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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**  **© 2022**  [**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** |
| **Tebet 7, 5783 / December 30-31 2022** | **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)

**Roll of Honor:**

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

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David and beloved wife HH Giberet Batsheva bat Sarah

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah

His Honor Paqid Adon David ben Abraham

His Honor Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Karmela bat Sarah

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His Excellency Adon Yehoshua ben Abraham and beloved wife HE Giberet Rut bat Sarah

His Excellency Adon Michael ben Yosef and beloved wife HE Giberet Sheba bat Sarah

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His Excellency Adon Robert Dick & beloved wife HE Giberet Cobena Dick

His Excellency Adon Ovadya ben Abraham and beloved wife HE Giberet Mirit bat Sarah

His Excellency Adon Brad Gaskill and beloved wife Cynthia Gaskill

His Excellency Adon Shlomoh ben Abraham

His Excellency Adon Ya’aqob ben David

**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 us about the contents and commentary of the weekly Torah Seder and allied topics**.

Be sure to check both websites for the latest updates and newest posts about Torah and the current state of affairs of our world before the Great and coming day of the return of the Messiah and the Tikun and restoration following.

**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** [**chozenppl@gmail.com**](mailto:chozenppl@gmail.com) **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**Blessings Before Torah Study**

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

**Please Ha-Shem, our GOD, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people Israel. May we and our offspring, and our offspring's offspring, and all the offspring of Your people, the House of Israel, may we all, together, know Your Name and study Your Torah for the sake of fulfilling Your delight. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel. Amen!**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our GOD, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations, and gave us the Torah. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**Ha-Shem spoke to Moses, explaining a Commandment. "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and teach them the following Commandment: This is how you should bless the Children of Israel. Say to the Children of Israel:**

**May Ha-Shem bless you and keep watch over you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem make His Presence enlighten you, and may He be kind to you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem bestow favor on you and grant you peace. – Amen!**

**This way, the priests will link My Name with the Israelites, and I will bless them."**

**These are the Laws for which the Torah did not mandate specific amounts: How much growing produce must be left in the corner of the field for the poor; how much of the first fruits must be offered at the Holy Temple; how much one must bring as an offering when one visits the Holy Temple three times a year; how much one must do when performing acts of kindness; and there is no maximum amount of Torah that a person must study.**

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

We pray for our beloved Hakham His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. **Mi Sheberach**…He who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David, and Solomon, may He bless and heal the sick person HE Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai, May the Holy One, Blessed is He, be filled with compassion for him to restore his health, to heal him, to strengthen him, and to revivify him. And may He send him speedily a complete recovery from heaven, among the other sick people of Yisrael, a recovery of the body and a recovery of the spirit, swiftly and soon, and we will say amen ve amen!

We pray for Her Honor Giberet Zahavah bat Sarah, the beloved wife of His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Haggai, who is struggling with health issues. Mi Sheberach – He Who blessed our holy and pure Matriarchs, Sarah, Ribkah, Rachel and Leah, bless Her Honor Giberet Zahavah bat Sarah and send her a complete recovery and strengthening of body and soul. Please G-d heal her, please. Please G-d heal her, please. Please G-d heal her, please. Cure her, strengthen her, make her healthy and return her to her original strength, together with all the sick of Yisrael. And may it be so willed, and we will say, Amen ve 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.

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **ושר' אשת** |  |  |
| **“VaSara Ashate”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 16:1-6 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 17:5-7 |
| **“And Sara, Abram’s wife”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 16:7-11 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 17:8-10 |
| **“y esposa del Abram”** | Reader 3 – B’resheet 16:12-16 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 17:11-13 |
| B’resheet (Genesis) 16:1- 17:27 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 17:1-8 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 54:1-10 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 17:9-14 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 17:5-7 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 13:1 – 14:7 | Reader 6 – B’resheet 17:15-22 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 17:8-10 |
| N.C.: Mark 1:35-39  Luke 4:42-44 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 17:23-27 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 17:11-13 |
|  | Maftir – B’resheet 17:25-27  Isaiah 54:1-10 |  |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* Hagar and Ishmael – Genesis 16:1-16
* The Covenant of Abraham – Genesis 17:1-27

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’resheet (Genesis) 16:1 – 17:27**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not borne to him, and she had an Egyptian handmaid named Hagar. | 1. But Sara, the wife of Abram, had not borne to him. But he had a handmaid, a Mizreitha, and her name was Hagar, a daughter of Pharoh, whom he gave to him as a handmaid at the time that he received her, being struck by the Word from before the LORD. |
| 2. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing; please come to my handmaid; perhaps I will be built up from her." And Abram hearkened to Sarai's voice. | 2. And Sara said to Abram, Behold, now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing, go to my handmaid and set her free; perhaps I may be built by her. And Abram hearkened to the word of Sara. |
| 3. So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, at the end of ten years of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, and she gave her to Abram her husband for a wife. | 3. And Sara the wife of Abram took Hagar the Mizreitha handmaid, when Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Kenaan, and set her free, and gave her to Abram her husband to wife. |
| 4. And he came to Hagar, and she conceived, and she saw that she was pregnant, and her mistress became unimportant in her eyes. | 4. And he went unto Hagar, and she conceived; and she saw that she had conceived, and the honour of her mistress was despised in her eyes. |
| 5. And Sarai said to Abram, "May my injustice be upon you! I gave my handmaid into your bosom, and she saw that she had become pregnant, and I became unimportant in her eyes. May the Lord judge between me and you!" | 5. And Sara said to Abram, All my affliction is from you. Being secure that you would do me justice, I left the land and house of my father, and came up with you to a foreign land; and forasmuch as I was not able to become a mother, I set free my handmaid, and gave her to lie in your bosom; and she sees that she had conceived, and my honour is despised before her. But now is my affliction manifest before the LORD, who will spread peace between me and you, and the land will be replenished from us, nor will we need the help of the progeny of Hagar the daughter of Pharoh bar Nimrod, who threw you into the furnace of fire.  JERUSALEM: And Sara said, My judgment and my affliction are delivered into your hand. I left the house of my birth, and the house of my father, and came with you in the faith of the Heavens. I have gone in with you before kings; before Pharoh King of Mizraim, and before Avimelek king of the Philistaee; and I have said of you, he is my brother, so that they might not kill you. And when I saw that I was not made fruitful, I took Hagar the Mizreitha, my handmaid, and gave her to you to wife, and said, She will bring forth, and I will bring up whom she may bear, that I may be built, be it only from her. But now seeing that she has conceived, my honour is contemned and despised in her sight. Now may the LORD appear, and judge between me and you, and fulfil mercies upon me and you, and spread His peace between me and you, and replenish the world from me and from you, that we may not heed the son of Hagar the Mizreitha handmaid, who is of the children of the people who cast you into the burning furnace of the Kasdin. |
| 6. And Abram said to Sarai, "Here is your handmaid in your hand; do to her that which is proper in your eyes." And Sarai afflicted her, and she fled from before her. | 6. And Abram said to Sara, Behold, your handmaid is under your authority: do to her what is right in your eyes. And Sara afflicted her, and she escaped from before her. |
| 7. And an angel of the Lord found her by a water fountain in the desert, by the fountain on the road to Shur. | 7. **And the Angel of the LORD found her at the fountain of waters in the desert; at the fountain of waters which is in the way to Chagra.**  **JERUSALEM: Chalitza.** |
| 8. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where are you coming from, and where are you going to?" And she said, "From before Sarai my mistress, I am fleeing." | 8. And He said, Hagar, handmaid of Sara, From where do you come, and to where are you going? And she said, From before Sara my mistress I have escaped. |
| 9. And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and allow yourself to be afflicted under her hands." | 9. And the Angel of the LORD said to her, Return to your mistress, and be subject under her hand. |
| 10. And the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your seed, and it will not be counted for abundance." | 10. And the Angel of the LORD said to her, Multiplying I will multiply your sons, and they will not be numbered for multitude. |
| 11. And the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard your affliction. | 11. And the Angel of the LORD said to her, Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son, and you will call his name Ishmael, because your affliction is revealed before the LORD. |
| 12. And he will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be upon all, and everyone's hand upon him, and before all his brothers he will dwell." | 12. And he will be like the wild ass among men: his hands will take vengeance of his adversaries, and the hands of his adversaries will be put forth to do him evil; and in the presence of all his brethren will he be commingled, (yitharbeb, Arabized,) and shall dwell. |
| 13. And she called the name of the Lord, Who had spoken to her, "You are the God of seeing," because she said, "Have I seen[him]here also after I have seen?" | 13. And she gave thanks before the LORD whose Word spoke to her, and thus said, You are He who lives and are eternal; who sees, but are not seen! for she said, For, behold, here is revealed the glory of the Shekina of the LORD after a vision.  JERUSALEM: And Hagar gave thanks, and prayed in the Name of the Word of the LORD, who had been manifested to her, saying, Blessed be You, Elohim, the Living One of all Ages, who has looked upon my affliction. For she said,**Behold, You are manifested also unto me, even as You were manifested to Sara my mistress.** |
| 14. Therefore the well was called Be'er Lachai Ro'i; behold it is between Kadesh and between Bered. | 14. Wherefore she called the well, The Well at which the Living and Eternal One was revealed; and, behold, it is situated between Rekam and Chalutsa. |
| 15. And Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar had borne, Ishmael. | 15. And Hagar bare Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar bare, Ishmael. |
| 16. And Abram was eighty- six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. | 16. And Abram was the son of eighty-six years when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. |
| **Chapter 17** |  |
| 1. And Abram was ninety-nine years old, and God appeared to Abram, and He said to him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me and be perfect. | 1. And Abram was the son of ninety and nine years, and the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am El Shadai; serve before Me and be perfect (shelim) in your flesh. |
| 2. And I will place **My covenant between Me and between you**, and I will multiply you very greatly." | 2. And I will set **My covenant between My Word and you**, and will multiply you very greatly. |
| 3. And Abram fell upon his face, and God spoke with him, saying, | 3. And because Abram was not circumcised, he was not able to stand, but he bowed himself upon his face; and the LORD spoke with him, saying, |
| 4. "As for Me, behold My covenant is with you, and you shall become the father of a multitude of nations. | 4. Behold, I have confirmed (or divided) My covenant with you; and you will be the father of many peoples. |
| 5. And your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. | 5. And your name will be no more called Abram, but Abraham will be your name, because to be the father of a great multitude of peoples have I appointed you. |
| 6. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings will emerge from you. | 6. And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and will set you for congregations; and kings ruling over peoples will come forth from you. |
| 7. And I will establish **My covenant between Me and between you** and between your seed after you **throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant,** to be to you for a God and to your seed after you. | 7. And I have established **My covenant between My Word and you**, and your sons after you in their generations, **for an everlasting covenant**, to be a God to you and to your sons after you. |
| 8. And I will give you and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, the entire land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be to them for a God." | 8. And I will give to you and to your sons after you the land of your habitation, all the land of Kenaan, for an everlasting possession: and I will be to them Elohim. |
| 9. And God said to Abraham, "And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. | 9. And the LORD said to Abraham, And you will observe My covenant, you and your sons after you in their generations. |
| 10. **This is My covenant, which you shall observe between Me and between you and between your seed after you, that every male among you be circumcised.** | 10. **This is My covenant, that you willll observe between My Word and you, and your sons after you:--Every male of you being circumcised, though he have not a father to circumcise him.** |
| 11. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and **it shall be as the sign of a covenant between Me and between you.** | 11. And you will circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, **as a sign of the covenant between My Word and you.** |
| 12. And at the age of eight days, every male shall be circumcised to you throughout your generations, one that is born in the house, or one that is purchased with money, from any foreigner, who is not of your seed. | 12. And the son of eight days will be circumcised among you, every male in your generations; from him who is brought up in your house, or bought with your silver, unto every son of the peoples who is not of you. |
| 13. Those born in the house and those purchased for money shall be circumcised, and **My covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant.** | 13. He who is circumcised will circumcise him who is brought up among you, or bought with your silver; and it will be **My covenant in your flesh for a covenant forever.** |
| 14. And an uncircumcised male, who will not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin-that soul will be cut off from its people; he has broken My covenant." | 14. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, unless he have someone to circumcise him, that man will be cut off from his people; he has made My covenant to pass away. |
| 15. And God said to Abraham, "Your wife Sarai-you shall not call her name Sarai, for Sarah is her name. | 15. And the LORD said to Abraham, The name of Sara your wife will be no more called Sara; for Sarah will be her name. |
| 16. And I will bless her, and I will give you a son from her, and I will bless her, and she will become [a mother of] nations; kings of nations will be from her." | 16. And I will bless in her body, and will also give from her a son to you, and I will bless, him, and he will be for assemblies, and kings ruling over nations will be from her. |
| 17. And Abraham fell on his face and rejoiced, and he said to himself, "Will[a child]be born to one who is a hundred years old, and will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?" | 17. And Abraham fell on his face, and wondered, and said in his heart, Will the son of a hundred years have progeny, and Sarah, the daughter of ninety years, bear a child? |
| 18. And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael will live before You!" | 18. And Abraham said before the LORD, May not Ishmael be established, and serve before You? |
| 19. And God said, "Indeed, your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him **as an everlasting covenant for his seed after him.** | 19. And the LORD said, In truth Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you will call his name Izhak; and with him I will confirm My covenant **for an everlasting covenant to his sons after him.** |
| 20. And regarding Ishmael, I have heard you; behold I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitful, and I will multiply him exceedingly; he will beget twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. | 20. And concerning Ishmael I have heard your prayer. Behold, I have blessed him; and I will spread him abroad, and multiply him very greatly. Twelve princes will he beget, and I will give him to be a great people. |
| 21. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year." | 21. But My covenant will I establish with Izhak, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time in the year after. |
| 22. And He finished speaking with him, and God went up from above Abraham. | 22. And He ceased speaking with him; and the Glory of the LORD ascended from Abraham. |
| 23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house and all those purchased with his money, **every male of the people of Abraham's household,** and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin **on that very day, as God had spoken with him**. | 23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all brought up in his house, and all bought with money, **every male among the household people of Abraham**, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin **in the same day in which the LORD spoke with him.** |
| 24. And Abraham was ninety-nine years old, when he was circumcised of the flesh of his foreskin. | 24. And Abraham was the son of ninety and nine years when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin. |
| 25. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised of the flesh of his foreskin. | 25. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he circumcised the foreskin of his flesh. |
| 26. On that very day, Abraham was circumcised, and[so was]Ishmael his son. | 26. In the same day, in the fourteenth year, was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. |
| 27. **And all the people of his household**, those born in his house and those bought with money from foreigners, were circumcised with him. | 27. And **every man** of his house, the house-trained, and the purchased with money of the sons of the people, was circumcised with him. |

