righteous/generous and the wicked, between those who have served before the LORD and those who have not served before Him. |
| 19. For lo, the sun comes, glowing like a furnace, and all the audacious sinners and all the perpetrators of wickedness will be stubble. And the sun that comes shall burn them up so that it will leave them neither root nor branch, says the Lord of Hosts. | 19. For behold, the day has come, burning like an oven, and all the wicked and all the evil-doers will be weak as stubble, and the day that is coming will consume them, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither son nor grandson. |
| 20. **And the sun of mercy shall rise with healing in its wings (Heb. BiK’nafeiah) for you who fear My Name. Then will you go forth and be fat as fatted calves.** | 20. **But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will arise with healing in her wings (Heb. BiK’nafeiah), and you will go out and sport like calves from the stall**. |
| 21. And you shall crush the wicked, for they will be as ash under the soles of your feet on the day that I will prepare, says the Lord of Hosts. | 21. And you will trample upon the wicked, for they will be ashes under the sole of your feet on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts. |
| 22. **Keep in remembrance the teaching of Moses, My servant-the laws and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.** | 22. **Remember the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him on Horeb for all Israel, to teach them statutes and ordinances.** |
| 23. Lo, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the **great** and awesome day of the Lord, | 23. Behold, I am sending to you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the **great** and terrible day which will come from the LORD. |
| 24. that he may turn the heart of the fathers back through the children, and the heart of the children back through their fathers - lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction. | 24. And he will turn the heart of the fathers upon the children and the heart of the children upon their fathers, lest I should reveal Myself and find the whole land in its sins, and utterly wipe it out. |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Malachi 3:4-24**

**6** **For I, the Lord, have not changed** **Although I keep back My anger for a long time, My mind has not changed from the way it was originally, to love good and to hate evil.**

**and you, the sons of Jacob** Although you die in your evil, and I have not requited the wicked in their lifetime

**you have not reached the end** You are not finished from before Me, for I have left over the souls to be requited in Gehinnom. And so did Jonathan render. And you of the House of Jacob, who think that whoever dies in this world, his verdict has already ended, that is to say, you think that My verdict has been nullified, that he will no longer be punished. Our Sages (Sotah 9a), however, explained it: א שָׁנִיתִי - I did not strike a nation and repeat a blow to it; but as for you, I have kept you up after much punishment, and My arrows are ended, but you are not ended.

**8** **Will a man rob** **Our Sages explained this as an expression of robbery, and it is an Aramaism.**

**With tithes and with the terumah levy** **The tithes and the terumah - levy that you steal from the priests and the Levites is tantamount to robbing Me.**

**9** **You are cursed with a curse** because of this iniquity, for which I send a curse into the work of your hands; but nevertheless, you rob Me.

**10** **so that there may be nourishment in My House** There shall be food accessible for My servants.

**11** **And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake** The finishing locusts and the shearing locusts, which devour the grain of your field and your vines.

**12** **a desirable land** A land that I desire.

**14** **“It is futile to serve God”** We worship Him for nothing, for we will receive no reward.

**in anxious worry** with low spirits.

**15** **And now we praise the bold transgressors, etc.** We worshipped Him and kept His charge, but now we see that the wicked are prospering - to the extent that we praise them for the wicked deeds.

**Yea, they tempt God,** saying, “Let us see what He will be able to do to us.”

**and they have, nevertheless, escaped** harm, and they have not stumbled.

**16** **Then the God-fearing men spoke, etc.** I retort upon your words then, when the wicked commit evil and the good go about in anxious worry because of Me. The God-fearing men spoke to one another not to adopt their evil deeds; and, as for Me, their words are not forgotten to Me. And although I do not hasten to visit retribution, I have hearkened and heard, and I have commanded that a book of remembrance be written for them. Their words shall be preserved for Me.

**17** **for that day when I make a treasure** that I have stored and put away, with which to pay My reward. There I will show you what the difference is between a righteous man and a wicked man.

