|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Esnoga Bet Emunah**  **12210 Luckey Summit**  **San Antonio, TX 78252**  **United States of America**  **© 2023**  [**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**  **© 2023**  [**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)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Three- and 1/2-year Lectionary Readings** | **First Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Tebet 14, 5783 / January 6-7, 2023** | **First Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

**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

His Excellency Adon Luqas Nelson

His Honor Paqid Adon Tsuriel ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Gibora bat Sarah

His Honor Paqid Adon Aviner ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Chagit bat Sarah

Her Excellency Giberet Sarai bat Sarah & beloved family

His Excellency Adon Barth Lindemann & beloved family

His Excellency Adon John Batchelor & beloved wife

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

Her Excellency Giberet Prof. Dr. Emunah bat Sarah & beloved family

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

**If you want to subscribe to our list and ensure that you never lose any of our commentaries or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to** [**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.

**Sabbath: “Vayera Alav”**

**“And appeared”**

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

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* Visit of the Angels – Genesis 18:1-16
* Abraham’s Intercession for Sodom – Genesis 18:17-33

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: B’resheet (Genesis) 18:1 – 33**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Now the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent when the day was hot | 1. AND the glory of the LORD was revealed to him in the valley of Mamre; and he, being ill from the pain of circumcision, sat at the door of the tabernacle in the fervour (or strength) of the day. |
| 2. And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were standing beside him, and he saw, and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent, and he prostrated himself to the ground. | 2. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, three angels in the resemblance of men were standing before him; (angels) who had been sent from the necessity of three things;--**because it is not possible for a ministering angel to be sent for more than one purpose at a time**;--one, then, had come to make known to him that Sarah should bear a man-child; one had come to deliver Lot; and one to overthrow Sedom and Amorah. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of the tent and bowed himself on the earth.  JERUSALEM: Three angels were sent to our father Abraham; **and the three were sent for three things; because it is not possible that one of the high angels should be sent for more things than one.** The first angel was sent to announce to our father Abraham, that, behold, Sarah would bear Izhak; the second angel was sent to deliver Lot from the midst of the overthrow; the third angel was sent to overthrow Sedom and Amorah, Admah and Zeboim. Therefore, was there a word of prophecy from before the LORD unto Abraham the Just, and the Word of the LORD was revealed to him in the valley of vision; and he sat in the door of the tabernacle, comforting himself from his circumcision in the fervour (or strength) of the day. |
| 3. And he said, "My lords, if only I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass on from beside your servant. | 3. And he said, I beseech, by the mercies (that are) before You, O LORD, if now I have found favour before You, that the glory of Your Shekina may not now ascend from Your servant, until I have set forth provisions |
| 4. Please let a little water be taken and bathe your feet and recline under the tree. | 4. Abraham again said to these men, Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and recline under the tree. |
| 5. And I will take a morsel of bread and sustain your hearts; after[wards] you shall pass on, because you have passed by your servant." And they said, "So shall you do, as you have spoken." | 5. And I will bring food of bread, that you may strengthen your hearts, and give thanks in the Name of the Word of the LORD, and afterwards pass on. For therefore at the time of repast are you come and have turned aside to your servant to take food. And they said, You have spoken well; do according to your word. |
| 6. And Abraham hastened to the tent to Sarah, and he said, "Hasten three seah of meal[and]fine flour; knead and make cakes." | 6. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said to her, Hasten three measures of flour-meal, mix, and make cakes. |
| 7. And to the cattle did Abraham run, and he took a calf, tender and good, and he gave it to the youth, and he hastened to prepare it. | 7. And unto the flock ran Abraham, and took a calf, tender and fat, and gave to a young man, and hastened to make prepared meats; |
| 8. And he took cream and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and he placed[them]before them, and he was standing over them under the tree, and they ate. | 8. and he took rich cream and milk and the calf which the young man had made into prepared meats, and set them before them, according to the way and conduct (hilkath) of the creatures of the world; and he served before them, and they sat under the tree; and he quieted himself (to see) whether they would eat. |
| 9. And they said to him, **"Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "Behold in the tent."** | 9. And they said to him, **Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, Behold, she is in the tent.**  JERUSALEM: And they said to him, **Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, Behold, she is in the tent.** |
| 10. And he said, "I will surely return to you at this time next year, and behold, your wife Sarah will have a son." And Sarah heard from the entrance of the tent, and it was behind him. | 10. And one of them said, Returning I will return to you in the coming year; and you will be revived, and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son. And Sarah was hearkening at the door of the tent, and Ishmael stood behind her, and marked what the Angel said.  JERUSALEM: And He said, Returning I will return to you at that time, to revive you, and behold, Sarah your wife will have a male child. And Sarah was hearkening at the door of the tent, and Ishmael stood behind her. |
| 11. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, coming on in years; Sarah had ceased to have the way of the women. | 11. But Abraham and Sarah were old, they had mounted in days, and with Sarah the way of women had ceased. |
| 12. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have become worn out, will I have smooth flesh? **And also, my master** is old." | 12. And Sarah wondered in her heart, saying After that I am old will I have conceptions, **and my lord Abraham** is old?  JERUSALEM: And Sarah derided in her heart, saying, After that I am old, is it possible to return to the days of my youth, for me to have conception, **and my lord Abraham** is old? |
| 13. And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Is it really true that I will give birth, although I am old?' | 13. And the LORD said to Abraham, Why has Sarah so laughed, saying, Can it be in truth that I will bear, being old? |
| 14. **Is anything hidden from the Lord?** At the appointed time, I will return to you, at this time next year and Sarah will have a son." | 14. **Is it possible to hide anything from before the LORD?** At the gracious time I will return to you, in the time when you will be revived, and Sarah will have a son. |
| 15. And Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh," **because she was afraid**. And He said, "No, but you laughed." | 15. And Sarah denied and said, I wondered not; **for she was afraid**. And the Angel said, Fear not: yet in truth you did laugh. |
| 16. And the men arose from there, and they looked upon Sodom, and Abraham went with them to escort them, | 16. And the angels, who had the likeness of men, arose from thence, and the one who had made known the tidings to Sarah ascended to the high heavens; and two of them looked toward Sedom; and Abraham went with them.  JERUSALEM: And they looked towards. |
| 17. And the Lord said, "Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am doing? | 17. And the LORD said, with His Word, I cannot hide from Abraham that which I am about to do; and it is right that before I do it, I should make it known to him.  JERUSALEM: And the LORD with His Word said, Will I hide from Abraham, My friend, that which I am about to do? Forasmuch as the town of Sedom is among the gifts that I have given to him, it is just that I should not overthrow it, till I have made it known to him. |
| 18. And Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, **and all the nations of the world will be blessed in him.** | 18. For Abraham is to be a great and mighty people, **and through him will all the peoples of the earth be blessed.** |
| 19. For I have known him because he commands his sons and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord to perform righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord bring upon Abraham that which He spoke concerning him." | 19. Because his holiness (piety) is manifest before Me, (and) that he will instruct his sons, and the men of his house after him, to keep the ways that are right before the LORD, to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken concerning him. |
| 20. And the Lord said, "Since the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has become great, **and since their sin has become very grave,** | 20. And the LORD said to the ministering angels, The cry of Sedom and Amorah, **because they oppress the poor, and decree that whosoever gives a morsel to the needy will be burned with fire, is therefore great, and their guilt exceedingly weighty.** |
| 21. I will descend now and see, whether according to her cry, which has come to Me, they have done;[I will wreak] destruction[upon them]; **and if not, I will know.**" | 21. I will now appear, and see whether, as the cry of a damsel torn away, which ascends before Me, they have made completion of their sins; (or, whether they have made an end of their sins;) **and if they have wrought repentance, will they not be as (if) innocent before Me? and as if not knowing, I will not punish.**  JERUSALEM: Now will I appear and see, according as the cry of the people of Sedom and Amorah has ascended before Me, whether they have made a complete end. It may be, that some among these sinners do not know that their works of evil are manifest before Me. **And if they seek to work repentance, behold, they will be considered before Me as if those works had not been known.** |
| 22. And the men turned from there and went to Sodom, and Abraham was still standing before the Lord. | 22. And the angels who had the likeness of men, turned thence, and went towards Sedom. And Abraham now supplicated mercy for Lot and ministered in prayer before the LORD. |
| 23. And Abraham approached and said, "Will You even destroy the righteous with the wicked? | 23. And Abraham prayed and said, Will You destroy in Your displeasure the innocent with the guilty? |
| 24. Perhaps there are **fifty righteous men** in the midst of the city; will You even destroy and not forgive the place for the sake of the fifty righteous men who are in its midst? | 24. Perhaps there are **fifty innocent persons** within the city, who pray before You,--ten for every city, of all the five cities of Sedom, Amorah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Wilt You in Your displeasure destroy and not forgive the country, on account of the fifty innocent ones who are in it? Unholy would it be before You to do according to this word, to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to make the innocent to be as the guilty! |
| 25. Far be it from You to do a thing such as this, to put to death the righteous with the wicked so that the righteous should be like the wicked. Far be it from You! Will the Judge of the entire earth not perform justice?" | 25. That be unholy with You. It cannot be that One who is the Judge of all the earth should not do justice. |
| 26. And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom **fifty righteous men** within the city, I will forgive the entire place for their sake." | 26. And the LORD said, If I find in Sedom **fifty innocent** in the midst of the city who pray before Me, I will forgive all the land on their account. |
| 27. And Abraham answered and said, "Behold now I have commenced to speak to the Lord, although I am dust and ashes. | 27. And Abraham responded, and said, I pray for mercy. Behold, now, I have begun to speak before the LORD; I, who am as dust and ashes. |
| 28. Perhaps the fifty righteous men will be missing five. Will You destroy the entire city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy if I find **there forty-five."** | 28. Perhaps of the fifty innocent persons, five may be wanting. On account of the five who may be wanting to Zoar, will You destroy the whole city? And He said, I will not destroy it, if I find there **forty and five.** |
| 29. And he continued further to speak to Him, and he said, "Perhaps forty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it **for the sake of the forty."** | 29. And he added yet to speak before Him, and said, Perhaps there may be forty found there; ten for each city of the four cities, and Zoar, whose guilt is lighter, forgive You for Your mercy's sake. And he said, I will not make an end for the sake **of the forty innocent ones.** |
| 30. And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak. Perhaps thirty will be found there." And He said, "I will not do it if I find **thirty there."** | 30. And he said, Let not the displeasure of the LORD, the LORD of all the world, wax strong against me, and I will speak. Perhaps thirty who pray may be found there, ten for each of the three cities, and Zeboim and Zoar forgive them for Your mercy's sake. And He said, I will not make an end **if I find thirty there.** |
| 31. And he said, "Behold now I have desired to speak to the Lord, perhaps twenty will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy **for the sake of the twenty."** | 31. And he said, Imploring mercy, I have now begun to speak before the LORD, the LORD of all the world. Perhaps twenty who pray may be found; ten in each of the two cities and forgive You for Your mercy's sake! And He said, I will not destroy for the sake of **the twenty innocent.** |
| 32. And he said, "Please, let the Lord's wrath not be kindled, and I will speak yet this time, perhaps ten will be found there." And He said, "I will not destroy **for the sake of the ten."** | 32. And he said, I implore mercy before You! Let not the anger of the LORD, the LORD of all the world, grow strong, and I will speak only this time. Perhaps ten may be found there; and I and they will pray for mercy upon all the land, and You will forgive them. And He said, I will not destroy for the sake of the **ten who may be innocent.** |
| 33. And the Lord departed when He finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place. | 33. And the majesty of the (Shekinah of the) LORD went up when He had ceased to speak with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place. |

**Reading Assignment:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez - Vol II: The Patriarchs**  By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1988)  Vol. 2 – “The Patriarchs,” pp. **157-219** | **Ramban: Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated  by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel  Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1971) pp. **226-249** |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎** **B’resheet (Genesis) 18:1-33‎**

**1 And [the Lord] appeared** to him to visit the sick (Tan. Buber, Vayera 1). Said Rabbi Chama the son of Chanina: It was the third day from his circumcision, and the Holy One, blessed be He, came and inquired about his welfare (B. M. 86b).