**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. **107-153** | **Ramban: Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated  by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel  Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1971) pp. **211-225** |

**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.

**Editors note:** A deeper look into

**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.

**Analogy noun[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. A similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar.
2. A comparison based on such similarity.
3. Correspondence in function or position between organs of dissimilar evolutionary origin or structure.

One of the strongest ways to make a point in any discussion. Rabbis and Sages have used this method to illustrate a teaching since it is so effective. One may not grasp the meaning of a pasuk in the Tanak but if he sees it in a different manner more related to his environmental influences then the meaning will become clearer. I found this link illustrating **Gezerah shavah.**

[**https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah\_Beitzah.1.6?ven=Open\_Mishnah&lang=bi**](https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Beitzah.1.6?ven=Open_Mishnah&lang=bi)

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎** **B’resheet (Genesis) 16:1 - 17:27‎**

**1 an Egyptian handmaid** She was Pharaoh’s daughter. When he (Pharaoh) saw the miracles that were wrought for Sarah, he said, “It is better that my daughter be a handmaid in this household, than a mistress in another household.”- [from Gen. Rabbah 45:1]

**2 perhaps I will be built up from her** This teaches that whoever has no children is not built up but demolished.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:2]

**I will be built up from her** in the merit that I will bring my rival into my house.-[from Gen. Rabbah 71:7, Aggadath Bereishith 52]

**to Sarai’s voice** to the Divine Spirit within her.- [from Gen. Rabbah 45:2]

**3 So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took** She took her with words, “You are fortunate that you have merited to cleave to a holy body such as this one.”-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:3]

**at the end of ten years** This is the allotted time for a woman who has lived ten years with her husband and has not borne children to him, when he is obligated to marry another.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:3]

**of Abram’s dwelling** This tells us that the time they dwelled outside the Land does not count in the number [ten years], because it was not said to him, and I will make you into a great nation, [i.e., this promise would not be fulfilled] until he would come to the Land of Israel.-[from above source]

**4 And he came to Hagar,** and she conceived from the first union.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:4]

**and her mistress became unimportant in her eyes** She said, “This Sarai her conduct in secret is not like her conduct in public. She shows herself as if she is a righteous woman, but she is not a righteous woman, for she did not merit to conceive all these years, whereas I have conceived from the first union.”-[from aforementioned source]

**5 May my injustice be upon you** [For] the injustice that has been done to me, I lay the punishment upon you. When you prayed to God, “What will You give me, since I am going childless?” you prayed only for yourself, whereas you should have prayed for both of us, and I would have been remembered with you. Moreover, you are stealing from me your [protective] words, for you hear my degradation, and you remain silent (i.e., you are depriving me of the words you should have spoken to Hagar to reprimand her on my behalf).-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:5]

**I gave my handmaid, etc. between me and you** Every בֵינֶיךָ in Scripture is spelled defectively (without the second yud), but this one is spelled plene. It may thus also be read וּבֵינַיִךְ (second person feminine), for she cast an evil eye on Hagar’s pregnancy, and she miscarried her fetus. That is why the angel said to Hagar, “Behold, you will conceive.” But was she not already pregnant? Yet he announces to her that she will conceive? But this teaches that she miscarried her first pregnancy.- [from Gen. Rabbah 45:5]

**6 And Sarai afflicted her** She enslaved her harshly.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:6]

**8 where are you coming from** [meaning]: “Where have you come from?” He knew [where she was coming from] but he wished to give her an opening to commence speaking with her. Now the אֵי מִזֶה [lit. where from this] means: “Where is the place about which you can say, ‘From this place I have come.’”

**9 And the angel of the Lord said to her, etc**. For each statement, another angel was sent to her. Therefore, the word מַלְאָךְ , angel, is used with each statement.- [from Gen. Rabbah 45:7]

**11 Behold, you will conceive** When you return, you will conceive, like (Jud. 13:5): Behold you shall conceive, stated concerning the wife of Manoah.

**and bear a son** - וְיֽלַדְתְּ is וְיוֹלֶדֶת , and similar to this (Jer. 22:23): You, who abide (ישַׁבְתְּ) in the Lebanon, (יוֹשֶׁבֶת) who nest (מְקוּנַנְתְּ) in the cedars [like, מְקוֹנֶנֶת ].

**and you shall name him** This is the imperative [feminine], as the text states for the masculine: (below 17:19): “and you shall name him (וְקָראתָ אֶת שְׁמוֹ) Isaac.”

**12 A wild donkey of a man** who loves the wilderness to hunt beasts, as it is written (below 21:20f): “And he was an archer; and he dwelt in the desert of Paran.”