**a treasure** a treasure; estouj, estui in Old French.

**19** **For lo, the sun comes** This instance of יוֹם is an expression of sun, for so did the Sages state that there will be no Gehinnom in the future, but the Holy One, blessed be He, will take the sun out of its case; the wicked will be punished thereby and the righteous will be healed thereby. That is the meaning of what is stated (verse 20): “And the sun of mercy shall rise for you who fear My Name, etc.”

**neither root nor branch** Neither son nor grandson

**20** **and be fat** an expression of fat, as in (Jer. 50: 11), “as you become fat, like a threshing heifer.”

**as fatted calves** [the calves] that enter the team to be fattened; kopla, cople in Old French: animals tied together.

**21** **And you shall crush** and you shall press. This is an expression of pressing, similar to (Ezek. 23:8) “they pressed their virgin breasts.”

**24** **that he may turn the heart of the fathers back** to the Holy One, blessed be He.

**through the children** lit., on. He will say to the children affectionately and appeasingly, “Go and speak to your fathers to adopt the ways of the Omnipresent.” So we explain, “and the heart of the children through their fathers.” This I heard in the name of Rabbi Menahem, but our Sages expounded upon it in tractate Eduyoth (8:7), that he will come to make peace in the world.

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| --- | --- |
| **Nazarean Talmud**  **Sidra Of B’resheet (Genesis) 26.12-35 - Y’zera Yitschaq” – “And Yitschaq Sowed”**  By: H. Em. Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham | |
| **Hakham Shaul’s School of Tosefta**  **(Luke 6:10-11)**  **And looking around at them all, he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did so. And his hand was restored and made whole like the other. And they** (the Boethusians) **were filled with madness, and talked with one another as to what they might do to Yeshua.** | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**  **(Mark 3:5-6)**  **And having looked upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their heart, he said to the man, “Stretch forth your hand;” and he stretched forth, and his hand was restored; And** the Boethusians **having gone forth, immediately, with the Herodians, were taking counsel against him how they might destroy him.** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gen. 26:12-35 | Psa. 22:1-22 | Malachi 3:4-24 | Mk 3:5-6 | Lk 6:10-11 |

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

**In the Esnoga (Synagogue)**

Hakham Tsefet depicts Yeshua as a faithfully obedient Jewish Hakham. The uses of “again” in the pericope, denotes faithful attendance. His attendance at the Esnoga is regular and faithful. Even though it appears that there are contradictions we understand that Judaism was struggling with its identity under the Roman regime. “Pax Romana” was not “peace” in the Jewish sense of the word. Roman “Pax” (peace) was peace through subjugation. The old cliché “the squeaky wheel gets the grease” did not serve to describe Pax Romana. The cliché might have read more like “the squeaky wheel gets replaced.” In other words, everything was peaceful so long as conformity was routine. When subjugation brought some form of rebellion the Roman administration quickly dealt with it by force. Our text makes somewhat of a play on these notions. The Boethusians sympathized with the Roman regime. Therefore, the contest between the Boethusians and the Master is more telluric than religious. Their use of the Torah was only for the sake of accomplishing their Epicurean agendas.

**The Rise of Rabbinic Hakhamim**

Having halakhic eyes to see the troubles which Hakham Tsefet presents as legal issues of the first century is most intriguing. What is of equal interest is the understanding of all the socio/religious views of the first century. Judaism of the first century was fragmented and fractured. Jacob Neusner tells us that there was no such thing as “normative Judaism” in the first century.[[43]](#footnote-43) Josephus observes noticeable differences between the three most popular groups.[[44]](#footnote-44) If Judaism was to survive there must be some normative unity. The rise of the Rabbinic Hakhamim was the result of Jews who were genuinely trying to draw closer to G-d and establish a normative Judaism. This legacy was initiated by Ezra and refuelled by Hillel and his talmidim. This is not to minimize the efforts of other great Jewish redeemers before or after. First century Judaism was “full of vitality, but in the end without a clear and widely accepted view of what was required of each man, apart from acceptance of the Mosaic revelation. And this could mean whatever you wanted. People would ask one teacher after another, what must I do to enter the kingdom of heaven?”[[45]](#footnote-45)

The rabbinic mission was that of bringing salvation[[46]](#footnote-46) – preservation by a normative Judaism.