**in the plains of Mamre** He [Mamre] was the one who counseled him about circumcision. Therefore, He appeared to him [Abraham] in his [Mamre’s] territory.-[from Tan. Vayera 3]

**was sitting** It is written יֽשֵׁב [without a “vav,” and may therefore be read: “he sat”]. He wished to stand. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, **“Sit and I will stand, and you will be a sign for your children that I am destined to stand in the congregation of the judges, and they will sit,”** as it is said (Ps. 82:1): **“God stands in the Divine assembly.”**-[from Gen. Rabbah 48:7]

**at the entrance of the tent** to see whether there were any passersby whom he would bring into his house.-[from B.M. 86b]

**when the day was hot** -(B.M. 86b) The Holy One, blessed be He, took the sun out of its sheath so as not to trouble him with wayfarers, but since He saw that he was troubled that no wayfarers were coming, He brought the angels to him in the likeness of men.-[from Gen. Rabbah 48:9, Exod. Rabbah 25:2]

**2 and behold, three men** One to bring the news [of Isaac’s birth] to Sarah, and one to overturn Sodom, and one to heal Abraham, for one angel does not perform two errands (Gen. Rabbah 50:2). You should know that [this is true] because throughout the entire chapter, Scripture mentions them in the plural, e.g., (below verse 8): “and they ate”; (ibid. verse 9): “and they said to him.” Concerning the announcement, however, it says (ibid. verse 10): “And he said: I will surely return to you.” And concerning the overturning of Sodom, it says (below 19:22): “For I will not be able to do anything”; (ibid. verse 21): “I will not overturn” (Gen. Rabbah 50:11). And Raphael, who healed Abraham, went from there to save Lot. This is what is stated: “And it came to pass when they took them outside, that he [the angel] said, ‘Flee for your life.’“ You learn that only one acted as a deliverer.

**were standing beside him** Heb. עָלָיו , lit. over him. Before him, like (Num. 2:20): “And next to him (וְעָלָיו) , the tribe of Manasseh,” but it is a euphemism in reference to the angels.

**and he saw** Why is וַיַרְא written twice [in this verse?] The first is to be understood according to its apparent meaning [i.e., and he saw], and the second means “understanding.” He observed that they were standing in one place, and he understood that they did not wish to burden him. And although they knew that he would come out toward them, they stood in their place out of respect for him, to show him that they did not wish to trouble him, and he went out first and ran toward them. (This is the reading in an old Rashi ms.) In Bava Metzia (ad loc.) it is written: “standing beside him,” and then it is written: “and he ran toward them!” When they saw that he was untying and tying [his bandages], they separated from him. Immediately, “he ran toward them.”

**3 And he said, “My lords, if only I have, etc.”** To the chief one he said this, and he called them all lords, and to the chief one he said, “Please do not pass by,” because if he would not pass by, his companions would stay with him. According to this version, it (אֲדֽנָי) is profane (Shev. 35b) (i. e., it does not refer to God). Another explanation: It (אֲדֽנָי) is holy, and he was telling the Holy One, blessed be He, to wait for him until he would run and bring in the wayfarers. And although this [“Do not pass by”] is written after, “and ran toward them,” the statement [to God, “do not pass by”] preceded it. It is customary for the verses to speak in this manner, as I explained in reference to (above 6:3): “Let My spirit not quarrel forever concerning man” [the decree that God would wait 120 years before bringing the Flood] which was written after (5:32): “And Noah begot.” But it is impossible to say otherwise than that the decree preceded the birth [of Japhet] by 20 years. And the two interpretations [of אֲדֽנָי as being profane and holy in this context] are in Genesis Rabbah.

**Please let...**be taken through a messenger, and the Holy One, blessed be He, rewarded his [Abraham’s] children through a messenger, as it is said (Num. 20:11): “And Moses raised his hand, and he struck the rock.”-[from B.M. 86b]

**and bathe your feet** He thought that they were Arabs, who prostrate themselves to the dust of their feet, and he was strict not to allow any idolatry into his house. But Lot, who was not strict, mentioned lodging before washing, as it is said (below 19: 2): “and lodge and bathe your feet.”-[from Gen. Rabbah 54:4]

**under the tree** under the tree.-[from Targumim]

**5 and sustain your hearts** In the Torah, in the Prophets, and in the Hagiographa, we find that bread is the sustenance of the heart. In the Torah-”and sustain your hearts”; in the Prophets-(Jud. 19:5): “Sustain your heart with a morsel of bread”; in the Hagiographa-(Ps. 104:15): “and bread sustains man’s heart.” Said Rabbi Chama: לְבַבְכֶם is not written here, but לִבְָּכֶם . This teaches us that the evil inclination does not rule over the angels.-[from Gen. Rabbah 48:11]

**after[wards] you shall pass on** Afterwards, you shall go.

**because you have passed by** For I request this from you [i.e., to sustain your hearts] because you have passed by me [i.e., have stopped in my home] to honor me.

**because** - כִּי עַל כֵּן is like עַל אֲשֶׁר , because, and so is every כִּי עַל כֵּן in Scripture, e.g., (below 19:8): “because (כִּי עַל כֵּן) they have come in the shadow of my roof”; (below 33:10): “because (כִּי עַל כֵּן) I have seen your countenance”; (below 38: 26): “because (כִּי עַל כֵּן) I have not given her”; (Num. 10:31): “because (כִּי עַל כֵּן) you know our encamping.”

**6 meal [and] fine flour** The fine flour for the cakes [and] the meal for the starch used by cooks to cover the pot, to draw out the scum.-[from B.M. 86b]

**7 a calf, tender and good** There were three calves, in order to feed them three tongues with mustard.-[from B.M. 86b]

**to the youth** This was Ishmael, to train him to perform mitzvoth.-[from Aboth d’Rabbi Nathan, ch. 13]

**8 And he took cream and milk, etc.** But he did not bring bread, because Sarah became menstruous, for the manner of the women returned to her on that day, and the dough became ritually unclean.-[from B.M. 87a] cream the fat of the milk that is skimmed off the top.

**and the calf that he had prepared that he had prepared.** Each one that he prepared, he took and brought before them.-[from B.M. 86b]

**and they ate** They appeared to be eating.-[from here we learn that a person should not deviate from custom.-[from B.M. ad loc., Gen. Rabbah 48:14, Targum Jonathan]

**9 And they said to him** Heb. אֵלָיו . There are dots over the letters איו in the word אֵלָיו . And we learned: Rabbi Simeon the son of Eleazar says: “Wherever the [undotted] letters are more than the dotted ones, you must expound on the [undotted] letters, etc.” And here, the dotted letters are more than the [undotted] letters, and you must expound on the dotted [letters]. [The meaning is that] they also asked Sarah, “Where (אַיוֹ) is Abraham?” (Gen. Rabbah 48:15) **We learn that a person should ask in his lodging place of the husband about the wife, and of the wife about the husband** (B.M. 87a). In Bava Metzia (ad loc.) it is said: **The ministering angels knew where our mother Sarah was, but [they asked in order] to make known that she was modest, in order to endear her to her husband.** Said Rabbi Joseph the son of Chanina: **In order to send her a cup of blessing (i.e., the cup of wine upon which the Grace after Meals is recited).**

**Behold in the tent** **She is modest.**-[from B.M. ad loc., Mid. Ps. 128:3]

**10 at this time next year** At this time, next year. **It was Passover, and on the following Passover, Isaac was born,** since we do not כְּעֵת [at “a” time] כָּעֵת [at “this” time]. כָּעֵת חַיָה means: at this time, when there will be life for you, when you will all be alive and well.-[from Targum Yerushalmi, Targum Jonathan]

**I will surely return** The angel did not announce that he [himself] would return to him, **but he was speaking to him as an emissary of the Omnipresent.** Similarly (above 16:10): “And the angel said to her: I will greatly multiply [your seed]” but he [the angel] did not have the power to multiply [her children], **but he spoke as an emissary of the Omnipresent.** Here too, it was as an emissary of the Omnipresent that he said this to him. (Elisha said to the Shunamite woman (II Kings 4:16): “At this season, at this time next year, you will be embracing a son.” And she said, “No my lord, O man of God, do not fail your maidservant. Those angels who announced to Sarah, said (below verse 14): ‘At the appointed time, I will return,’“ [but Elisha did not promise to return]. Elisha replied, “Those angels, who live and endure forever, said, ‘At the appointed time, I will return.’ But I am flesh and blood, alive today and dead tomorrow. Whether I shall be alive or dead, ‘At this time, etc. [you will embrace a son.’“] (Gen. Rabbah 53:2).

**and it was behind him** The entrance was behind the angel.

**11 ceased to have** It had ceased from her.-[from Gen Rabbah 48:16]

**the way of the women** the menstrual cycle.

**12 within herself** She looked at her insides and said, “Is it possible that these insides will carry a child; that these breasts, which have dried up, will give forth milk?”-[from Tan. Shoftim 18] smooth flesh Heb. עֶדְנָה , smoothness of flesh, and in the language of the Mishnah (Meg. 13a, Men. 86a): “It causes the hair to fall out and smooths (מְעַדֵָּן) the flesh.” Another explanation: an expression of time (עִידָן) , the time of the menstrual period.-[from Gen. Rabbah 48:17]

**13 Is it really true** Is it really true that I will give birth?-

**although I am old** Scripture altered [her statement] for the sake of peace, for she had said, “and my master is old.”-[from B.M. 87a]

**14 Is...hidden** Heb. הֲיִפָָלֵא , as the Targum renders: הַיִתְכַּסֵי . Is anything too hidden and separated and concealed from Me [to prevent Me] from doing My will?