**his hand will be upon all** [He will be] a bandit.-[from Tan. Shemot]

**and everyone’s hand upon him** Everyone will hate him and attack him.

**and before all his brothers he will dwell** for his seed will be numerous.

**13 You are the God of seeing -** רֳאִי is vowelized with a “chataf kamatz” because it is a noun, i.e., the God of seeing, Who sees the humiliation of the humiliated.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:10] (Other editions: Another explanation: “You are the God of seeing” meaning that He sees all, but no one sees Him. Targum Jonathan).

**Have I seen here also** - הֲגַם הֲלֽם is an expression of wonderment. Would I have thought that even here in the desert I would see the emissary of the Omnipresent after I had seen them in the house of Abraham, where I was accustomed to seeing angels? And you should know that she was accustomed to seeing them, because Manoah saw the angel once and said, “We will surely die,” and this one saw four, one after the other, and she was not frightened.-[from Gen. Rabbah 45:7]

**14 Be’er Lachai Ro’i** As the Targum renders: a well upon which the living angel appeared.

**15 and Abram named, etc**. Although Abram had not heard the words of the angel, who said, “And you shall name him Ishmael,” the Holy Spirit rested upon him, and he called him Ishmael.-[from Bereishith Rabbathi, also Mid. Aggadah]

**16 And Abram was eighty-six years old, etc**. This was written in praise of Ishmael, to let us know that he was thirteen years old when he was circumcised, and he did not object.-[Mid. Aggadah]

**Chapter 17**

**1 I am the Almighty God** Heb. שַׁדַי —I am He Whose Godliness suffices for every creature. [ שֶׁ that, דַי is sufficient]. Therefore, walk before Me, and I will be your God and your Protector, and wherever it (this name) appears in Scripture, it means “His sufficiency,” but each one is [to be interpreted] according to the context.-[from Gen. Rabbah 47:3]

**walk before Me** As the Targum renders: “Serve Me, cleave to My service.”

**and be perfect** This too is one command following another command: be perfect in all My trials (Mid. Ps. 119:3), i.e., “Walk before Me” with faith and honesty, and also be perfect in all My trials. [Mizrachi] According to its midrashic interpretation, walk before Me refers to the commandment of circumcision, and thereby, you will be perfect, for as long as the foreskin is upon you, I consider you imperfect (Gen. Rabbah 46:1). Another explanation: “and be perfect”-Now you are missing [control over] five organs: two eyes, two ears, and the male organ. I will add a letter to your name, and the numerical value of your letters [of your name] will be 248, corresponding to the number of your organs (Tan. Lech Lecha 16, Ned. 32b).

**2 And I will place My covenant** A covenant of love and the covenant of the land, to give it to you as a heritage through [your fulfillment of] this commandment.-[from Gen. Rabbah 46:9]

**3 And Abram fell upon his face** from fear of the Shechinah, for as long as he was uncircumcised, he did not have the strength to stand when the Divine Presence stood over him, and that is what is said concerning Balaam (Num. 24:4): “who falls and his eyes are open” (Num. Rabbah 12:8). I found this in the Baraitha of Rabbi Eliezer (Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 29).

**5 the father of a multitude of nations** - אַב הֲמוֹן is an acrostic of his name [i.e., - אב ר הם ]. (Gen. Rabbah 46:7). The “resh” that was in it [his name] originally, denoting that he was the father only of Aram, which was his native place, whereas now [he became] the father of the whole world (Ber. 13a): nevertheless the “resh” that was there originally was not moved from its place. For even the “yud” in Sarai’s name complained to the Shechinah until it was added to Joshua, as it is said: (Num. 13:16): “and Moses called Hosea [ הוֹשֵׁעַ ] the son of Nun, Joshua [ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ].”- [from Gen. Rabbah 47:1]

**6 and I will make you into nations** [This refers to] Israel and Edom, for he already had Ishmael, and He would therefore not be informing him about him.

**7 And I will establish My covenant** And what is that covenant? To be to you for a God.

**8 for an everlasting possession** And there I will be to you for a God (Gen. Rabbah 46:9), but if one dwells outside the Holy Land, it is as though he has no God (Keth. 110b).

**9 And you** Heb. וְאַתָּה . This “vav” connects [this verse] to the preceding matter. “As for Me, behold My covenant is with you,” and you must be careful to observe it. Now what does its observance entail? “This is My covenant, which you shall observe...that every male among you be circumcised.”

**10 between Me and you** those living now.

**and between your seed** who are destined to be born.

**be circumcised** Heb. הִמוֹל , is like לְהִמוֹל , to circumcise [the infinitive], as you might עֲשוֹת in place לַעֲשוֹת , to do.

**11 And you shall circumcise** - וּנְמַלְתֶּם is like וּמַלְתֶּם , and the “nun” is superfluous, a radical that sometimes appears in it, like the “nun” of נוֹשֵׁךְ and the “nun” of נוֹשֵׂא וּנְמַלְתֶּם has the same form as וּנְשָׂאתֶם , (i.e., the Kal form). But יִמוֹל is in the passive form (the Nifal), like יֵעָשֶׂה (it will be done) יֵאָכֵל (it will be eaten).

**12 one that is born in the house** whom the maidservant bore in the house.

**one that is purchased with money** whom he bought after he was born.

**13 Those born in the house... shall be circumcised** Here Scripture repeated it [the commandment to circumcise a slave born in the house;] but did not state [that it is to be] on the eighth day, to teach you that there is a slave born in the house who is circumcised after eight days [other editions: at the age of one day], as is delineated in Tractate Shabbath (135b).

**14 And an uncircumcised male** Here Scripture teaches that circumcision is in that place that distinguishes between male and female.

**who will not circumcise** When he reaches the age when he becomes liable for punishment, then [his soul] will be cut off (Shab. 133b), but his father [who does not circumcise him] is not punishable by “kareth” (spiritual excision), but is guilty of transgressing a positive commandment (Yeb. 70b).

**that soul will be cut off** He goes childless (Yeb. 55a) and dies prematurely (Moed Katan 28a).

**15 you shall not call her name Sarai** which means “my princess,” for me, but not for others. But Sarah, in an unqualified sense, shall be her name, that she will be a princess over all.-[from Ber. 13a]

**16 And I will bless her** And what is the blessing? That she returned to her youth, as it is said (below 18:12): “My skin has become smooth.”- [from B.M. 87a]

**and I will bless her** with breast feeding, when she required it, on the day of Isaac’s feast, for people were murmuring against them, that they had brought a foundling from the street and were saying, “He is our son.” So each one brought her child with her, but not her wet nurse, and she (Sarah) nursed them all. That is what is said: (below 21:7): “Sarah has nursed children.” Gen. Rabbah (47:2) alludes slightly to this.-[from B.M. 87a]

**17 And Abraham fell on his face and rejoiced** Heb. וַיִצְחָק Onkelos renders this as an expression of joy, וַחֲדִי “and he rejoiced,” but the one [ וַתִצְחָק ] in the case of Sarah (below 18:12) [he renders] as an expression of laughter. You learn that Abraham believed and rejoiced, but Sarah did not believe and ridiculed, and for this reason, the Holy One, blessed be He, was angry with Sarah, but was not angry with Abraham.

**Will [a child] be born to on, etc.** There are questions which are positive assertions, like (I Sam. 2:27): הֲנִגְלה נִגְלֵיתִי , “Did I appear?” [meaning: “of course I appeared!”]; (II Sam. 15:27): הֲרֽאֶה אַתָּה , “Do you see?” [meaning: “of course you see!”] This too is a positive assertion, and so did he say to himself, “Was such kindness done to anyone else, that the Holy One, blessed be He, is doing for me?”

**and will Sarah, who is ninety years old** Shall she be worthy of giving birth? Now although the first generations begot children at the age of five hundred, in Abraham’s time, the years were already lessened, and weakness had come to the world. Go out and learn this from the ten generations from Noah to Abraham, who hastened to beget children at the age of sixty and seventy.

**18 If only Ishmael will live** If only Ishmael will live! I do not deserve to receive such a reward as this.

**will live before You** [This means]: [“Let him] live in fear of You,” as in (verse 1): “Walk before Me,” [which Onkelos renders:] “Serve Me.” [following Targum Jonathan]

**19 Indeed** - אֲבָל is an expression of a confirmation of a statement, and likewise (below 42:21): “Indeed (אַבָל) , we are guilty;” (II Kings 4:14): “Indeed (אַבָל) , she has no son.”-[from Targumim]

**and you shall name him Isaac** Heb. יִצְחָק , because of the rejoicing (צְחוֹק) (Mid. Chaseroth v’Yetheroth. And some say: because of the ten (י) trials, and Sarah’s ninety (צ) years, and the eighth (ח) day on which he was circumcised, and Abraham’s hundred (ק) years. (Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 32). (Other editions: “And My covenant.” Why is this written? Is it not already written (verse 9): “And you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed, etc.?” But because He said (verse 7): “And I will establish, etc.,” one might think that the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah are included in the establishment [of the covenant]. Therefore, Scripture states: “And I will establish My covenant with him,” and not with others. Now, why does it say [again in verse 21]: “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac?” This teaches us that he was holy from the womb. Another explanation [for the repetition of verse 19]: Said Rabbi Abba: Scripture here derives an a fortiori conclusion regarding the son of the mistress from [what is written regarding] the son of the handmaid. It is written here: “Behold I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitful, and I will multiply him.” This refers to Ishmael. How much more so, “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac!” (Gen. Rabbah 47:5).

**My covenant** The covenant of circumcision shall be given over [only] to the seed of Isaac. See Sanh. 59.

**20 twelve princes** Heb. נְשִׂיאִים . They will disappear like clouds, as (Prov. 25:14): Clouds (נְשִׂיאִים) and wind.-[from Gen. Rabbah 47:5]

**22 from above Abraham** This is a euphemism used in reference to the Shechinah, and we learn **that the righteous are the chariot of the Omnipresent.**-[from Gen. Rabbah 47:6, 82:6]

**23 on that very day** **On the very day that he was commanded (Mid. Ps. 112:2), during the day and not at night. He was afraid neither of the heathens nor of the scorners. [He circumcised in the light of day] so that his enemies and his contemporaries would not say, “Had we seen him, we would not have allowed him to circumcise and to fulfill the commandment of the Omnipresent” (Gen. Rabbah 47:9).**

**and he circumcised** Heb. וַיָמָל , an expression in the וַיִפְעַל form, (the active [kal] form.)

**24 when he was circumcised** Heb. בְּהִמֽלוֹ , when it was done to him, like (above 2:4): “when they were created (בְּהִבָּרְאָם) .”