**The God of our fathers raised up Yeshua, whom you had killed and hanged on a tree. This one, God has exalted to be a leader and the preservation[[47]](#footnote-47) of the** Oral Torah – Mesorah.

This verse is typically rendered as…

This One G-d has exalted to be a Ruler and Saviour to His right hand in order to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel.

The context is butchered and the “new” religion is established in just a few simple words. This translation totally misappropriates Yeshua’s mission. The fact that Yeshua is a “**leader”** (ruler) is easily demonstrated in the present pericopes of the Marcan and Lucan texts. Our translation makes it clear that Yeshua was one of the “Leaders” who sought to “preserve” (save) faithful obedience to God through an awareness of the Oral Torah – Mesorah i.e. normative Judaism.

If we define “salvation” as some ecstatic connection to the spirit world and thereby G-d we have totally missed the point. Yeshua’s mission as one of the Leaders of the Jewish people was **the preservation of a normative Jewish lifestyle which was faithful to the Torah.**

**Hillel as a Prophet**

In our previous pericope and commentary, we demonstrated that Yeshua was a Prophet “Like” Moshe Rabbenu. We must assert that the same is true of Hillel. As a Hakham, Hillel “Prophesied” the Oral Torah in the same manner as Yeshua. Yeshua and Hillel prophesied on a level above the Prophets because they prophesied from the Oral Torah. Just as the Torah is the standard for Prophecy the Oral Torah is the standard for elucidating the written Torah. We have used the word “prophecy” in relation to speaking the truth of the Torah and Oral Torah. This is NOT to rob the concept of Prophecy of the ability to see the future per se. This would evoke a question. If the Torah and Oral Torah are prophecy, can the Hakhamim such as Hillel and Yeshua foresee the future by studying the Oral Torah? Or, to state the question differently are the Torah and Oral Torah prophecy in the sense of foretelling the future? We answer with a decisive **Yes**! Therefore, the Hakhamim who devote themselves to incessant study of the Torah and Oral Torah will see the future. Therefore, by means of the Oral Torah, Hillel and Yeshua were able to picture the future of Judaism. Furthermore, they laboured to bring about a normative Judaism based on the foundation of the Torah and Oral Torah. Hillel and Yeshua desired to build Judaism on an establishment of Jewish Mesorah. In one sense, this type of Judaism had never existed before. However, since that time the dominant Judaism is the Judaism that they established. This is not to say that there are not branches, factions and diversity in present day Judaism. What has been deemed as “Orthodox” is that of Rabbinic Mesorah taught by Yeshua. These pericopes of Hakham Tsefet reflect this connection. However, it is impossible to see this connection if one takes an anti-Rabbinic posture. It is interesting to note that in the coming pericope of Hakham Tsefet’s Mishnah demonstrates that Jews from every “corner” of Eretz Yisrael came to the North (the Galil) to hear the Mesorah of Hillel and Yeshua.[[48]](#footnote-48) Why do we see these groups arrive in the Galil (North) from every part of Eretz Yisrael to question Yeshua? It would suggest that the Galil was the religious academic centre of Eretz Yisrael, while Yerushalayim was the cultic centre of the Nation. We would further opine that it was here with Yeshua and his teacher Shimon ben Hillel that the “Kallah Secessions” actually were initiated.

**Ben Elohim**

Many scholars jump at the chance to cite some passage or phrase to deify Yeshua HaMashiach. The phrase “Son of G-d” should be understood as “Son of the (a) Judge. This implies that Yeshua’s father, Yosef was a Judge on a Bet Din. However, the phrase can also mean that Yeshua was the student (talmid) of a Judge such as Shimon ben Hillel. This notion fits well with the comments we have made above. As a talmid of Hillel, Yeshua fits into this category. In a measure all Hakhamim must now function as a Judge. This is for the benefit and growth of the spiritual community. Yeshua is depicted in these pericopes as a Judge, defining matters of halakhah. As Messiah, Yeshua would accept the role of Judge very much like Hillel his Hakham.

Yeshua presents the halakhic question to the Boethusians.