**At the appointed time** At that time that was appointed, that I set for you yesterday, [when I said] (17:21): “at this time next year.”

**15 because she was afraid...but you laughed** The first כִּי serves as an expression of “because,” for it gives the reason for the matter: “And Sarah denied...because she was afraid,” and the second כִּי serves as an expression of “but.” And He said, “It is not as you say, but you did laugh.” F**or our Sages said: כִּי has four different meanings: if, perhaps, but, and because.-[from R.H. 3a]**

**16 and they looked** Heb. וַיַשְׁקִיפוּ . Whenever the word הַשְׁקָפָה occurs in Scripture, it denotes evil, except (Deut. 26:15): “ Look (הַשְׁקִיפָה) from Your holy dwelling,” **for the power of gifts to the poor is so great that it converts the Divine attribute of wrath to mercy**.- [from Tan. Ki Thissa 14]

**to escort them** Heb. לְשַׁלְחָם , to escort them. He thought that they were wayfarers.-[from Zohar, vol. 1, 104a]

**17 Shall I conceal** Heb. הַמְכַסֶה ? This is a question.[i.e., The “hey” is not the definite article but the interrogative “hey.”]

**what I am doing in Sodom?** It would be improper for Me to do this thing without his knowledge. I gave him this land, and these five cities are his, as it is said (10:19): “And the border of the Canaanite was from Sidon..., as you come to Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.” I called him Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations. Now, can I destroy the sons without informing the father, who loves Me?-[from Gen. Rabbah 49:2, Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer ch. 25]

**18 And Abraham will become** [According to] a Midrash Aggadah (Yoma 38b) (Prov. 10: 7): “The mention of a righteous man is for a blessing.” Since He mentioned him, He blessed him. Its simple meaning is, however: Shall I conceal this from him? He is so dear to Me as to become a great nation, **and through him will be blessed all the nations of the earth.**

**19 For I have known him** Heb. יְדַעְתִּיו , an expression of love, like (Ruth 2:1): “a kinsman (מוֹדַע) of her husband”; (ibid. 3:2): “And now, Boaz our kinsman (מוֹדַעְתָּנוּ) ”; (Exod. 33:17): “and I shall know you (וָאֵדָעֲךָ) by name.” But, in fact, **the primary meaning of them all is none other than an expression of knowing, for if one loves a person, he draws him near to himself and knows him and is familiar with him.** **Now why do I love him? “Because he commands”... for he commands his sons concerning Me, to keep My ways.** But if you explain it as the Targum renders: “I know about him that he will command his sons, etc.,” the word לְמַעַן does not fit into the sense [of the verse].

**because he commands** Heb. יְצַוֶּה , a present tense, (i.e., a habitual action) like (Job 1: 5): “So would Job do (יַעֲשֶׂה) ”; [(Num. 9:20): “in accordance to the utterance of the Lord they would camp” (יַחֲנוּ) ].

**in order that [the Lord] bring** So would he command his sons, “Keep the way of the Lord in order that the Lord bring upon Abraham, etc.” It does not say “upon the house of Abraham” but “upon Abraham.” **We learn from this that whoever raises a righteous son is considered as though he does not die.-[from Gen. Rabbah 49:4]**

**20 And the Lord said to Abraham,** for He did as He had said, that He would not conceal from him.

**since [it] has become great** Wherever רָבָָּה appears in Scripture, the accent is on the last syllable, on the “beth,” because they are translated: “great”, or “becoming great.” But this one has its accent on the first syllable, on the “resh,” because it is to be translated: “has already become great,” as I have explained regarding (above 15:17): “Now it came to pass that the sun had set (בָּאָָה) ”; (Ruth 1:15): “Lo, your sister-in-law has returned (שָׁבָָה) .”

**21 I will descend now** This teaches judges that they should not decide capital punishment cases unless they see it [i.e., they must go to the site of the crime and investigate the matter.]-[Divrei David]) Everything is as I explained in the chapter dealing with the dispersion (Tan. Noah 18). Another explanation: I will descend to the end of their deeds (to fathom the results thereof). -[Be’er Mayim Chayim]).

**whether according to her cry** [i.e., the cry] of the land.

**which has come to Me, they have done** And [if] they remain in their state of rebellion, I will wreak destruction upon them, but if they do not remain in their state of rebellion, I will know what I will do, to punish them with suffering, but I will not destroy them. Similar to this we find elsewhere (Exod. 33:5): “But now, leave off your ornament from yourself, so that I may know what to do to you.” Therefore, there is a pause marked by the cantillation sign of a פּסִיק between עָשָׂוּ and כָָּלָה , in order to separate one word from another. Our Sages, however, interpreted הַכְָּצַעֲקָתָה to refer to the cry of a certain girl, whom they killed with an unusual death because she gave food to a poor man, as is delineated in [chapter] Chelek. (Sanh. 109b)

**22 And [the men] turned from there** from the place to which Abraham had escorted them.

**and Abraham was still standing, etc.** But is it not so that he did not go to stand before Him, but the Holy One, blessed be He, came to him and said to him (above verse 20): “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has become great, etc.,” and it should have been written here: “and the Lord was still standing beside Abraham?” But this is an emendation of the Scribes (Gen. Rabbah 49:7). (The Sages of blessed memory changed the text and wrote it in this manner) [to avoid an irreverent expression, i.e., it would be offensive to God to say that He was standing before Abraham!]

**23 And Abraham approached and said** We find [the expression]”approaching” for war (II Sam. 10:13): “And Joab drew forward, etc.”; and “approaching” for placating (below 44:8): “And Judah approached him”; and “approaching” for prayer (I Kings 18:36): “And Elijah the prophet came near.” For all these, Abraham approached: to speak harshly [i.e., when he requested justice], to placate, and to pray.-[from Gen. Rabbah 49:8]

**Will You even destroy** Heb. הַאַף . Will You also destroy? And according to the translation of Onkelos, who rendered אַף as an expression of wrath, this is its interpretation: Will wrath entice You that You should destroy the righteous with the wicked?

**24 Perhaps there are fifty righteous men ten righteous men for each city,** because there were five places.-[from Targum Jonathan]

**25 Far be it from You** And if You say that the righteous will not save the wicked, why should You kill the righteous?-[from Gen. Rabbah 49:8]

**Far be it from You** Heb. חָלִילָה . It is profane (חוּלִין) , [i.e., unfitting] for You. They will say, “So is His craft. He inundates everyone, righteous and wicked.” So, You did to the Generation of the Flood and to the Generation of the Dispersion.-[from Tan. Vayera 8]

**a thing such as this** Neither this nor anything similar to it.-

**Far be it from You** for the World to Come.-[from Tan. Buber]

**Will the Judge of the entire earth** The “hey” of הֲשֽׁפֵט is vowelized with a “chataf pattach,” as an expression of wonder: Will He Who judges not perform true justice?!

**26 “If I find in Sodom, etc.,** the entire place [Sodom refers to] all the cities, but because Sodom was the metropolis and the most important of them all, Scripture ascribes [the fifty righteous men] to it.

**27 although I am dust and ashes** I was already fit to be dust at the hands of the kings and ashes at the hands of Nimrod, were it not for Your mercies that stood by me.

**28 Will You destroy because of five** Will there not be nine for each city? And You, the Righteous One of the world, will be counted with them.-[from Gen. Rabbah 49:9]

**29 Perhaps forty will be found there** And four cities will be saved, and so thirty will save three of them, or twenty will save two of them, or ten will save one of them.-[from Zohar, vol. 1, omissions, 255b]

**31 Behold now I have desired** Heb. הוֹאַלְתִּי . I have desired, as in (Exod. 2:21): “And Moses was willing (וַיוֹאֶל) .”

**32 perhaps ten will be found there** For fewer [than ten] he did not ask. He said, “In the Generation of the Flood, there were eight: Noah and his sons, and their wives, but they did not save their generation.” And for nine, together with counting [God] he had already asked but did not find.

**33 And the Lord departed, etc.** Since the defender was silent, the Judge left.

**and Abraham returned to his place** The Judge left, the defender left, and the prosecutor is accusing. Therefore: ”And the two angels came to Sodom,” to destroy (Gen. Rabbah 49:14) One to destroy Sodom and one to save Lot, and he [the latter] is the same one who came to heal Abraham, but the third one, who came to announce [Isaac’s birth] to Sarah, since he had performed his mission, he departed (Tan. Vayera 8).

**Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

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

1. **Ḳal wa-ḥomer:** Identical with the first rule of Hillel.
2. **Gezerah shawah:** Identical with the second rule of Hillel.
3. **Binyan ab:** Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel.
4. **Kelal u-Peraṭ:** The general and the particular.
5. **u-Peraṭ u-kelal:** The particular and the general.
6. **Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal:** The general, the particular, and the general.
7. **The general** which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general.
8. **The particular** implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular.
9. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application.
10. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application.
11. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it.
12. **Deduction from the context.**
13. **When two Biblical passages contradict each other** the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage.

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

**Ramban’s Commentary for:** **B’resheet (Genesis) ‎18:1-33‎**

‎**18:1. AND HE APPEARED TO HIM.** Rashi comments: "To ‎visit the sick man. Said Rabbi Chama the son of Chanina, 'It was the third day after his circumcision, and the Holy One, blessed be He, came ‎and inquired after him.'[[1]](#footnote-1) And, lo, three men:[[2]](#footnote-2) angels who came to him in the form of men. Three: one to announce to Sarah that she would bear ‎a son, one to heal Abraham, and one to overthrow Sodom. Raphael who healed Abraham went from there to rescue Lot" for these do not ‎constitute two commissions.[[3]](#footnote-3) This is because the second mission was in another place, and he was commanded thereon after [he had ‎completed his first mission].[[4]](#footnote-4) Perhaps it is because the two missions had rescue as their common goal.[[5]](#footnote-5) *"And they did eat*:[[6]](#footnote-6) they appeared to ‎be eating." ‎

In the book Moreh Nebuchim[[7]](#footnote-7) it is said that this portion of Scripture consists of a general statement followed by a detailed description. Thus ‎Scripture first says that the Eternal appeared to Abraham in the form of prophetic visions, and then explains in ‎what manner this vision took place, namely, that he [Abraham] lifted up his eyes in the vision, *and lo, three men stood by him*,[[8]](#footnote-8) *and he said, ‎If now I have found favor in Your eyes*.[[9]](#footnote-9) This is the account of what he said in the prophetic vision to one of them, namely, their chief. ‎