**25 when he was circumcised** of the flesh of his foreskin Concerning Abraham, it does not say אֵת , because he was lacking only the severing of the flesh, because it had already been flattened out by intercourse, but Ishmael, who was a youth, required that the foreskin be severed and the corona be uncovered. Therefore, in his case, it is אֵת . Gen. Rabbah (47:8).

**26 On that very day** when Abraham reached the age of ninety-nine and Ishmael [reached the age of] thirteen, “Abraham was circumcised, and [so was] Ishmael his son.”

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) ‎13:1-6 + 14:1-7**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| **Psalms 13** |  |
| 1. To the conductor, a song of David. | 1. For praise, a hymn of David. |
| 2. How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? | 2. How long, O Lord, will You neglect me forever? How long will You hide the splendour of Your face from me? |
| 3. How long will I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart by day; how long will my enemy have the upper hand over me? | 3. How long will I put warnings in my soul, suffering in my heart daily? How long will my enemy vaunt himself over me? |
| 4. Look and answer me, O Lord my God; enlighten my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death. | 4. Pay heed and receive my prayer, O Lord my God; illumine my eyes by Your Torah, lest I sin and sleep with those who deserve death. |
| 5. Lest my enemy say, "I have overwhelmed him"; my adversaries will rejoice when I totter. | 5. Lest the evil impulse should say, “I have taken control of him,” [lest] my oppressors rejoice because I stray from Your paths. |
| 6. But I trusted in Your loving-kindness, my heart will rejoice in Your salvation; I will sing to the Lord for He has bestowed [it] upon me. | 6. But I have placed my trust in Your goodness, my heart will rejoice in Your redemption; I will give praise in the Lord’s presence because He rewards me with good things. |
| **Psalms 14** |  |
| 1. For the conductor, of David; The fool said in his heart, "There is no God"; they have dealt corruptly; they have committed abominable deeds; no one does good. | 1. For praise; in the spirit of prophecy through David. The fool said in his heart, "There is no rule of God on the earth." They corrupted their deeds, they despised goodness and found iniquity. There is none who does good. |
| 2. **The Lord in Heaven looked down upon the sons of men to see whether there is a man of understanding, who seeks the Lord.** | 2. **The LORD looked down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there was any wise man seeking instruction from the presence of the LORD.** |
| 3. All have turned away; together they have spoiled; no one does good, not even one. | 3. All alike have turned backward, they have become lax; there is none who does good, there is not even one. |
| 4. Did not all the workers of iniquity know? Those who devoured My people partook of a feast; they did not call upon the Lord. | 4. Do they not know, all doers of falsehood? Those among My people who dine have dined on bread and not blessed the name of the LORD. |
| 5. There they were in great fear, for God is in the generation of a righteous/generous man. | 5. There they became afraid because the word of the LORD is in the generation of the righteous/generous. |
| 6. You put to shame the counsel of the poor, for the Lord is his refuge. | 6. You will despise the counsel of the poor man, because he has placed his hope in the LORD. |
| 7. O that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion; when the Lord returns the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be glad. | 7. Who will produce from Zion the redemption of Israel? When the LORD brings back the exile of his people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad. |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Tehillim (Psalms) 13 and 14**

**Psalm 13**

**1 How long** Four times, corresponding to the four kingdoms [Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Edom] and it is stated concerning all Israel.

**4 lest I sleep the sleep of death** For death is called sleep, (as in Jer. 51:39): “and sleep a perpetual sleep.”

**Psalm ‎14**

**1 The fool said in his heart, etc.** David recited two psalms in this Book, in one manner [with almost identical wording]: the first one concerning Nebuchadnezzar and the second one (ch. 53) concerning Titus. In this one, he prophesied concerning Nebuchadnezzar, who was destined to enter the Temple and to destroy it, with not one [man] of all his armies protesting against him.

**“There is no God”** and “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.”

**they have committed abominable deeds** Heb. עלילה , deeds.

**3 All have turned away, etc.** Not one man of his armies protested against him.

**they have spoiled** Heb. נאלחו , have turned to rot.

**4 Did not...know?** Did they not know at the end what had befallen them?

**Those who devoured My people** The seed of Nebuchadnezzar.

**partook of a feast** Heb. לחם , lit. bread. They made a feast (as in Dan. 5:1) “made a huge feast (לחם) .”

**they did not call upon the Lord** They neither considered Him nor remembered His wondrous and awesome deeds at their feast, and [they] used His vessels.

**5 There they were in great fear** For recompense was paid to Belshazzar king of Babylon [causing him] to be in great fear, as it is stated (in Dan. 5:6): “Then the king’s color changed, his thoughts terrified him, the joints of his loins came loose, and his knees knocked against each other.” But our Sages explained this (Sanh. 104b, Mid. Ps. 14:4) as referring to the heathens: Whoever does not rob Israel does not experience a pleasant taste in his food. Those who devoured my people felt as though they ate bread, for they experienced a pleasant taste.

**for God is in the generation of a righteous man** In the generation of Jeconiah, who were righteous.

**6 You put to shame the counsel of the poor** You say that the counsel of Israel is shameful, for they trust in the Lord because He is their refuge.

**7 O that** Then the day will arrive when He will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel in the future; then Jacob shall rejoice; Israel shall be glad.

**Commentary on the Psalms**

By Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David

**Bereshit (Genesis) 16:1 – 17:27**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 54:1-10**

**Tehillim (Psalms) chapters 13 and 14**

Mk 1:35-39, Lk 4:42-44

**Psalms 13** teaches us that of all the suffering endured by Israel during its history, the one that stands the longest is גלות, Exile. In exile, Israel is prey to the dominant evil forces which subject their helpless victims to an infinite variety of torments.

The agony of exile penetrates yet deeper. If there is hope in a man’s heart, then his tenacity and endurance are unlimited. As long as, man can dream and pray for HaShem’s assistance, then his powers have no end.

But the depressing gloom of exile seems like a long, dark night with no hope for a dawn. Israel appears abandoned for all time, as if HaShem has forsaken it forever.

As the exhausted nation feels its energy ebbing, and it sinks into despair, it summons its last traces of strength and cries out again and again, עד אנה, *how long*?[[2]](#footnote-2)

Such fervent pleading does not go unheeded. Thus, the psalm concludes on a confident note, showing that HaShem responds to those who truly seek Him, even in exile, causing the Psalmist to exclaim, *my heart will exult in Your salvation, I will sing to HaShem for He dealt kindly with me*.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Psalms 14**: David composed two songs, Psalms 14 and 53, which deal with the very same topic and are very similar in language.[[4]](#footnote-4) This one is dedicated to the destruction of the First Temple at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and the second psalm deals with the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus. Here David prophesies that Nebuchadnezzar will enter the Sanctuary to defile and destroy it, and not one of his soldiers will attempt to protest or restrain him.

Malbim notes that this psalm is an example of the multi-dimensional aspect of David's compositions. David created this psalm primarily in response to the enemies of his day. In later generations when new enemies and tragedies arose, however, Israel *saw* that the words of David applied to the problems of their times as well. And so, we have a psalm endowed with both personal meaning for David and with national, historical meaning for all Israel. Malbim interprets the prophetic aspect of this psalm not as a reference to Nebuchadnezzar, but to Sancherib of Assyria and his siege against King Chizkiyahu of Judea.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The superscriptions of psalms 13 and 14 attributes them to David. Both Rashi and Radak maintain that psalms 13 is dedicated to the future misery of the entire Jewish people when they are sent into exile.[[6]](#footnote-6) In contrast to most of our earlier psalms,[[7]](#footnote-7) this psalm does not speak of any musical instrument, nor does it make any connection to some personal event in David’s life.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Chapter 14 of Psalms has a key pasuk which seems to be the pivotal thought. This pasuk should cause us all to pause and consider our ways.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 14:2*** *The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to* ***see <07200> (8800)*** *if there were any that did understand, [and] seek G-d.*

This pasuk forms the verbal tally between our Torah seder and our chapter of Psalms. The key tally is:Appeared / Behold / See - ראה, Strong’s number 07200. We see this same Hebrew root in our Torah seder:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:1*** *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD* ***appeared <07200> (8735)*** *to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty G-d; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

Given this key pasuk and our verbal tally of: ‘See’ – (raah) ראה, lets look a little closer at the modality of sight and try to understand why HaShem uses *sight* as the modality to “see men of understanding”. After all, *understanding* is not normally associated with *seeing*. Let’s start by examining the Mishkan’s[[9]](#footnote-9) furnishings or “vessels”, which are seen as representations of the various organs and faculties of man. These should begin to give us an insight into seeing: The menorah[[10]](#footnote-10) corresponds to the *eyes* and the sense of sight. As you can see from the image, His Eminence is also suggesting that the menorah is the *key*.

The Mishkan later gave way to the Bet HaMikdash, the Temple, and was called the “eye of the world”. The eye is a physical organ but it receives something that is about as non-physical as you can get; light. The eye is the gateway to a non-physical existence called light. The Bet HaMikdash was called “the eye of the world” because it was the portal for the Light.