**“Is it lawful** (Halakhically acceptable) **on the Sabbath, to do what is beneficial, or to do evil** (empty – Heb Ra)**? To save** (preserve) **life, or to destroy it?”**

**Peroration**

The failure of the Boethusians to answer the question means they acquiesce. Likewise, Yeshua’s healing of the man with the withered hand demonstrates his decisive Halakhah. Therefore, we gather that Yeshua decided with true Rabbinic Hokhmah and determined that **the Torah is a means to live by**.

**Determinate Halakhah**

**As Nazarean Jews we must state that the Torah is a means to Live by! However, to fully understand these matters we emphatically assert that the Nazarean Jew must seek the council of a Hakham in such matters before taking any course of action!**

אמן ואמן סלה

**Some Questions to Ponder:**

1. From all the readings for this week, which particular verse or passage caught your attention and fired your heart and imagination?
2. In your opinion and taking into consideration all of the above readings for this Sabbath, what is the prophetic message (the idea that encapsulates all the Scripture passages read) for this week.

**Blessing After Torah Study**

**Barúch Atáh Adonai, Elohénu Meléch HaOlám,**

**Ashér Natán Lánu Torát Emét, V'Chayéi Olám Natá B'Tochénu.**

**Barúch Atáh Adonái, Notén HaToráh. Amen!**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem our GOD, King of the universe,**

**Who has given us a teaching of truth, implanting within us eternal life.**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**“Now unto Him who is able to preserve you faultless, and spotless, and to establish you without a blemish,**

**before His majesty, with joy, [namely,] the only one GOD, our Deliverer, by means of Yeshua the Messiah our Master, be praise, and dominion, and honor, and majesty, both now and in all ages. Amen!”**

**Shabbat Pesach – First Passover Sabbath is coming soon.**

**Note: With the beginning of the month of Nisan, and with the reading of Shabbat “HaGadol”, at this time we make our last request for our collection for the work of HaShem, most blessed be He. The entire collection will be devoted to finance this work and resources needed, before we sit at our tables to celebrate Pesach. Your donations are much appreciated and should be sent via PayPal to:** [**ravybh@bigpond.com**](mailto:ravybh@bigpond.com) **. Many thanks for your generosity!**

**Coming Festivals:**

**Ta'anit B'khorim (Fast of the First Borns) – Daylight fast**

**Nisan 14 (Wednesday 5th of April, 2023)**

All firstborns should fast all day in remembrance of the plague of the death of the firstborns in Egypt. Also, we should remember and meditate on the implications of what it means that we are a priesthood of the firstborn.

**Finish eating Chametz:**

Wednesday April 5th – 12:00 PM

**Burn Hametz**

Wednesday April 5th – 12:45 PM

**Shabbat Pesach First Intermediate Day**

**Nisan 14 (Wednesday Evening April 5, 2023) – First Seder**

**Family Passover**

**Nisan 15 (Thursday Evening April 6, 2023) – Second Seder**

**Community Passover**

**Pesach- Passover**

**JSOR 2023 Passover guide:** <https://www.kashrut.com/Passover/pdf/JSOR_passover_2023_bulletin.pdf>

**Wednesday Evening the 5th of April through Thursday Evening the 13th of April 2023.**

**For further information see:**

[**http://www.betemunah.org/chametz.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/chametz.html) **&** [**http://www.betemunah.org/passover.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/passover.html)

[**http://www.betemunah.org/chronology.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/chronology.html) **&** [**http://www.betemunah.org/redemption.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/redemption.html)

[**http://www.betemunah.org/haggada.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/haggada.html) **&** [**http://www.betemunah.org/pcustoms.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/pcustoms.html)

**&** [**http://www.betemunah.org/seventh.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/seventh.html)

**P.S.**

We suggest that all of our Talmidim, associated fellowships and Congregations print out enough copies of our Passover Haggada [**http://www.betemunah.org**](http://www.betemunah.org/)**/haggada.docx**. This way we will all be Ha-Shem willing, on the same page.