Now if in the vision there appeared to Abraham only men partaking of food, how then does Scripture say, *And the Eternal appeared to him*, ‎as G-d did not appear to him in vision or in thought?[[10]](#footnote-10) Such is not found with respect to all the prophecies. And according to his[[11]](#footnote-11) words, Sarah ‎did not knead cakes, nor did Abraham prepare a bullock, and also, Sarah did not laugh. It was all a vision! If so, this dream came *through a ‎multitude of business*,[[12]](#footnote-12) like dreams of falsehood, for what is the purpose of showing him all this![[13]](#footnote-13) Similarly did the author of the Moreh ‎Nebuchirn say in the case of the verse, *And a man wrestled with him*,[[14]](#footnote-14) that it was all a prophetic vision. But if this be the case, I do not know ‎why Jacob limped on his thigh when he awoke! And why did Jacob say, *For I have seen an angel face to face, and my life is preserved*?[[15]](#footnote-15) The ‎prophets did not fear that they might die on account of having experienced prophetic visions. Jacob, moreover, had already seen a greater and ‎more distinguished vision than this since many times, in prophetic visions, he had also seen the Revered Divinity.[[16]](#footnote-16) Now according to this ‎author's opinion, he will find it necessary for the sake of consistency to say similarly in the affair of Lot that the angels did not come to his ‎house, nor did he bake for them unleavened bread and they did eat.[[17]](#footnote-17) Rather, it was all a vision! But if Lot could ascend to the height of a ‎prophetic vision, how did the wicked and sinful people of Sodom become prophets? Who told them that men had come into Lot's ‎house? And if all these [i.e., the actions of the inhabitants of Sodom], were part of prophetic visions, then it follows that the account related ‎in the verses, *And the angels hastened Lot, saying: ‎Arise take your wife ... And he said, Escape for your life ... See, I have accepted you*,[[18]](#footnote-18) as well as the entire chapter is but a vision, and if so, Lot ‎could have remained in Sodom! But the author of the Moreh Nebuchim thinks that the events took place of themselves, but the conversations ‎relating to all matters were in a vision! But such words contradict Scripture. It is forbidden to listen to them, all the more to believe in them! ‎

In truth,[[19]](#footnote-19) wherever Scripture mentions an angel being seen or heard speaking it is in a vision or in a dream for the human senses cannot ‎perceive the angels. But these are not visions of prophecy since he who attains the vision of an angel or the hearing of his speech is not yet a ‎prophet. For the matter is not as the Rabbi[[20]](#footnote-20) pronounced, i.e., that every prophet, Moses our teacher excepted, received his prophecy ‎through the medium of an angel. The Sages have already said[[21]](#footnote-21) concerning Daniel: "They[[22]](#footnote-22) were greater than he for they were prophets and ‎he was not a prophet." His book, likewise, was not grouped together[[23]](#footnote-23) with the books of the prophets since his affair was with the angel Gabriel, ‎even though he appeared to him and spoke with him when he was awake, as it is said in the vision concerning the second Temple: ‎*Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, etc.[[24]](#footnote-24)* The vision concerning the ultimate redemption[[25]](#footnote-25) also occurred when ‎

‎

Daniel was awake as he walked with his friends beside the Tigris River.[[26]](#footnote-26) Hagar the Egyptian[[27]](#footnote-27) is not included in the group of prophetesses.[[28]](#footnote-28) ‎It is also clear that hers was not a case of the *bath kol* (prophetic echo),[[29]](#footnote-29) as the Rabbi would have it. Scripture, furthermore, sets apart the ‎prophecy of Moses our teacher from that of the patriarchs, as it is said, *And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the ‎name of] G-d Almighty*,[[30]](#footnote-30) this name being one of the sacred names for the Creator, and not a designation for an angel. Our Rabbis also taught ‎concerning the difference in the degree of prophecy between Moses and the other prophets, and they said:[[31]](#footnote-31) "What is the difference between ‎Moses and all the prophets? The Rabbis say that all prophets saw through unclear vision. It is to this matter that Scripture refers in saying, ***And ‎I have multiplied visions, and by the ministry of the prophets have I used similitudes***.[[32]](#footnote-32) Moses saw through a clear vision. It is to this matter ‎that Scripture refers in saying, ***And the similitudes of the Eternal does he behold*,[[33]](#footnote-33)** as is explained in Vayikra Rabba 1:14 and other places. ‎But in no place did the Sages attribute the prophecy of the prophets to an angel.

‎

Do not expose yourself to argument by quoting the verse, *I also am a prophet as you are; and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the ‎Eternal, saying*,[[34]](#footnote-34) since its meaning is as follows: "I ‎also am a prophet as you are, and I know that the angel who spoke to me was by word of G-d, this being one of the degrees of prophecy, as ‎the man of G-d said, *For so was it charged me by the word of the Eternal*,[[35]](#footnote-35) and he further said, *For it was said to me by the word of the ‎Eternal*.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Our Rabbis have further stated[[37]](#footnote-37) in the matter of Balaam, who said, *Now, therefore, if it displease you, I will get me back*,[[38]](#footnote-38) [that is as if ‎Balaam commented]: "I did not go [with the messengers of Balak] until the Holy One, blessed be He, told me, *Rise up, go with them*,[[39]](#footnote-39) and ‎you [i.e., an angel], tell me that I should return. Such is His conduct! Did He not tell Abraham to sacrifice his son, after which the angel of the ‎Eternal called to Abraham, *And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad*.[[40]](#footnote-40) He is accustomed to saying something and to have an angel revoke ‎it, etc." Thus the Sages were prompted to say that the prophecy comprising the first charge where G-d is mentioned is not like the second charge ‎of which it is said that it was through an angel, only this was not unusual, for it is customary with the prophets that He would command by a ‎prophecy and revoke the command through an angel since the prophet knew that the revocation was the word of G-d. ‎

In the beginning of Vayikra Rabba[[41]](#footnote-41) the Sages have said: ‎‎"*And He called to Moses*,[[42]](#footnote-42) unlike Abraham. Concerning Abraham it is written, *And the angel of the Eternal called unto Abraham a second ‎time au t of heaven*.[[43]](#footnote-43) The angel called, and G-d spoke the word, but here with respect to Moses, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'It is I Who ‎called, and it is I Who spoke the word.' " That is to say, Abraham did not attain prophecy until he prepared his soul first to perceive an angel, ‎and from that degree he ascended to attain the word of prophecy, but Moses was prepared for prophecy at all times. ‎

‎Thus the Sages were prompted to inform us everywhere that seeing an angel is not prophecy, and those who see angels and speak with them ‎are not included among the prophets, as I have mentioned concerning Daniel. Rather, this is only a vision called "opening of eyes," as in the ‎verse: *And the Eternal opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Eternal*;[[44]](#footnote-44) similarly: ‎*And Elisha prayed, and said, O Eternal, I pray to you, open his eyes, that he may see*.[[45]](#footnote-45) But where Scripture mentions the angels as men, as is ‎the case in this portion, and the portion concerning Lot - likewise, *And a man wrestled with him*, *And a certain man found him*,[[46]](#footnote-46) in the ‎opinion of our Rabbis[[47]](#footnote-47) - in all these cases there was a special glory created in the angels, called among those who know the mysteries of the ‎Torah "a garment," perceptible to the human vision of such pure persons as the pious and the disciples of the prophets, and I cannot explain ‎any further. And in those places in Scripture where you find the sight of G-d and the speech of an angel, or the sight of an angel and the speech ‎of G-d, as is written concerning Moses at the outset of his prophecy,[[48]](#footnote-48) and in the words of Zechariah.[[49]](#footnote-49) I will yet disclose words of the living ‎G-d in allusions. ‎

Concerning on the matter of the verse, *And they did eat*, the Sages have said:[[50]](#footnote-50) "One course after the other disappeared.”[[51]](#footnote-51) The matter of ‎‎"disappearance" you will understand from the account about Manoah,[[52]](#footnote-52) if you will be worthy to attain it. ‎

Now here is the interpretation of this portion of Scripture. After it says that *In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised*,[[53]](#footnote-53) Scripture says ‎that G-d appeared to him while he was sick from the circumcision as he was sitting and cooling himself in his tent door on account of the heat ‎of the day which weakened him. ‎Scripture mentions this in order to inform us that Abraham had no intention for prophecy. He had neither fallen on his face nor prayed, yet ‎this vision did come to him. ‎

**IN THE OAKS OF MAMRE.** This is to inform us of the place wherein he was circumcised. ‎

Now this revelation of the Shechinah (the Divine Presence) came to Abraham as a mark of distinction and honor, even as it is said in ‎connection with the dedication of the Tabernacle, *And they [Moses and Aaron] came out, and blessed the people, and the glory of the Eternal ‎appeared unto all the people*,[[54]](#footnote-54) as it was on account of their effort in fulfilling the commandment of building the Tabernacle that they ‎merited seeing the Shechinah. Now the revelation of the Shechinah here and there was not at all for the purpose of charging them with some ‎commandment or to impart some communication. **Instead, it was a reward for the commandment which had already been performed, and ‎it informed them that their deeds have G-d's approval**, even as it says, *As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness/generosity; I will be satisfied, ‎when I awake, with Your likeness*.[[55]](#footnote-55) Similarly, in connection with Jacob, Scripture says, *And the angels of G-d met him*,[[56]](#footnote-56) and yet we find no ‎communication there, nor is any new matter conveyed. Instead, **the verse only informs us that he merited seeing angels of the Supreme One, ‎and thus he knew that his deeds had His approval**. And so it was with Abraham: the seeing of the Shechinah (the Divine Presence) was both ‎merit [for his having performed the commandment of circumcision] and assurance of G-d's approval. ‎

Similarly did the Sages say[[57]](#footnote-57) of those who passed through the Red Sea and said, *This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him*:[[58]](#footnote-58) "A handmaid saw ‎at the sea what Ezekiel the prophet never saw." This they merited at the time of the great miracle because *they believed in the Eternal, and ‎in Moses his servant*.[[59]](#footnote-59)‎

At times the appearance of the Shechinah comes in a moment of anger, as mentioned in the verse: *And the whole congregation bade stone ‎them with stones, when the glory of the Eternal appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel*.[[60]](#footnote-60) That was for the protection ‎of His righteous servants and their honor. ‎

Now do not be concerned about the interruption of the portion[[61]](#footnote-61) since the subject is after all connected. It is for this reason that the verse says, ‎*And He appeared to him*, and it does not say, "And the Eternal appeared to Abraham." But in this present chapter Scripture wishes to give an ‎account of the honor that was bestowed upon him [Abraham] at the time he performed the circumcision, and it tells that the Shechinah ‎appeared to him and sent him His angels to inform his wife [that she would give birth to a son], and also to save his relative Lot on his account. ‎Abraham had already been informed by the Shechinah concerning the birth of a son,[[62]](#footnote-62) and Sarah was now informed by word of the angel ‎who spoke with Abraham in order that Sarah should hear, even as it says, *And Sarah heard*.[[63]](#footnote-63)

This is the intent of the Sages' saying,[[64]](#footnote-64) "G-d came to visit the sick man," meaning that it was not for the purpose of some utterance but as a ‎mark of honor to him. ‎