A picture containing text, clipart

Description automatically generatedRashi, Radak, Metzudat David, and other classical commentaries suggest that the Menorah is lit by HaShem, again indicating that HaShem Himself will provide warmth, light, and will safeguard the Jews. In a somewhat different vein, and perhaps hewing closer to the simple meaning of the text, Malbim notes the parallel between the seven lights of the menorah to the seven lights of the human face: the eyes, nostrils, mouth and ears, suggesting that the candles represent HaShem’s protective eyes. The prophet Zecharyah had a vision of a golden menorah, in which an angel explained to him that the meaning of the seven flames of the menorah were “the eyes of the Adonai, ranging over the whole earth”.[[11]](#footnote-11) That is a powerful image; it tells us that when we see the flames of the menorah we are, so to speak, seeing the eyes of HaShem.

The menorah is described repeatedly in Exodus 25: 33-34, as well as later in Exodus 37:19-20, as having oil cups which are “*meshukadim*” - מְשֻׁקָּדִים. The translation of this word is varied, but the majority opinion is that it has to do with the almond tree. Thus, the menorah is to be decorated to look like an almond tree, with almond shaped cups, and flowers. The root of the Hebrew word for almond: *shin kuph dalet* שֻׁקָּדִ*,* is also the root for one of the words meaning to *watch* or *guard*. In this way, there is a connection between the almond tree image and the idea in Zecharyah of the menorah lights as the eyes of HaShem.

The eye is similar in shape to the Hebrew letter *yud*, which has a numerical value of ten. Two eyes and one nose, therefore, are represented by ten plus ten plus six equals twenty-six. Twenty-six is the sum of the letter values of one of the names of HaShem. Thus the name of HaShem is inscribed upon our bodies, teaching us that He is the master of each person, for it is customary to write one‘s name on his belongings.

When the Bne Israel stood at Mt. Sinai, the Torah records that we *saw* the voices. We saw something that is normally heard. Our Sages teach that when HaShem is manifest, then we see everything as it really is. We see reality, even if it is normally heard, because there are no broken pieces to assemble when everything is one with HaShem. Since there are no broken pieces to assemble, the Torah calls that *seeing*.

Eyes see things outside of oneself. *Seeing* is like an instantaneous picture. We perceive everything at once, but is stillness. We need multiple *sightings* to perceive movement. Seeing is the modality of the next world. We see in the light. We see a world of stillness. We have a proverb which says, “Seeing is believing”. Because we see all at once and there is no assembling necessary, what we see is considered a proof. That is why *seeing* and *proof* both come from the same Hebrew root.[[12]](#footnote-12)

*Sight* is used to garner our emotions to a great reaction for an understanding that we already have because sight is our strongest and most reliable sense. Seeing really is believing and I can commit to something much more easily when I see it rather than if I only hear it. Just ask anyone who has bought an item without having seen it first. Finally, our brains are wired to remember visual cues more clearly than other types.

**Seeing is the modality of the Olam Haba, the next world.** Seeing is the modality of the Zohar and the other mystical writings. In these writings it says, “Come and see”. Here are a few examples:

***Yachanan (John) 1:46*** *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

***Yochanan (John) 11:34*** *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.*

***Soncino Zohar, Shemot, Section 2, Page 38b*** *(Psalms 139:I3). Nothing so miraculous was witnessed since the creation of the world. ‘Come and see,’ he said, ‘it is written: “It is a night (leyl) of observations unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night (ha-layla) of the Lord, observations to all the children of Israel”.[[13]](#footnote-13) Now, why “observations” in plural, and “night” first in the masculine gender (layiil), and then in the feminine (layla)? To indicate the union which took place on that night between the Masculine and Feminine aspects in the Divine attributes, and also the same union which will take place in the future Redemption: “As in the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things”.[[14]](#footnote-14)*

Now, lets contrast ‘hearing’ and ‘seeing’.

**Hearing is the modality of this world. In this world there is movement and sound. Hence hearing is the sense modality of this world. In the next world, there is no more movement, there is no more hearing. This is a world of stillness, a world of sight. Why don’t we move in the next world? Because all movement is done to meet a need. In the next world there will be no more needs and hence there will be no more movement.**

Hearing is the modality of this world. In this world we *hear* even though we are using our *eyes*. This world is like reading a book. We see one letter at a time and we put these letters together to form the ideas being conveyed by the writer. In this world we see a collage of images that we have to assemble into a complete picture. This world is a collection of broken pieces that must be assembled and internalized in order to be understood. That is why Chazal[[15]](#footnote-15) teach that hearing is the modality of this world, even when we use our eyes, we are still required to assemble the pieces. HaShem is not a proof in front of us until WE assemble the broken images into a clear vision that HaShem is concealed in his world, but the one who assembles the pieces will be able to see Him.

**Hearing requires us to work, as we shall see. It is the mode of this world. Seeing requires no work. That is why seeing is believing. In the Olam Haba, the next world, reality will be instantly apparent. The Olam HaBa is *seeing*.**

When the Talmud cites a proof to decide a dispute between two sages or to resolve a question of law, it often introduces it with the phrase *Ta shema, Come, hear* or *Come, understand* (the Hebrew word *shema* means both hear and understand). In contrast, the common opening phrase in the Zohar is *Ta chazi, Come, see*. According to what we have discussed, it becomes clear. Talmud includes all of the revealed, rational Torah, which is known as "nigleh", revealed. Torah entails great and profound logical thought, and understanding of the intellect. This is why "hearing" is most necessary since "hearing" achieves clear communication on a rational plain. Zohar is the chief work of Jewish mysticism and goes beyond the realm of rationale and logic to the world of the supernatural and the hidden. It is "nistar", the concealed Torah. "Seeing" is the sense that can rouse our emotions to a great reaction and the Zohar's main function is to strengthen our passions and emotions for our soul and spirit. This is why Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz[[16]](#footnote-16) would say that when learning Zohar one experiences the sweetness of our Father in Heaven. For the difference between these two forms of Torah is akin to the difference between sight on the one hand, and hearing and comprehension on the other. We “hear” in this world and we will “see” in the olam haba. In other words, HaShem hides in a broken world which He wants us to find Him and correct the world. In the olam haba, we will see the world of truth, we will see the world as it really is.

Hearing and seeing are the only senses associated with beauty. We see and hear beautiful things. This makes hearing and seeing intimately associated because they both have this modality.

While sight and hearing are both tools of perception, absorbing stimuli and conveying them to the mind to interpret, there is a major difference in the manner in which they impress their findings upon us. Sight is the most convincing of faculties: once we have seen something with *our own eyes*, it is virtually impossible for other sensory evidence or rational proofs to refute what we now know. On the other hand, hearing and comprehension are far less vivid impressers of the information they convey. They will convince us of certain truths, but not as unequivocally as do our eyes. What we hear and understand are facts that have been proven to us; what we see is reality.

*Hearing* takes place inside of a person. It requires interpretation by the person doing the hearing. This is in contrast to *seeing* which is external to a person and does not need interpretation, the sight speaks for itself.

Ears hear things inside of oneself. The way we hear is one sound at a time. By the time we hear the second sound, the first sound is just a memory. And so it goes with each subsequent sound. We then combine the sounds to make syllables inside our head. Our brain then assembles the syllables into words and the words into sentences, The sentances are assembled into paragraphs and the paragraphs are assembled into the final picture. By the time we have assembled the whole picture, there is no more sound. All of the sounds are just a memory. Since sounds must be assembled by the hearer, hearing is very much a subjective art. Hearing depends on the person and his background. No two persons build the same picture from the words of a speaker. We hear in the darkness. Sound characterizes this world, the world of movement.

This world is all hearing. We do not see things as they are, we merely “hear” small pieces. If we pay attention and work diligently to make sense out of the “sounds”, then we can assemble a fractured picture.

The Olam HaBa, the next world, is a world of seeing. We will see things as they are. Everything will be apparent all at once. We will not have to struggle to reassemble the pieces.

When the Jewish People stood at Sinai to receive the Torah, they underwent an experience which was literally out of this world. When HaShem spoke, the Torah writes that the Jewish People “saw the voices.” There was a dislocation of the natural perception of the senses. What does it mean to see sound?

There is a fundamental difference between the two senses. With sight, we perceive a complete whole instantaneously. The essence of vision is an instantaneous whole. Sound, on the other hand, is assimilated as a collection of sounds. We order these separate pieces of information, giving them substance and definition, and in the process, we understand what it is we are hearing. This process of assembly is not instantaneous. Our brain takes time to balance and evaluate what it is hearing. In the end, *we have assembled the pieces* into a single unified picture.

The reason we say “Hear! O Israel” is that, in this world, you cannot see HaShem. You have to “hear” Him. You have to take the disparate, seemingly random elements of this world, and assemble them into a cogent whole. There was only one time in history that you didn’t have to *hear* HaShem‘s Unity; one moment when you could actually see it. At Mount Sinai. There the Jewish People *saw* the voices. They saw with an incontrovertible clarity those things that usually need to be *heard*. Seeing is more than believing. When you see, you don’t have to believe. It’s in front of your eyes.

Hearing takes place inside of a person. It requires interpretation by the person doing the hearing. This is in contrast to seeing which is external to a person and does not need interpretation, the sight speaks for itself.

The ears provide two essential services for the body:

1. They allow us to hear and
2. The provide balance for the body.

Since we have one organ that provides two different functions, we understand that these “two“ functions MUST really be just *one* function. The Hebrew word for “ear” (ozen - אוזן) comes from the same root as “balance” (izzon). The root of both words uses the consonants Aleph (א), Zayin(ז), and Nun (נ), which could be read by their spiritual concepts: *G-d nurtures the soul*. What is the connection between these two words (ear & balance)? Balance is taking two legs and bonding them into oneness, just as hearing bonds multiple words into one thought or idea.

The main function of our ears is hearing and balance. In law, a hearing is a proceeding before a court which uses a set of balances as its symbol. The Hebrew word ***Moznayim*** represents “the scales”, which is the Mazzalot for the Hebrew month of Tishrei. **Moznayim** (מאזנים), from the word ***oznayim*** (ears), implies **equilibrium** and **balance** (the inner and outer sense of the ears).