**Pesach - Shabbat of the Intermediate Days**

**Morning Service**

**Nisan 17 (Shabbat Morning April 8, 2023)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“V’hayah HaYom Hazeh”** | Reader 1 – Shemot 12:14-16 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 27:1-4 |
| **“And will be this the day”** | Reader 2 – Shemot 12:17-20 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 27:5-8 |
| **“Y este día os ha de ser”** | Reader 3 – Shemot 12:21-24 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 27:9-12 |
|  | Reader 4 – Shemot 12:25-28 |  |
| Shemot (Exo.) 12:14-51  B’Midbar (Num) 28:16-25 | Reader 5 – Shemot 12:29-36 | **Monday & Thursday**  **Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Shemot 12:37-42 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 27:1-4 |
| Ashlamatah: Josh. 5:2 – 6:1 + 27 | Reader 7 – Shemot 12:43-51 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 27:5-8 |
|  | Maftir – B’Midbar 28:16-25 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 27:9-12 |
| N.C.: 1 Corinthians 1:1 – 2:16 &  Revelation 2:1-7 | Josh. 5:2 – 6:1 + 27 |  |



**Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

**Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

**Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham**

Edited by His Honor Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham

A special thank you to HH Giberet Giborah bat Sarah for her diligence in proof-reading every week

1. II Shmuel (Samuel) 16:5-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Megillah 13a [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Esther 2:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Maaseh Rav no. 250 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Esther 1:1-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 29:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. see v. 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Euphemism for ‘Israel’. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Achashverosh. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. As only those in Susa were invited. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Set up by Nebuchadnezzar. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. By delivering them, since they really deserved to be exterminated. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Lit., ‘they did only for appearance’. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Lamentations 3:33. [ מלבו is rendered ‘without heart’, מ being taken as partitive: G-d does not afflict him who sins without intent (Maharsha).] [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Esther 1:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Lit., ‘he who was worthy’. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Amalekites are any people who try to destroy Jews even if they are killed themselves – like suicide bombers in Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. King Saul was a Benjamite. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Esther 2:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. And not mention three names only. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Lit., ‘crowned with his nimus’. The word nimus means in the Talmud ‘manner’, or ‘way’ (\*\*), hence bearing, character. Rashi translates ‘with his names’ (as just explained) as if ‘nimus’ here = Greek \*\*. [Var. lec. add ‘as an ornament’, כעדי. V. Aruch who explains: He was adorned with the precepts of the Law as with an ornament. Yehudi as applied to Mordecai then does not denote a tribal name but is an epithet of distinction.] [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. I.e., derogatory. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Daniel 3:12. Though Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to whom he refers were not of the tribe of Judah. V. Sanh. 93 b (Tosaf.). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Genesis 41:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. There was a Tarsus in Cilicia and in Cappodocia and it is not certain which is referred to. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Having always to dance attendance on Achashverosh. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The meeting place of the Sanhedrin in the Temple at Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. V. Sanh. 17a. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. So that neither of us can do duty for both. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. E.V., ‘it was found’. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Hat worn by orthodox Jews. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Bamidbar (Numbers) 15:37ff [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Esther 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Radal emends: If there is no Israel, why should there be a Passover? [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The word wa-ya’abor (went his way), which literally means ‘passed’, and can also be rendered ‘transgressed’. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Esther 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Esther 6:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Esther 7:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Esther 7:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Esther 7:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Esther 2:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Jacob Neusner, First-century Judaism in crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the renaissance of Torah, Ktav Pub Inc., 1982 p. 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Cf. **Wars 2:164 -166** [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Jacob Neusner, First-century Judaism in crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the renaissance of Torah, Ktav Pub Inc., 1982 p. 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Our use of “salvation” here in no way reflects the traditional use of the word. We use “salvation” as a description of the mission of preserving the Jewish way of life. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 7:1004 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. The order of the places mentioned in the text is points of the compass. Jerusalem was situated to the most north of Judea; Idumea lied to the south of Judea, “beyond the Jordan” lies to the east of Judea, and Tyre and Sidon lie to the west of Judea. Verse eight therefore could be summarized as saying that congregations of people from the four corners of the Land of Israel (Palestine) together with congregations of men from Judea and the Galil had come to see the Master based on the information that “great things he was doing.” [↑](#footnote-ref-48)