They have also said,[[65]](#footnote-65) "*An altar of earth you will make unto Me*.[[66]](#footnote-66) Now if any person just built an altar to My name, he is assured that I ‎will appear unto him and bless him.[[67]](#footnote-67) All the more is such assurance given to Abraham who circumcised himself for My name." ‎

It is possible that the Sages may have further intended to say [by their remark, "He came to visit the sick man,"] **that the vision of the ‎Shechinah was a cure for his sickness on account of the circumcision**, for so it should be, as it is written, *In the light of the King's countenance ‎is life*.[[68]](#footnote-68)

‎

**2. STOOD OVER HIM.** The purport thereof is that they were standing opposite Abraham and looking at him, the expression being similar to: ‎*that stood over the reapers*;[[69]](#footnote-69) *the chief officers that stood over the work*.[[70]](#footnote-70) And due to the fact that he [Abraham] was sitting and they were ‎standing and looking at him, the verse says, "*over him*." This is also the meaning of the expression, *And he saw, and ran to meet them*, for as ‎he saw them standing opposite him and not continuing their journey, he ran to meet them in order to bring them to his house. ‎

The sense of the expression, *From the tent door*, is that Abraham was still sitting there after the vision of the Shechinah. had departed from ‎him. ‎

It is possible that the expression "over him" refers to the tent, i.e., that they were near it on the side which was not opposite the door, and there ‎they stood and did not approach Abraham, just as in the verse, *encamping 'at' (on) the sea*.[[71]](#footnote-71)

‎

**3. 'ADONAY,' IF NOW I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES.** We find the word Adonay here in the books marked with a kamatz.[[72]](#footnote-72) Thus ‎it must be that he called them by the name of their Master, i.e., with the Aleph Datet,[[73]](#footnote-73) as he recognized them ‎ to be angels of the Supreme One, even as they are called elohim and eilim.[[74]](#footnote-74) For this reason he bowed down to the earth to them. ‎

**PASS NOT AWAY, I PRAY, FROM YOUR SERVANT. ‎**Abraham spoke to each one of the angels, as is the way of the whole Torah: *You will keep all My statutes ... and do them*;[[75]](#footnote-75) *The nakedness ‎of your father, and the nakedness of your mother, you will not uncover*;[[76]](#footnote-76) *And when you reap the harvest of your land, you will not wholly ‎reap the corner of your field*;[[77]](#footnote-77) *And from thence you will seek the Eternal your G-d, and you will find Him, If you search after Him with all your ‎heart and with all you soul*.[[78]](#footnote-78) The greater part of the Mishneh Torah[[79]](#footnote-79) is written in this manner. A counter-example to the above is the verse: ‎*Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse*.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Now our Rabbis have said,[[81]](#footnote-81) "Abraham spoke to the chief of the angels ...[[82]](#footnote-82) It is also possible that he said to the chief, "*Pass not away, I pray , [in the singular sense], and you and your companions who will remain with you wash your feet*," [the verb "wash" being in the plural form] ‎‎. ‎

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that he called them all "lords," and he turned to each individual, saying to the first one: *If now ‎I have found favor in your eyes, pass not away*, and to the second one he said the same, and the same to the third one. He begged each one ‎individually: *If now I have found favor in your eyes, pass not away*, *and, let now a little water be fetched, and all of you wash your feet*.[[83]](#footnote-83) This ‎was by way of ethical conduct and respect out of his great desire to show kindness towards them. Now he recognized them as transients who ‎did not have the desire ‎to lodge there. This is why he asked of them only that a little water be fetched to wash their feet a little from the heat, to give *cold waters to ‎a faint soul*,[[84]](#footnote-84) and that they recline under the tree in the cool of the day without coming into the tent and the tabernacle. ‎

‎

**5. FORASMUCH AS YOU PASSED BY.** Since your path crossed near me, it is not proper that you should not rest a little with me. ‎

*So do, as you have said*. This is an ethical expression indicating that a morsel of bread will be sufficient.[[85]](#footnote-85) Thus the language of Rabbi ‎Abraham ibn Ezra. ‎

It may be that the verse is stating, "So will you do to us, that we recline under the tree and pass immediately as we are messengers, and ‎therefore do not detain us by making us come into the tent or lodge with you."

‎

‎**6. MEAL, FINE FLOUR.** The fine flour for the cakes; the meal for the dough used by cooks to place over the pot to absorb the scum. Thus the ‎words of Rashi. And so it is found in Beresheet Rabba.[[86]](#footnote-86) Now there the Sages explained that there were three measures of meal and three ‎measures of fine flour for each one of the guests. But we do not know why he served so much bread for three men. Perhaps he was aware of ‎how the food disappeared successively,[[87]](#footnote-87) and it was as if he was offering more Burnt-offerings upon the altar, or perhaps because in their ‎honor chiefs of his house dined with them. ‎

By way of the simple meaning [of Scripture, the verse is to be interpreted as follows: Make ready quickly three measures of meal to make of ‎them fine flour. Thus from the entire three measures of meal, they extracted a bit of fine flour. ‎

‎

‎**7. AND ABRAHAM RAN UNTO THE HERD.** The purport thereof is to tell us of his great desire to bestow kindness. This great man had three ‎hundred and eighteen men[[88]](#footnote-88) in his house, each one a swordsman, and he was very old and weakened by his circumcision, yet he went ‎personally to Sarah's tent to urge her in the making of the bread, and afterwards he ran to the place of the herd to chose a calf, tender and ‎good, to prepare for his guests, and he did not have all these done by means of one of his servants who stood ready to serve him. ‎

‎**10. I WILL CERTAINLY RETURN UNTO YOU WHEN THE SEASON COMES AROUND.** Rashi comments, "The angel was not ‎announcing that he would return to him, but he was speaking to him as G-d's agent, [meaning that G-d would return]. This is similar to the ‎verse: *And the angel of the Eternal said to her [Hagar], I will multiply your seed exceedingly*.[[89]](#footnote-89) **But he [the angel] has no power to multiply, ‎and he was therefore speaking as G-d's agent. So also here, he spoke as G-d's agent."** ‎

Now the Rabbi[[90]](#footnote-90) found it necessary to say so because the Holy One, blessed be He, told Abraham here, *At the set time I will return unto you.[[91]](#footnote-91)* However, whether it be a reference to the angel or to the Holy One, blessed be He, we do not find it recorded that at the set time He returned. ‎Perhaps a reference to this return is included in the expression, *And the Eternal remembered Sarah, as He had said, and the Eternal did unto ‎Sarah as He had spoken*.[[92]](#footnote-92) ‎

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra said that the verse beginning, *And the Eternal said to Abraham*,[[93]](#footnote-93) means that the angel said it in the name of Him ‎Who sent him, and he did return at the set time which he had told him, even though it is not written in Scripture. ‎

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that [the expression, ***shov ashuv*** *(I will certainly return)*], is akin to the phrase, ***liteshuvath ‎hashanah*** (*at the return of the year*).[[94]](#footnote-94) The verse is thus stating: "I will surely bring back to you a time as this time, that you will be alive and ‎Sarah your wife will have a son." This is similar to what was said to Abraham, *At this set time in the next year*.[[95]](#footnote-95) The word ***ashuv*** will then be ‎like, ***'Veshav'*** *(And) the Eternal your G-d (will bring back) your captivity and have compassion upon you and will return and gather you*.[[96]](#footnote-96)

‎

**11. 'BA'IM BAYAMIM' (ADVANCED IN DAYS).** In his youthful days a man is called "standing in days," and they are referred to as "his days" ‎because they belong to him, just as in verse *The number of your days will I fulfil*.[[97]](#footnote-97) But when he gets old and has lived longer than most people ‎of his generation, it is said of him that he is ***ba bayamim***, [literally, "came into days"], because it is as if he came into another land, travelling ‎from and arriving in a city each and every day. ‎

**IT HAD CEASED TO BE WITH SARAH AFTER THE MANNER OF WOMEN.** This is the time of pregnancy, for after menstruation has ‎ceased due to old age, a woman will not become pregnant. ‎

‎**13. I BEING OLD.** This is the explanation of Sarah's words, *after 1 am waxed o1d*.[[98]](#footnote-98) And G-d's words [that Sarah had said, "I being old"], were ‎true, but for the sake of peace He did not reveal what she also said, namely, ***My lord being old also***, for [if He were quoting Sarah], He ‎should have said, "I and my lord are old," as Sarah had laughed concerning both of them. ‎

‎

‎**14. IS ANYTHING TOO HARD ('HAYIPALEI') FOR THE ETERNAL?** Is anything too hard and improbable for G-d to cause it to happen? ‎This expression is similar to the verse, *For all things come of You, and of Your own have we given You*.[[99]](#footnote-99) Likewise, *Out of Asher his fat ‎bread*,[[100]](#footnote-100) meaning "Out of Asher will come fat bread." ‎

Onkelos translated: "Is anything hidden?" He interpreted it as similar to the expression, *If there arise a matter hidden (‘yipalei’) for thee in ‎judgment*.[[101]](#footnote-101) If so, there is a hidden secret here.

‎

Rashi's language: "***Hayipalei***, is anything apart and hidden from Me that I cannot do as I would wish?" Rashi has thus grafted together in [the ‎word ***hayipalei***] two separate concepts.[[102]](#footnote-102) ‎

‎

**15. AND SARAH DENIED, SAYING.** I wonder about the ‎righteous/generous prophetess:[[103]](#footnote-103) ‎How did she deny that which G-d had said to the prophet,[[104]](#footnote-104) ‎and also, why did she not believe in the words of G-d's angels? ‎

The answer appears to me to be that these angels who appeared as men came to Abraham, and he, in his wisdom, recognized them. They ‎announced to him, "*I will certainly return unto you*,[[105]](#footnote-105) *and Sarah will have a son*." *And Sarah heard it*, but she did not know that they were ‎angels of the Supreme One, as was the case with the wife of Manoah.[[106]](#footnote-106) It is even possible that she did not see them at all. Therefore she ‎laughed within herself in derision, just [as the word "laugh" is used in the verse]: *He that sits in heaven laughs, the Eternal has them in ‎derision*.[[107]](#footnote-107) For joyous laughter is [expressed in Hebrew as originating] in the mouth - *Then was our mouth filled with laughter[[108]](#footnote-108)* - but ‎laughter ‎originating in the heart is not spoken of as joyous. Now the Holy One, blessed be He, accused her before Abraham as to why the matter ‎appeared to her to be impossible. It was fitting for her to believe, or she should have said, "Amen, G-d do so!" Now Abraham said to her, "Why ‎did you laugh? Is anything too hard for the Eternal?" He did not explain to her that G-d had revealed her secret to him. And she, because of ‎Abraham's fear of G-d, denied it for she thought that Abraham had said so through recognition of the expressions on her face or because she ‎had kept quiet and gave no expression of praise and thanksgiving or joy. And he said to her, *No, but you did laugh*. Then she understood ‎that it was told to him in a prophecy, and so she remained quiet and did not answer a word. ‎