Rav Yitzchak Hutner’s[[17]](#footnote-17) begins, his explanation of the putting an awl through the servant’s ear, by quoting the Rabbenu Yonah who says that the ear is unique among the senses/organs because it is the only one that receives but does not emit. Seeing/the eyes receive visual stimuli but also “look”, convey emotion. The nose/smelling accepts scents and also acts, through blowing the nose, breathing...; so too for touch/hands, and taste/tongue. The ear is the quintessential receiver.

Similarly, the servant’s identity is completely subsumed by hearing instructions from his master. This understanding is supported by a halachah in the laws of evaluating worth. In ancient times, when damage was done to an organ of the body, financial compensation was required. How was damage assessed? The beit din would take the person to the slave market and determine how much he would be worth without that limb. The incredible idea is that for damage to the ear, the perpetrator must pay the full worth of the individual! The ear is worth more than any other sense organ. This notion is incredible for it contradicts the Talmudic reference which suggests that blindness is the worst curse a person could bear. The ear is essential for a servant for it represents his entire personality. The servant must listen to his master at all times. That is why the servant is exempt from positive time bound commandments.”

Now we can understand what the Torah meant when it said:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:19-20*** *And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and G-d answered him by a voice. And HaShem came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and HaShem called Moses [up] to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

When HaShem came down to Mt. Sinai, it means that shamayim, *there*, intersected, *here*, with this world. The world of sight intersected with the world of hearing. When this happened, we read of something very unusual:

***Shemot (Exodus) 20:18*** *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw [it], they removed, and stood afar off.*

Now we can understand why the Torah says that we saw the thunder. We perceived the Olam HaBa. We were endowed with the modality of the next world. We no longer *heard*; we *saw*. We were a part of the Olam HaBa.

At Mt. Sinai in the days of Moshe, HaShem gave His Torah to the Children of Israel. According to the Sages, when HaShem gave the Torah all of nature stood still. The sea did not roar. No birds sang. No creature stirred or made so much as a peep. Not even a leaf fell from the trees. In short, there was no movement whatsoever! The Midrash put it like this:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XXIX:9*** *What is the meaning of, The Lord G-d hath spoken; who can but prophesy? (Amos III, 8). Said R. Abbahu in the name of R. Johanan: When G-d gave the Torah no bird twittered, no fowl flew, no ox lowed, none of the Ophanim stirred a wing, the Seraphim did not say ‘Holy, Holy’, the sea did not roar, the creatures spoke not, the whole world was hushed into breathless silence and the voice went forth: I AM THE LORD THY G-D. So it says, These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly... with a great voice, and it went on no more’ (Deut. V, I9).*

The lack of movement at Sinai suggests that there were no needs during this period. At Sinai we lacked nothing, therefore, we had no need to move.

Lack of movement is an indication that there is no force moving it out of position.

*Eretz*, the Hebrew word for land, comes from a root which means *to move*. This is why the mystics say that this world, *eretz*, is the world of movement. This world is constantly moving towards shamayim, heaven. Shamayim is the place of the infinite. Shamayim comes from the root *shammin* which means “there”. *There* there is no movement because everything has arrived where it should be.

No wonder we had no movement. We had entered another dimension where we perceived that we had arrived at a place where there were no more needs. We lacked nothing, therefore there was no movement. Eretz (earth) became shamayim (heaven). *Here* became *there*! We had arrived at the place we had been moving towards, When we arrived where we were supposed to be, we no longer moved, we had arrived!

It should be obvious now why the Sages said that HaShem had suspended Mt. Sinai over our heads and told us to accept Torah or be buried:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:17*** *"They stood on the bottom of [lit. under] the mountain."*

***Shabbath 88a*** *And they stood under the mount: R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them, ‘If ye accept the Torah, ‘tis well; if not, there shall be your burial.’ R. Aha b. Jacob observed: This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah. Said Raba, Yet even so, they re-accepted it in the days of Ahasuerus, for it is written, [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.]: [i.e.,] they confirmed what they had accepted long before.*

This midrash means we had no free choice. We were seeing, and seeing is believing! This is the coercion implied by suspending the mountain over our heads. When shamayim intersected eretz for a brief time, the nature of things changed. That brief moment was a foretaste of the Olam HaBa. The Sages discussed this:

***Sukkah 5a*** *and it has been taught, R. Jose stated, Neither did the Shechinah ever descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to Heaven, as it is written, ‘The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the sons of men’. But did not the Shechinah descend to earth? Is it not in fact written, And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai? — That was above ten handbreadths [from the summit]. But is it not written, And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives? — That will be above ten handbreadths. But did not Moses and Elijah ascend to Heaven? Is it not in fact written, And Moses went up unto G-d.? — [That was] to a level lower than ten [handbreadths from heaven]. But is it not written, And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.? -[That was] to a level lower than ten handbreadths. But is it not written, He seizeth hold of the face of His throne, and He spreadeth His cloud upon him, and R. Tanhum said: This teaches that the Almighty spread some of the radiance of his Shechinah and his cloud upon him? — That was at a level lower than ten handbreadths. But in any case is it not written, ‘He seizeth hold of the face of His throne’? — The throne was well lowered for his sake until [it reached a level] lower than ten handbreadths [from Heaven] and then hell seized hold of it.*

The mystical writings of the Nazarean Codicil also speak of the time When HaShem and shamayim will intersect eretz:

***Revelation 21:1-4*** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from G-d out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of G-d [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and G-d himself shall be with them, [and be] their G-d. And G-d shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

When we arrive *there*, then we will perceive reality as starkly as those who awake from a dream. Then we will realize that eretz, this world, is the illusion and shamayim, heaven, is the reality. *There*, we will no longer have needs that force us to move. *There*, we will no longer move because all of our needs will be met.

Now, lets return to chapter 14 of Psalms and its key pasuk, its pivotal thought. This pasuk should surely cause us all to pause and consider our ways.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 14:2*** *HaShem looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to* ***see <07200> (8800)*** *if there were any that did understand, [and] seek G-d.*

The words "The Lord looks down from heaven on mankind to find a man of understanding, a man mindful of G-d" appear twice in the Psalms (14:2; 53:3).[[18]](#footnote-18) The subject of both psalms is a godless man who says in his heart "There is no G-d", and as a result "Man's deeds are corrupt and loathsome". At this same time G-d is looking down from the heavens and seeking his loyal followers, those who strive towards him. Obviously, this "looking down" does not bring with it sorrow as does the "looking down" of humans. On the contrary: It offers them caring and stretches forth a hand of friendship against the deniers and rejecters.

Rabbi Simchah Zisl Ziv[[19]](#footnote-19) notes that people seem to have an innate curiosity to learn something new, to hear of a new discovery. We rarely miss a news program or a newspaper, lest we remain unaware of a new happening.

"Where," he asks, "is the curiosity to learn about G-d? Why are people not coming in droves to those who can teach them and direct them to learn about G-d?"

Perhaps the answer to this question is that learning anything else that is new does not obligate us, whereas coming to a greater knowledge of G-d will make us more subservient to G-d. Perhaps people are apprehensive that if they know more about G-d, they will be more compelled to accept His sovereignty, and this might necessitate changing their way of living.

The Psalmist says that G-d looks down from heaven to *see* if anyone is interested in learning more about Him. But apparently no one wishes to change. "Every man was depraved. None was a doer of good, not even one".[[20]](#footnote-20)

When HaShem sees, He is looking at the only things that matter. He is looking from the perspective of the Olam HaBa, the world of truth. He is looking to see the only things that matter, those things which bring us be with him forever. Clearly this chapter of Psalms speaks of the wicked godless man who has no place in the Olam HaBa, but it should give the righteous/generous man pause. That man should also examiner himself and look to see if his focus is on Olam HaBa, or on the substitute, the temporary pleasures of this world.

The following is an excerpt from *The Path of the Just:*

In the first chapter of *The Path of the Just*, Luzzatto tells us what we have to look forward to if we complete the task ahead of us. It is, he tells us, what **we were created for in the first place: the ability to “delight in G-d and enjoy the radiance of His divine presence**.” We are assured that it is “the true delight, the greatest enjoyment of all.” In chapter twenty-six he tells us that “the holy . . . are considered to be ‘walking before God in the land of the living while they are in this world”; and that when one will have attained holiness, “a spirit from on high will descend upon you, and the Creator will dwell upon you as He does to all of His holy ones.” So what we are being promised is the felt Presence of the Divine, a sure involvement in Godliness, an evolution to the angelic. It is the end of woe and the ever-presence of bliss.

It (intimacy with the Creator, “the true delight, the greatest enjoyment of all”) is what it is we have been wanting all our lives without knowing it: it is the fulfillment of all of our dreams—of even the most unholy.

That can be explained thusly: When the body and the person crave, they generally crave things of the world, physical things or subtle personal things. They may crave food or love or power or wealth. But, we assume, only the body and the person *can* crave. “After all,” we reason, “what would the soul want?—it is already a part of the Divine, and has all that it needs in its being!”

The truth of the matter is that if the soul could be said to crave anything it would be what it already has—made manifest in the person it “occupies.” The soul yearns for its inherent power, love, and wealth. But the body and the person misunderstand that craving and try to make it manifest in material terms.

**In other words, the soul yearns for its inherent wealth (for it is wondrously wealthy), and the person takes that to be a yearning for material wealth; the soul yearns for its natural power (for it has vast amounts of power), and the person takes that to be a yearning for material power, and so on.**

What we are looking for in our essential beings is delight. But we look for it in the wrong places. The person and the body *look* for it everyplace but in God, where delight can only be found. In fact He is indeed “the true delight, the greatest enjoyment of all.” We know that in our very core but forget it moment by moment. It is what we are looking for and yearn for.

It is the great response to the questions, “Why?” “To what end?” “What’s in it for me?’ and “What do I get out of it?” It is truly the fulfillment of all of our dreams.

But our age seems to have forgotten. That is because we have lost sight of the fact that there is holiness. Having “lost” God (of course, one never loses God, but only loses cognizance of God), we have “lost” His couriers as well. We have forgotten our Holy Ones—those who have lived only for intimacy with God and for the simple doing of His will made manifest to them. We have forgotten the fact that there are individuals who are truly as gifted in piety and matters of the life of the spirit as others are in the arts and sciences.

Holiness is a category of humanity we have decided to suspend in disbelief. To benefit from that great delight we must remember and take seriously the very core Jewish notion of holiness and association with God.

**Our Chazal have taught us that we were created to delight in God and enjoy the radiance of His Divine presence. This is the true delight, the greatest enjoyment of all.**

But in truth, the place for this pleasure is the World to Come,4 as it was created, readied, and prepared for just such a pleasure.

The road that will take us to our desired destination is this world. Our sages were referring to this when they said,[[21]](#footnote-21) “This world is like a vestibule to the World to Come”. The means to bring you to this goal are the *mitzvot* which God has commanded.

Can we see?

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 54:1-10**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum Pseudo Yonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 Sing, O Jerusalem who was as a barren woman who did not bear; shout in singing and exult, [you who were] as a woman who did not become pregnant! For the children of desolate Jerusalem will be more than the children of inhabited Rome, says the LORD. | 1 Sing, Jerusalem, who was like a barren woman that beareth not; rejoice with praise and be glad, who was like a woman that conceiveth not: for more shall be the children of Jerusalem that was laid desolate, than of the inhabited city, saith the Lord. |
| 2 Enlarge the place of your camping, and cause the cities of your land to be inhabited; hold not back, increase the people of your armies and strengthen your rulers. | 2 Enlarge the place of the house of thy dwelling, and from the cities of the land do not keep back the inhabitants; multiply the people of the camp, and increase the number of thy governors. |
| 3 For you will be strengthened to the south and to the north, and your sons will possess peoples and will cause desolate cities to be inhabited. | 3 For thou shalt spread abroad to the south and to the north, and thy children shall inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. |
| 4 Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproaches of your widowhood you will remember no more. | 4 Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproaches of thy widowhood any more. |
| 5 For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. | 5 For thy husband, who is thy Maker, the Lord of hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called. |
| 6 For the Shekhinah of the LORD has summoned [you] like a wife forsaken and distressed in spirit, like a wife of youth who is cast off, says your God. | 6 For as a woman forsaken, and afflicted in spirit, the Shekinah, the Lord, met thee, like a woman of youth which was forsaken, saith thy God. |
| 7 In a little anger I forsook you, but with great compassion I will bring your exiles near. | 7 In a little anger have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I bring together thy captivity. |
| 8 In a brief hour, for a time, I took up the face of my Shekhinah from you, but with everlasting benefits which do not cease I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer. | 8 For a little moment I removed the presence of my Shekinah, *yea*, for a short time from thee, but with everlasting kindness, which shall not cease, will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. |
| 9 This is like the days of Noah before me: as I swore by my Memra (Word) that the waters of the flood which were in the days of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that my anger will not turn upon you and I will not rebuke you. | 9 This shall be before me as the days of Noah, when I swore by my Word, that the waters of the deluge, which were in the days of Noah, shall no more pass over the earth; thus I swear by my Word, that my anger shall not be hurled upon thee, neither will I reprove thee. |
| 10 For the mountains may pass and the hills be split, but my goodness shall not pass from you, Jerusalem, and my covenant of peace shall not be cast away, says He who is about to have compassion on you, says the LORD. | 10 For .the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be rent; but my kindness shall not de part from thee, Jerusalem, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that will have mercy on thee. |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Isaiah 54:1-10**

**1. Sing, you barren woman** Jerusalem, who was as though she had not borne.

**you who have not experienced birth pangs** Heb. חָלָה, an expression of childbirth, for the woman in confinement gives birth with pains and writhing.

**for the children of the desolate one** The daughter of Edom.

2. **and let them stretch forth** far off.

**lengthen your cords** These are thin ropes that hang at the bottom of tents, and that are tied to stakes called ‘chevills’ in French, which are thrust into the ground.

3. **shall you prevail** Heb. תִּפְרֹצִי, shall you prevail.

4. **your youth** Heb. עֲלוּמַיִךְ, your youth.

6. **who was rejected** When she is rejected at times that her husband is a little wroth with her.

8. **With a little wrath** Heb. שֶׁצֶף. Menahem (Machbereth p. 179) interprets this as, “with kindling of wrath,” and Dunash (Teshuvoth p. 20) states, “with a little wrath,” paralleling “For a small moment have I forsaken you,” and so did Jonathan render.

**and with everlasting kindness** that will exist forever.

9. **For this is to Me [as] the waters of Noah** [i.e.,] it is an oath in My hand, and He proceeds to explain His words, “as I swore that the waters of Noah shall never again pass over the earth, etc.”

10. **For the mountains shall depart** Even if the merit of the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs is depleted, My kindness shall not depart from you.

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra Of B’resheet Gen. 16:1- 17:27**

**“And Sara, Abram’s wife”**

By: H. Em. Dr. Eliyahu b. Abraham

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hakham Shaul’s School Of Tosefta**  **(Luke 4:42-44)** | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**  **(Mark 1:35-39)** |
| **As the day was approaching, he** (Yeshua) **went out to an isolated place** to recite the morning Shema.[[22]](#footnote-22) **And the congregations searched for him; and when they came to him, they wanted to keep him from leaving. But he said to them, I must proclaim the Mesorah (Oral Torah) of the governance[[23]](#footnote-23) of G-d** through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings, **to the other cities as well; because I was sent for this** purpose (mission). **And he heralded the Mesorah in the Synagogues** of Y’hudah.[[24]](#footnote-24) | **And early in the morning, long before daylight[[25]](#footnote-25) he** (Yeshua) **got up[[26]](#footnote-26) and went out to an isolated place and prayed there. And Shim’on (Hakham Tsefet) and those** (talmidim) **who were with him** (Hakham Tsefet) **followed[[27]](#footnote-27) him** (Yeshua)**. And having discovered[[28]](#footnote-28) from him** the true halakhic practice concerning the recital morning Shema and Amidah**, they said to him, “everyone is searching[[29]](#footnote-29) for you.” And he** (Yeshua) **responded, “let us go to the neighbouring towns, so I can teach this** halakhic practice**[[30]](#footnote-30) to them as well, because this is what I came to do.”[[31]](#footnote-31) And he went through the entire region of the Galil proclaiming this** halakhic **message** (the Mesorah) **in the Synagogues and driving out *shedim* – demons.** |

**ἐξέρχομαι – he** (Yeshua) **went out**

The LXX uses no less than 35 words to translate the Greek **ἐξέρχομαι**. However, this word immediately connects with the Torah Seder where Abraham is given an **oral commanded** (command from the Oral Torah) to “walk” before G-d. (B’resheet 17:1). The text in both cases is synonymous. Abraham is called to “come” and “walk” before Me. In Yeshua’s case he “went (came) out” to walk before G-d **following the voice of the Oral Torah**.

**Shema Yisrael**

**In the beginning was the Torah (**Word**), and the Torah (**Word**) was with God, and the Torah (**Word**) was/is an Elohim** (judge)**. He, [the Torah] was in the beginning with God. And we saw the glory of the Torah, glory as of the only begotten,** Yisrael **from the Father, full of chesed (loving-kindness) and Emet (truth).**

The sublime words of the Kabbalist Hakham Yochanan picture Messiah as the “Word – Torah of G-d.” As Messiah Yeshua conducts himself as if an actor on the stage[[32]](#footnote-32) daily modelling how the Torah is to be “walked” in each circumstance of life. The scenario of our Mishnaic Markan pericope pictures Messiah rising a “long time before daylight” to find an isolated place in which to pray [far from distractions and interference].

**Hermeneutic Principle OF Rov**

By the hermeneutic principle of Rov and Sevarah, we can determine that Yeshua recited the Morning Shema on the morning of our present pericope.

We are forced to use the principles of **Rov,** **Ḳal va-ḥomer:** "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori and **Gezerah shavah:** Argument from the analogy, of Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications.

1. The Jewish people are commanded to recite the Shema twice daily by the Torah itself (“when you lay down and when you rise up”).
2. The Jewish people are instructed in how and when to recite the Shema by the Mishnah, Tosefta and Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud and this by Rabbinical dictum.
3. The Jerusalem Talmud states that it would be preferable for a person who studies without performing the mitzvoth never to have been created.[[33]](#footnote-33)

While there are some variants to the above-cited materials the consensus is that we must recite the Shema twice daily. By the hermeneutic principle of Rov, we see that the greater community of the B’ne Yisrael recited the Shema twice daily. Therefore, “**how much the more**” would we conclude that Messiah would have recited the Shema on this morning in accordance with the Torah, Mishnah and both Talmud’s Jerusalem and Babylonian.

**The Torah**

**Deut 6:4** Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.[[34]](#footnote-34)﻿b﻿﻿ You will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ﻿Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. ﻿Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. ﻿Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol[[35]](#footnote-35)﻿c﻿ on your forehead;[[36]](#footnote-36)﻿d﻿ ﻿inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.[[37]](#footnote-37)

**The Mishnah**

m. Ber 1:2 From what time do they recite the ﻿Shema﻿ in the morning? From the hour that one can distinguish between [the colors] blue and white. R. Eliezer says, “Between blue and green.” And one must complete it before sunrise. R. Joshua says, “Before the third hour. “For it is the practice of royalty to rise [at] the third hour. [Thus, we deem the third hour still to be ‘morning.’]” One who recites later than this [i.e., the third hour] has not transgressed [by reciting a blessing at the wrong time, for he is viewed simply] as one who recites from the Torah.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Mishnah Berakhot 1:1 juxtaposes the talmidim of Gamaliel having attend a wedding with the recital of the evening Shema. The present pericope of Mordechai juxtaposes the recital of the Morning Shema in very much the same way. Yeshua has completed the ministry of healing and exorcism departs to recite the morning Shema according to the tradition of the “old-timers.”