It is proper that we also say that Abraham had not revealed to her what had originally been told to him: *Indeed, Sarah, your wife will bear you ‎a son*.[[109]](#footnote-109) Perhaps he waited until G-d would send her the announcement on the following day for he knew that *the Eternal G-d will do ‎nothing, but He revealed His counsel unto His servants the prophets*.[[110]](#footnote-110) It may be that due to his great diligence in fulfilling commandments, ‎he was occupied with his circumcision and the circumcision of the many people in his house. Afterward, on account of his weakness, he sat ‎at the doorway of the tent, and the angels came before he had told her anything. ‎

‎**17. AND THE ETERNAL SAID.** I.e., to the host of heaven standing by Him,[[111]](#footnote-111) or to the angel messengers. ‎It is possible that the word ***amar*** (He said) refers to thought, meaning that He thought He should not keep it hidden from Abraham on account ‎of these reasons. Similarly: *I 'said,' in the noontide of my days I will go*;[[112]](#footnote-112) *And he 'said' to slay David*.[[113]](#footnote-113) Likewise all expressions of ‎speaking within the heart refer to thought.[[114]](#footnote-114) ‎

‎**18. AND ABRAHAM WILL SURELY BECOME.** A Midrash Agadah comments: *The memory of the righteous/ generous will be for a blessing*.[[115]](#footnote-115) ‎Since He mentioned Abraham, He blessed him. The simple meaning of the verse though is, "Will I conceal it from him since he is so beloved ‎by Me to become a mighty nation?" Thus the language of Rashi. ‎

The correct interpretation is that G-d, blessed be He, spoke of the honor of Abraham, saying: "Behold, he is destined to become a great and ‎mighty nation, and his memory will be a blessing among his seed and all nations of the earth. Therefore, I will not conceal it from him for the ‎future generations will say, "How could He hide it from him?' or, 'How could the righteous/generous one[[116]](#footnote-116) be so callous about his close neighbors and ‎have no mercy on them, not praying at all in their behalf, and that which was known to him, [i.e., that the cities will be destroyed], was good ‎and pleasing!' For I know that he recognizes and is cognizant that *I the Eternal loves righteousness/ generosity and justice*,[[117]](#footnote-117) that is to say, that I do ‎justice only with righteousness/generosity, *and therefore he will command his children and his household after him[[118]](#footnote-118)* to follow in his path. Now if it is ‎possible in keeping with righteousness/generosity and justice to free the cities from destruction, he will pray before Me to let them go, and it will be well ‎and good. And if they are completely guilty, he too will want their judgment. Therefore, it is proper that he enter in the council of G-d."[[119]](#footnote-119) ‎

‎

**19. FOR I HAVE KNOWN HIM ('YEDATIV'), TO THE END ('LEMA'AN') THAT HE MAY COMMAND HIS CHILDREN.** Rashi comments: ‎‎"For I have known him, as the Targum takes it, is an expression denoting affection, just as *A kinsman (‘moda’) of her husband's*;[[120]](#footnote-120) *And I know ‎you*.[[121]](#footnote-121) Still the main connotation of all these expressions is that of knowing, for he who holds a person in affection and draws him to himself ‎knows him well and is‎ familiar with him. But if you explain it as the Targum does - i.e., "I know that he will command his children" - then the word ***lema'an (to the ‎end)*** does not fit into the sense."[[122]](#footnote-122) ‎

It is possible that the word ***yedativ*** means "I have raised him and elevated him so that he will command his children after him to do that ‎which is right before Me, and therefore I will make him a great and mighty nation so that he should serve Me. In a similar sense are the verses: ‎*I know you (‘yedaticha') by name*;[[123]](#footnote-123) *What is man, that You know him?[[124]](#footnote-124)* Or the verse may be stating, *I know that he will ‎command*,[[125]](#footnote-125) and in a similar sense is the verse, *So that your ox and your ass may have rest (lema'an yanuach)*,[[126]](#footnote-126) meaning that he may ‎have rest. ‎

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that the word ***yedativ*** literally means "knowing." He is thus alluding that G-d's knowledge, which ‎is synonymous with His Providence in the lower world, is to guard the species, and even the children of men are subject despite it to the ‎circumstantial evil occurrences until the time of their visitation comes. But as regards His pious, He directs His Providence to know each one ‎individually so that His watch constantly attaches to him, His knowledge and remembrance of him never departs, as it says: *He withdraws ‎not His eyes from the righteous/generous*.[[127]](#footnote-127) There are many verses on this theme, as it is written, *Behold, the eye of the Eternal is toward them that ‎fear Him*,[[128]](#footnote-128) and other verses besides. ‎

‎

‎**20. AND THE ETERNAL SAID, THE CRY OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.** Rashi comments: "*And the Eternal said* to Abraham, thus doing ‎what He had said, i.e., that He would not conceal the matter from him." ‎

And Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra said that the verse, *And the men turned from there*,[[129]](#footnote-129) was inserted in the middle of the account[[130]](#footnote-130) in order ‎to let us know that at the time the angels arrived in Sodom, then G-d said to Abraham: *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great*. ‎

The opinion of all commentators is likewise that G-d was speaking with Abraham. Now according to this, the correct interpretation of the ‎verse, *And the men turned from there*, is that when G-d said to Abraham after the men journeyed from him, *The cry of Sodom and ‎Gomorrah is great*, Abraham stood in prayer and supplication before Him to forgive them and to give him permission to speak. And he ‎prolonged his prayer until the men came to Sodom, and then Abraham drew near and said, *Will You also sweep away the righteous/generous with the ‎wicked*?[[131]](#footnote-131) Or the explanation may be that Scripture itself returns to clarify the expression, *Abraham stood yet before the Eternal*,[[132]](#footnote-132) as ‎meaning that Abraham drew near and said, *Will You also sweep away the righteous/ generous with the wicked?* Thus he prolonged his supplication ‎before Him, saying each time, "*Let not the anger of the Eternal blaze*,"[[133]](#footnote-133) and directing the intent of his mind each time towards prophecy ‎until he heard an answer to his words direct from the Holy One, blessed be He. They continued in this manner the entire day [until, as the verse ‎says], *the Eternal finished speaking with Abraham*,[[134]](#footnote-134) and the two angels came to Sodom. ‎

‎

**THE CRY OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.** This is the cry of the oppressed, crying out and begging for help from the arm of their wickedness. ‎It would have been proper for Scripture to say, "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah I heard because it is great," or "The cry of Sodom and ‎Gomorrah is great and their sin is very heavy." But the purport of the verse is to state that "I will go down and see the cry of Sodom and ‎Gomorrah and their sin which have become very great. If they have all sinned, I will bring the Law to bear down on them, and if not, I will know ‎who are the sinners." ‎

Concerning the matter of "going down and seeing," Rashi said by way of drash:[[135]](#footnote-135) "This teaches that judges are not to give decisions in ‎cases involving capital punishment except after having carefully looked into the matter." ‎

According to the simple meaning of Scripture, the explanation is as follows: Since the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to reveal to Abraham ‎the matter of Sodom and to inform him that there was none among them who did good, He said to him "Because it is great, the cry of Sodom ‎and Gomorrah will I go down to see, meaning I have come to judge. If they have sinned, I will make an end of them, and if not, I shall know ‎what I shall do to them: ‎*Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with strokes*."[[136]](#footnote-136) He thus informed him that their judgment was not yet ‎complete for now He will visit their sin and judge them. This is like the verse: *The Eternal looks from heaven upon the children of men, to ‎see if there were any man of understanding, that did seek after G-d. They are all corrupt; they are together become impure*.[[137]](#footnote-137) ‎

Now Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra said concerning this[[138]](#footnote-138) ["going down and seeing"] a mystery [i.e., a mysterious explanation], pleasing himself ‎with foreign offspring.[[139]](#footnote-139) I shall now intimate to ‎you the opinion of those who received the truth. Our Rabbis have exposited[[140]](#footnote-140) from the verse, *For behold, the Eternal comes forth out of ‎His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth*:[[141]](#footnote-141) "He comes forth and goes from attribute to attribute; He ‎comes forth from the attribute of mercy, and goes to the attribute of justice." We interpret this matter similarly. *And the Eternal said* in His ‎heart, "*The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, because it is great, I will go down* from the attribute of mercy to the attribute of justice, ***and I will ‎see* in mercy** *If they have done according to the cry of it which is come unto Me* through the attribute of justice, and if so, *punishment; and If ‎not, I will know* and I will show mercy," just as in the verse, *And G-d knew*.[[142]](#footnote-142) Now after Scripture tells of the knowledge of the Most High, it ‎returns to the first matter and relates the story of how the men who glanced towards Sodom with the intention of going there and whom ‎Abraham sent away arrived there. And Abraham, from the moment they left him until they arrived there, still stood before the Eternal for He ‎called him and told him that the angels were those messengers who would destroy the place, as He had said. It was not necessary for Scripture ‎to explain when Abraham stood before Him for from the moment He said, *Will I conceal it from Abraham*,[[143]](#footnote-143) it is known that He told him. ‎

‎**23. AND ABRAHAM DREW NEAR AND SAID, WILL YOU ALSO SWEEP AWAY THE RIGHTEOUS/ GENEROUS WITH THE WICKED?** The anger[[144]](#footnote-144) of the Holy One, blessed be He, is His attribute of justice. Now Abraham thought that this would sweep away the righteous/generous with the wicked, ‎not knowing of G-d's thoughts in which He thought of them with His mercies, as I have explained.[[145]](#footnote-145) ‎

Therefore, Abraham said that it is proper and good that He should forgive the entire place because of the fifty righteous/generous inhabitants, but it is ‎inconceivable even according to the Divine attribute of Justice to slay the righteous/generous with the wicked,[[146]](#footnote-146) for if so the righteous/generous will be as the ‎wicked, and they will say, *It is vain to serve G-d*.[[147]](#footnote-147) And all the more is this inconceivable according to the Divine attribute of Mercy since *He ‎is the Judge of all the ‎earth*, and He does justice[[148]](#footnote-148) even as it is said, *And the Eternal of Hosts is exalted through justice*,[[149]](#footnote-149) and we say in our prayers, "The King of judgment."[[150]](#footnote-150) This is the significance of the double ‎use of the expression, *It is unworthy of You*.[[151]](#footnote-151) And the Holy One, blessed be He, conceded that He would forgive the entire place for the sake ‎of the fifty righteous/generous, for He will conduct Himself towards them with the attribute of Mercy. ‎

What informs you of all this[[152]](#footnote-152) is the fact that ***Vayomer HaShem*** (And the Eternal said)[[153]](#footnote-153) is written with the Tetragrammaton, and all references ‎by Abraham to the Divine Name are written Adonay.[[154]](#footnote-154) This has now been clarified. ‎