**The Talmud**

**b. Ber 2b** *It has been taught on Tannaite authority along these same lines:*  The old-timers would complete the recitation of Shema exactly at dawn so as to place the prayer for redemption[[39]](#footnote-39) [with which the Shema closes] right next to the Prayer [of supplication], and one will turn out to say the Prayer in daylight.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

This Gemara teaches us to see the exact moments when Yeshua was reciting the Shema and Amidah. Herein we learn that the zemanim of the “old-timers” (Hakhamim).

**Following Yeshua HaMashiach**

And Shim'on (Hakham Tsefet) and those who were with him (Hakham Tsefet) **followed** him (Yeshua).

Most translations read this passage as if Yeshua’s talmidim are searching for him because they do not know where he was. The Greek word for “follow” **καταδιώκω** (*katadioko*) does not mean search or hunt as many have translated. The Markan text demonstrates the talmidim mimicking Yeshua and his halakhic practices. They, with Yeshua depart early in the morning to say the Morning Shema and Amidah.

**Searching for Messiah**

**“Everyone is searching for you”** indicates that people are looking for Yeshua. We have two things to note.

1. They must be looking for him “early in the morning.”
2. And, they must be looking for him to determine the true halakhic practice concerning recital of the morning Shema.

**Peroration**

Suffice it to say that the Markan pericope echoes the present Torah Seder. The Torah Seder (“Vay’hi Abram” - “And when Abram was”- Gen. 17:1-27) initiates the Mitzvah of Circumcision. This ritual practice is the physical Symbolic mark of a Covenantal Token, commemorating immediate halakhic obedience. Likewise, we see in the Pericope of Mordecai that Yeshua, followed by his talmidim is teaching halakhic practice concerning the recital of the morning Shema and Amidah. As a result, Hakham Tsefet depicts Yeshua…

1. Observing a Torah mandate to pray as a mitzvah
2. Depicts Yeshua in agreement with **Rabbinic,** **Mishnaic and Talmudic** practice

**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!”**

**Coming Fast**

**Fast of Tebet 10 - Asarah B'Tebet - עשרה בטבת**

**From sundown on January 2, 2023 till nightfall on January 3, 2023**

**Daylight fast**

The 10th of Tebet (known as Asarah B'Tebet) is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance. We refrain from food and drink from daybreak to nightfall, and add Selichot (penitential prayers) and other special supplements to our prayers. The fast ends at nightfall, or as soon as you see three medium-sized stars in the sky.

[**https://www.betemunah.org/tevet10.html**](https://www.betemunah.org/tevet10.html)

**Next Shabbat:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat:** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| וירא אל'ו |  |  |
| **“Vayera Al'o”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 18:1-5 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 19:1-3 |
| **“And appeared”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 18:6-8 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 19:4-6 |
| **“Y se apareció”** | Reader 3 – B’resheet 18:9-14 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 19:7-9 |
| B’resheet (Genesis) 18:1-33 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 18:15-19 |  |
| Yesheyahu (Isaiah) 33:17-24 + 35:10 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 18:20-22 |  |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 15:1-5 | Reader 6 – B’resheet 18:23-25 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 19:10-12 |
| N.C.: Mark 1:40-45  Luke 5:12-15 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 18:26-33 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 19:13-15 |
|  | Maftir – B’resheet 18:31-33 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 19:14-17 |
|  | Isaiah 33:17-24 + 35:10 |  |

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Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Edited by Adon Ovadyah ben Abraham and Paqid Adon Aviner ben Abraham

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Please e-mail any comments, questions or suggestions to [chozenppl@gmail.com](mailto:chozenppl@gmail.com)

1. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition.. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The musical note on two of the repetitions of this plaint is the שלעזלת (lit. long chain), a drawn out sound suggesting an action which continues for an extended period of time. See Genesis 19:10 מתמהמה; Genesis 39:8 וימאן. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. v. 6 - This introduction was edited from: *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This introduction was excerpted and edited from: *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Note that we see musical instruments in 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, 6:1, 8:1, and 9:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Da’ath Sofrim*, Commentary to the book of Psalms, by Rabbi Chaim Dov Rabinowitz, translated from Hebrew by Rabbi Y.Starrett, edited by Shalom Kaplan. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. the sanctuary set up by Moses in the wilderness [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The menorah is described in the Bible as the seven-lamp ancient Hebrew lampstand made of pure gold and used in the sanctuary set up by Moses in the wilderness and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. Fresh olive oil of the purest quality was burned daily to light its lamps. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Zecharyah (Zechariah) 4:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Photoshop and photo-realistic pictures and video are a new phenomenon in our era. For the first time in history we can understand that this generation is so steeped in falsehood that we can no longer believe our own eyes. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Shemot (Exodus) 7:42 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Micah 7:1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Chazal (Hebrew: חז״ל), an acronym for the Hebrew "Ḥakhameinu Zikhronam Liv'rakha" ( חכמינו זכרונם לברכה, "Our Sages, may their memory be blessed"), refers to all Jewish sages of the Mishna, Tosefta and Talmud eras. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Circa 1940, known as the Chazon Ish [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. sefer Pachad Yitzchak, Pesach volume, article 43, Rav Yitzchak Hutner, former Rosh Yeshiva of Chaim Berlin. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Tehillim (Psalms) 14:2; 53:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv Broida (1824–1898), also known as Simhah Zissel Ziv or as the Alter of Kelm (the Elder of Kelm), was one of the foremost students of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter and one of the early leaders of the Musar movement. He is best known as the founder and director of the Kelm Talmud Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Tehillim (Psalms) 14:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Avot 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Johnson suggests that Yeshua had spent the entire night “**And evening being come, at sunset just after Habdalah”**healing and casting out *shedim* – demons. Now the dawn approaches and Yeshua, with his talmidim find an isolated place to pray the morning prayers, specifically the Morning Shema. Johnson, L. T. (1991). *The Gospel of Luke* (Vol. 3). (S. J. Daniel J. Harrington, Ed.) Collegeville , MN: The Liturgical Press, Sacra Pagina Series. pp. 84 – 7. As such we see that both Hakham Tsefet and Hakham Shaul present Yeshua as a prophet. The materials taut extrordinary miraclous acts and deeds to contrast Yeshua HaMashiach with the prophets i.e. Moshe. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Verbal connection to Jer 34:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The Lukan text includes Y’hudah whereas the Markan text says “**the entire region of the Galil.**” This may infer that Y’hudah was considered a part of the Galil or that the northern parts of Y’hudah were considered the Galil. Or Hakham Shaul may only extend the public ministry of the Master to these regions. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. From three to six a.m. The temporal expression echoes Mark 1:32 where Yeshua must have recited the Habdalah. Now we see Yeshua “**early in the morning, long before daylight**” reciting the Morning Shema and The Amidah. see Mark 1:32, Luke 6:12, 11:1 and others where it seems that temporal markers suggest either halakhic practices or halakhah concerning prayer, i.e. Zemanim [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Verbal connection to Psa 12:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. **καταδιώκω** (*katadioko*) v. From 2596 and 1377; GK 2870; AV translates as “**follow after**” once. 1 **to follow after, follow up**. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. “The term may sometimes apply to ordinary earthly and possibly contingent facts, but its reference is predominantly to the surprising discovery and mysterious understanding of human existence and historical occurrence in their hidden relationships as seen from the standpoint of and with an ultimate view to the kingdom of God.” *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.(2:769).The Lukan text, Luke 11:1 could be an elucidation of this passage. **Luke 11:1** It happened that while Yeshua was praying in a certain place, after he had finished, one of his talmidim said to Him, "master, teach us to pray just as Yochanan (the immerser) also taught his talmidim." [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The Greek term clearly indicates that people are looking for Yeshua. We have two things to note. 1. The must be looking for him “early in the morning.” And, they must be looking for him to determine the true halakhic practice concerning recital of the morning Shema. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. “The Gospel (Mesorah) is not revealed in a vacuum, nor is ecstatic and voluntary movements, which there were not a few in first-century Palestine. Jesus directs his ministry to practicing communities of faith (faithful obedience) in Judaism fulfillment of an earlier history of revelation (1:2-3).” Edwards, J. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark.* Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Apollos. p. 68 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. This passage and its Lukan Tosefta teach us concerning the “Messianic Mission.” In other words the “Messianic Mission” is the proclamation of the Mesorah – Oral Torah and the governance of G-d [through the Hakhamim and Bate Din as opposed to human kings]. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Jones, Vendyl,. *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand,.* (p. 5-11) Institute of Judaic-Christian Research, 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. j.t. Berakhot 1:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. ﻿b﻿ *Cf. Rashbam and Ibn Ezra see Zech. 14.9. Others “The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”*  [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. ﻿c﻿ *Others “frontlet” ; cf. Exod. 13.16.* [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. ﻿d﻿ *Lit. “between your eyes” ; cf. Exod. 13.9.* [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Jewish Publication Society. (1997, c1985). *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures : A new translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the traditional Hebrew text.* Title facing t.p.: Torah, Nevi'im, Kethuvim = Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim. (Dt 6:4). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Neusner, J. (1988). *The Mishnah: A new translation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. “Our Redeemer! Adonai, [Master] of Hosts is His Name, Holy One of Israel. Blessed are You Adonai, who redeems Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Neusner, J. (2005). *The Babylonian Talmud, A Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 1 Berakhot). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers. p. 54 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)