‎

**24. FIFTY RIGHTEOUS/GENEROUS.** Rashi wrote: "Ten righteous/generous men for each city. *Will You destroy on account of the five*.[[155]](#footnote-155) Nine for each city, and ‎You, the All-Righteous One of the Universe, will be counted with them [to make up the original number of ten]. *Perhaps there will be found ‎there forty*.[[156]](#footnote-156) Then let four cities be saved. So, too, thirty will save three of them, twenty will save two of them, and ten will save one of them. ‎And he did not plead for less than ten since in the generation of the flood there were eight righteous/generous people,[[157]](#footnote-157) and they could not save their generation. For nine, in association with G-d, he had already pleaded but found no ‎acceptance." All these are the words of the Rabbi, of blessed memory. ‎

But I wonder: If so, what is this prayer and supplication which he pleads each and every time, saying, *oh let not the Lord be angry*;[[158]](#footnote-158) ‎*Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak*?[[159]](#footnote-159) It is proper that forty should save four cities, and thirty and twenty should save in ‎proportion, just as fifty would save five! Similarly, concerning that which Rashi said, "for nine in association with G-d he had already pleaded ‎but found no acceptance," it may be asked: When he pleaded about forty-five, [i.e., to save all five cities by having nine righteous men for ‎each city] in association [with G-d to make up ten], and he did not find forty-five, but perhaps he might have found there nine![[160]](#footnote-160) Now it ‎would seem that the intention of the Rabbi[[161]](#footnote-161) is that many righteous/generous people can effect a proportionately greater salvation than a few ‎righteous/generous people can, just as the Sages have said:[[162]](#footnote-162) "A few who fulfil the commandments of the Torah cannot compare with the many who ‎fulfil the commandments of the Torah." And thus,[[163]](#footnote-163) the Holy One, blessed be He, having conceded that forty-five righteous men in ‎association with the All-Righteous/Generous One of the Universe would save all the five cities just as if there were the entire fifty, it follows that if forty ‎could save four cities - in association with the Righteous One, praised be He - they would also save with even thirty and twenty, since He ‎already conceded this association. [Thus, thirty-six would save four, twenty-seven three, eighteen two, and nine one]. And in case you say that ‎He conceded only ‎ the case of forty-five because they are many, and perhaps He might not concede the principle of association with the few, as we have said, ‎the refutation is that it is proper for the righteousness/generosity of G-d to associate even with the few and save [as many of the cities as possible] since ‎He had conceded the principle of association, for He would not distinguish between the many and the few.[[164]](#footnote-164) This is the opinion of the Rabbi. ‎

But the way of the simple meaning of the verses is smooth.[[165]](#footnote-165) First Abraham said fifty in order to give a perfect number of ten for each city, ‎and then he decreased the number as much as possible, and each time he thought to save all five cities. And I do not know who brought the ‎Rabbi to that which he said.

‎

‎**26. WITIIIN THE CITY.** Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explained that [these men for whose sake the cities were to be saved] fear G-d publicly. In ‎a similar sense is the verse: *Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem*.[[166]](#footnote-166) ‎

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that Abraham said, within the city, meaning that even if they are strangers therein, it is fitting ‎that they save it. He said this on account of Lot, and he thought that perhaps there are others there. ‎

‎**28. I WILL NOT DESTROY IT IF I FIND THERE.** He assured him that He would not destroy it if that number of righteous/generous men will be found ‎there. And He did not tell him, "Know that there is not such a number there as you said," since their trial had not been completed, just as He ‎said, *I will go down now, and see*.[[167]](#footnote-167)

‎

Now Abraham did not know what would be done to them. ‎Therefore, he rose early in the morning and looked towards Sodom,[[168]](#footnote-168) and upon seeing that they were destroyed, he knew that the required ‎number of righteous/ generous men had not been there. ‎‎

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 15:1-5**

| **RASHI** | **TARGUM** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **A song of David; O Lord, who will sojourn in Your tent, who will dwell upon Your holy mount?** | 1. **A hymn of David. O LORD, who is worthy to dwell in your tabernacle, who is worthy to abide on the mountain of your sanctuary?** |
| 2. He who walks uprightly and works righteousness/generosity, and speaks truth (i.e., Torah) in his heart. | 2. One who walks in integrity, and does righteous/ generous deeds, and speaks truth (i.e., Torah) in his heart. |
| 3. He did not slander with his tongue; he did his neighbor no harm, neither did he take up reproach upon his kinsman. | 3. He does not slander with his tongue, he causes no harm to his fellow, and he bears no shame against his neighbor. |
| 4. A base person is despised in his eyes, and he honors the God- fearing; he swears to [his own] hurt and does not retract. | 4. Who despises the contemptible to his face, but honors those who fear the LORD; who will swear to do harm to himself and does not change. |
| 5. He did not give his money with interest, nor did he accept a bribe against the innocent; he who does these will not falter forever. | 5. He has not given his money at interest; he has not accepted a bribe against the innocent; one who does these things will never be moved. |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Tehillim (Psalms) Chapter Fifteen**

**3 He did not slander with his tongue** Ankuza in Old French, to accuse, as (in II Sam. 19:28) “And he slandered **(וַיְרַגֵּל)** your servant.” This psalm is to inform us of the [proper] measure of piety.

**and speaks truth in his heart** The good that he says in his heart is true. He is not a hypocrite [lit. one in mouth and one in heart].

**neither did he take up reproach** Rapporta in Old French, to report.

**upon his kinsman** If his kinsman committed a transgression for which he was punishable, he would punish him with justice, and he did not bear upon himself his reproach, that the reproacher should have an excuse to say, “So-and-so, your relative, committed such-and-such a sin, and you covered up for him.”

**4 A base person is despised in his eyes** One who is base with his wickedness/Lawlessness is despised in the eyes of the righteous man, e.g., Hezekiah, who dragged his father’s remains in disgrace.

**he swears to hurt** himself.

**and does not retract** his oath. How much more does he not retract it if it concerns something that is not to his hurt!

**5 nor did he accept a bribe, etc.** against a poor man, to condemn him in judgment by judging perversely. Our Sages explained it further to mean that he would not accept a bribe to exonerate him in judgment, and he certainly will not take a bribe to pervert the judgment.

**will not falter** and he deserves to sojourn in Your tent.

**will not falter forever** If he falters, his faltering will not be permanent faltering, but he will falter and ascend.

**Meditation on the Psalms**

by H. Em. Rabbi Dr Hillel b. David

**Bereshit (Genesis) 18:1-33**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 15:1-5**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:17-24 + 35:10**

**Mk 1:40-45, Lk 5:12-15**

The superscription on this psalm ascribes it to King David. This psalm gives us eleven cardinal principles of observance which A David stressed and taught.[[169]](#footnote-169) They are examples of ‘beyond the letter of the law’, i.e. service of G-d beyond the Torah’s minimum requirements. In order to instill in people a love for the law itself, they must be taught to go even beyond it with extra devotion and sacrifice. These principles are particularly appropriate for those who are near the ark. It is likely that David was thinking of Uzzah[[170]](#footnote-170) as he wrote this psalm.[[171]](#footnote-171) The Talmud comes and lists these eleven cardinal principles of observance for us.

***Makkoth 24a*** *David came and reduced them[[172]](#footnote-172) to eleven [principles],[[173]](#footnote-173) as it is written, A Psalm of David.[[174]](#footnote-174) Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy mountain? —*

1. *He that walketh uprightly, and*
2. *worketh righteousness, and*
3. *speaketh truth in his heart; that*
4. *hath no slander upon his tongue,*
5. *nor doeth evil to his fellow,*
6. *nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor,*
7. *in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but*
8. *he honoureth them that fear the Lord,[[175]](#footnote-175)*
9. *He sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not,*
10. *He putteth not out his money on interest,*
11. *nor taketh a bribe against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

All of these eleven items deal with man’s relationship with his fellow man and they also concern the earning and spending of money. From this we understand that David’s subjects were weak in the mitzvot which govern the relationships between men.

David’s subjects were weak in these eleven areas. As the Sages said, ‘The people of David’s generation were all righteous and observant. Yet, they would fall in battle because they harbored slanderers and tale-bearers. The people of King Achav’s generation were wicked idolaters, yet, because they had no slanderers and tale-bearers in their ranks, they entered battle and emerged victorious, with no casualties’.[[176]](#footnote-176)

Einei Yitzchak[[177]](#footnote-177) notes that the masses were corrupted by the example of depraved leaders. Doeg and Achitophel, two prominent personalities of that period, were vicious men who engaged in vile slander and wanton bloodshed.

Hirsch makes a final observation. This chapter of psalms opens with: ‘HaShem, who will reside in Your tent?’, implying that the topic of G-dly service will be discussed. But the Psalmist launches into a discussion of man’s obligations towards his fellow man. This proves that the person who aspires to come close to G-d cannot hope to do so until he has first made himself acceptable to his brethren.[[178]](#footnote-178)

The Talmud[[179]](#footnote-179) states that Rav Safra[[180]](#footnote-180) fulfilled King David’s words[[181]](#footnote-181) that one must speak truth even in one’s heart. Rashi relates the event through which Rav Safra earned this accolade. He had an item for sale and was approached by a potential buyer while he was reciting the Shema. Involved in his prayer and being unable to respond, Rav Safra seemed to be ignoring him. Thinking that the offer was too low, the buyer repeatedly raised his bid, only to be stonewalled again and again. After making his final exorbitant offer, which happened to coincide with the prayer’s end, Rav Safra nodded in agreement. The buyer began to count out the money only to be told that the price would be original amount offered. Rav Safra explained to this astounded buyer that in his heart he had agreed to the original offer. Accepting any more money than that would be dishonest. He spoke truth in his heart.

Avraham stressed the eleven principles that were enumerated by David, and he elucidated the taryag[[182]](#footnote-182) mitzvot through each of the four levels. This is all alluded in the Targum to v.33:

***Targum Pseudo Jonathan for Bereshit 21:33*** *And he planted a garden, (lit., “a paradise” - PaRDeS) at the Well of the Seven Lambs, and prepared in the midst of it food and drink for them who passed by and who returned; and he preached to them there, Confess, and faithfully obey in the Name of the Word of the Lord, the everlasting G-d. [JERUSALEM. And Abraham planted a paradise in Beer Sheba, and prepared in the midst of it food and drink for those who arrived at the border; and they ate and drank, and sought to give him the price of what they had eaten and drunk, but he willed not to receive it from them; but our father Abraham discoursed to them of that which he had said, that the world was by His Word. Pray before your Father who is in heaven, from whose bounty you have eaten and drunk. And they stirred not from their place until the time when he had made them proselytes, and had taught them the way everlasting. And Abraham praised and prayed there in the name of the word of the Lord, the G-d of Eternity.]*

Since all of these eleven items deal with the earning and spending of money, let’s look at Torah economics in greater detail.[[183]](#footnote-183)

Is money, like dollar bills or gold coins, spiritual or physical?

A good way to determine the answer to this question is to give it to a monkey and watch what he does with it. If he hides it and takes care of it, then we know it must be physical. If, on the other hand, the monkey wipes his nose with it and drops it, then it must be spiritual because monkeys have no knowledge of spiritual things.

So, what does the monkey do with the gold coin? He sniffs it and drops it. A monkey finds no value in the gold coin. This teaches us that money is inherently SPIRITUAL. Money represents stored value that we can use to acquire physical items that we can eat or use. Paper money especially has no inherent value. It is simply a piece of worthless paper.

Money itself isn't good or bad. It's paper, or metal. It is not consciously making decisions on it's own. Therefore, it's neutral. It's the purpose that we choose to use money with that determines whether it is used for "good" or for "bad” purposes.

**Making money is a Torah virtue, it is inherently moral**. Prospering is a virtue. Why is it that Jews are disproportionately successful with money? Mark Twain made this same observation in his essay, *Concerning Jews*:

*“If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk…”*

We know that Jews have won a disproportionate number of Nobel Prizes: over twenty per cent of them from a group that represents 0.2 per cent of the world population, an over-representation of 100 to one. But the most striking disproportion is in the field of economics. The first Nobel Prize in economics was awarded in 1969. The most recent winner, in 2017, was Richard Thaler. In total there have been 79 laureates, of whom 29 were Jews; that is, over 36 per cent!

The reason Jews have excelled in the area of economics is because they have believed that **making money is a good thing in and of itself**. When you are making money you are doing something good. Philanthropy and tzedaka (charity – righteousness) do not have to be the goal. **Making money is, in the end, good**. Not doing tzedaka is reprehensible, but that does not detract from the fact that making money is good. For Jews especially, making money is a perfectly natural thing to do. How can this be?

Consider a man who knocks on people’s doors and offers to take away their unwanted items, their junk. If he pays a pittance for the goods, so much the better. In fact, businesses have sprouted up for the sole purpose of taking unwanted items from people. These businesses charge people good money to take unwanted items. Whether the business is the city trash collector, or a junk hauler, they both charge money to remove a man’s junk. Now if one could purchase one man’s junk and fix it up and sell it to another man for a good price, then all are extremely satisfied with this arrangement. The one has his junk removed without cost or for a small profit, and the other has obtained a needed item for a good price. The end result is two happy customers and a junk dealer who has made a profit.[[184]](#footnote-184) The whole world is better off because of this transaction. By engaging in this sort of commerce we are doing something good for people. People welcome such junk dealers. When we do these types of transactions everyone is happy with the outcome. The ability to make multiple people happy is at the root of the Torah. Thus **making money is a good thing in, and of, itself**!

In Hebrew, and in English, we use the same word to characterize good business dealings and our worship of HaShem. We call it *avodah*, or service. Those who get good service are glad. Whether they are HaShem or men. Providing good service is what the Torah is all about. When we please the men whom HaShem made, then we are also pleasing HaShem! When children treat their siblings well, then the parents are extremely happy. In the same way, when HaShem sees his children treating each other well, then He is extremely happy. To make HaShem happy, all we have to do is make people happy when we make money.

Does it matter whether we are serving HaShem’s children with a profit motive? Absolutely not! In fact, in both the Torah and in common wisdom we find that actions are more important than intentions. Obeying HaShem for the wrong reason is certainly better than not obeying Him at all. In the same way, if we serve people with a profit motive we still serve people. Now clearly kavanah, or intent, is important. Never the less, obedience is more important. Consider a child who obeys his parents with a bad attitude. While the parents would prefer a good attitude, they are never the less glad that the child obeyed. Since only HaShem understands the motives of our hearts, it is impossible for us to judge this aspect. In fact, a Jewish court looks for the actions and words, to discern intent. Actions speak louder than words and actions trump intention. The fact that a waiter provides good service to his customers is appreciated, despite the fact that he is looking for a good tip.

The process of building good economic relationships is integral to building good relationships between human beings. The world was created for the purpose of building bonds and relationships. Consider the elements on the periodic chart. As important as those elements are, the compounds that are produced from those elements are infinitely more important. The air we breathe is a mixture. Water is a mixture. As nice as iron is, steel is ever so much more useful.

Salt, for example, is composed of sodium (toxic) and chlorine (toxic). Yet the result graces nearly every dinner table in the world. With the alchemy of relationships, even toxic substances become tov, beneficial. In the same way, we take a toxic male and marry him to a toxic female and the relationship is called love, and the whole world is better off because of this relationship. In fact, Bereshit (Genesis) describes the creation as good except for one exception. The Torah tells us that it is not good for man to be alone. Man needs a relationship with a woman. Bonding and connectivity are what make the world go around.

Does HaShem want us to be rich? While His desire in inscrutable, it is quite clear that He wants us to be obsessively preoccupied with the need and desires of other people. Whether they are your clients or your customers; whether they are your boss or your employees. No matter what the relationship, HaShem warns us to be concerned with the needs of others. When we do this, prosperity and wealth are the natural outcome. To put it another way, **if we want to become wealthy, all we have to do is become obsessively preoccupied with the needs of others**. If we build buggy whips whilst the world is driving automobiles, then we will never meet the desires of others and we will never make a profit. We make profit when we sell what others want. The more we understand the needs and desires of the world and obsess with how to meet those needs and desires, the more we will become wealthy. It is interesting that the more we do what we want to do, the more poverty stricken we become. It is only when we turn outward to the desires of others that we can become wealthy.

Many have said that the most important occupation is the occupation that you enjoy. This is not the Torah perspective. The Torah perspective is to choose an occupation that meets the needs of others. This is the only way to have success in life because we will be serving HaShem in the process. Prosperity is the result of building relationships by meeting the needs of others.

The Torah is full of contracts (covenants) because contracts allow relationships to flower. The contract that Yaaqov made with Esav regarding the birthright was a contract that allowed the Jewish people to become a nation of priests.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:30-33*** *And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:6*** *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

A profit motive is what allowed Joseph to survive his encounter with his brothers at Shechem.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:26-27*** *And Judah said unto his brethren: ‘What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh’. And his brethren hearkened unto him.*

Yehuda asked, “what profit do we get by killing the boy? Come let us sell him instead”. Thus Joseph will succinctly state that their intention to do evil was used by HaShem to do good.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 50:19-20*** *And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of G-d? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but G-d meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

This good came about only because of a motive for profit. Consider the alternative: Joseph is dead and the Jewish people all starve to death. Where is the good in that? Even Joseph greatly benefited from this transaction. Thus the whole world benefited from the profit motive of Joseph’s ten brothers.

When Joseph’s ten brothers encountered Joseph in Egypt he accused them of spying.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:9*** *And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.*

Additionally, he had their money returned to them in the top of their sacks of grain.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:35*** *And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.*

When they saw the money they were terrified because they imagined that they would be accused of theft. Yet Joseph’s intention was to teach them that relationships were more important than money. The brothers thought that squandering their relationship with Joseph to produce a profit was a good thing. Joseph’s message was just the opposite. His message was that profit comes from good relationships, not the other way around. It is not about money, it is about relationships.

Relationships and profit go hand in hand with the uniqueness of each individual. If we were all clones we would find it very hard to meet the needs of others. What we have is what they have. There is no profit in having each individual being a clone. Having different desires allows commerce. If no one wants to get rid of his junk, then there can be no sale of that junk. If everyone desires the same junk, then there is no opportunity for commerce. Being created in the image of G-d makes us unique.

While most economists would tend to call us consumers, in reality we are actually producers. If everything were consumed there would be no museums, buildings, roads, or parks. We produce! When we create wealth we acknowledge the uniqueness of the individual. When a government attempts to equalize its citizens, then they will necessarily produce poverty. The more we are alike the more commerce fails. It is our uniqueness that allows commerce to thrive. Thus the more freedom (uniqueness) that exists in the world, the greater the prosperity of the world. The more we are free to pursue our own desires, the more we allow the world to prosper.

Socialism destroys uniqueness. Consider government housing, public transportation, and confiscatory taxation. These socialist tools are all designed to destroy our uniqueness and in the process doom us to poverty. We must produce wealth, not merely move it around.

At the tower of Babel the goal was to make bricks, not to make a tower. Notice that bricks come first followed by what was to be done with the bricks:

***Bereshit Genesis) 11:1-4*** *And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*

Bricks were the goal! That is why the people were FIRST encouraged to make bricks, then to build a city and a tower. *Bricks* are made by man and are all identical. *Stones* are made by HaShem and each is unique. The goal of Babel was to make all individuals the same, to destroy their uniqueness, to make bricks. One of the reasons that HaShem confused the languages at Babel was to make it very difficult to all be alike.

The Torah records that bricks were used only in two regards: The tower of Babel and the building of Egypt by the Israelites.[[185]](#footnote-185) As the Israelites were enslaved, so too were the people of Babel. As the people at Babel received no pay for their service, so too were the Israelites deprived of their pay.

We had two economic models: The Abrahamic model[[186]](#footnote-186) and the Nimrod model.[[187]](#footnote-187) The Abrahamic model is the basis for the economy of the western world. This model is based on giving, not on taking. Abraham wanted to give to and to serve other human beings. This is the source of the strength of the Abrahamic model. Nimrod’s model was based on taking from people and making them all the same. The Abrahamic model is the modified free market system whereas the Nimrod model is the socialistic / communist type system.

The free market system is propped up by a spiritual system. The Torah establishes that once every fifty years, there is a redistribution of the primary, and almost exclusive means of production during the biblical period – land:[[188]](#footnote-188)

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:8-13*** *And you shall number seven sabbaths of years to you, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty nine years. Then shall you cause the shofar to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the day of atonement shall you sound the shofar throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants: it shall be a jubilee for you; and you shall return every man to his possession, and you shall return every man to his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather in it the grapes of your undressed vine. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat its increase out of the field. In the year of this jubilee you shall return every man to his possession.*

Expression is given here to a revolutionary idea whose aim is to prevent entire generations from drowning in abject poverty: every fifty years land returns to the family to which it had originally belonged, and the family members are given another opportunity at economic success.[[189]](#footnote-189) This is not communism, where the means of production belong to the collective; this is not even insistence on a constant equal allocation of the means of production. Halacha recognizes that free competition is critical in order to guarantee a state of general welfare. But Halacha sets limits on this free competition. This has an economic price: real estate transactions will clearly be influenced by the fact that land is sold for only fifty years at the most. Surely the rich will also have less motivation to achieve economic success, when the most productive assets that they can buy, real estate, will not remain in their possession for the long term. Halacha is prepared to pay this economic price.

The same objective is found in another important law, the release of debts in the seventh year:

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 15:1****-2 At the end of every seven years you shall make a release. And this is the manner of the release; every creditor that lends anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact if of his neighbor or of his brother; because he has proclaimed a release to the Lord.*

Here too we find the same principle: a second chance. Every seven years all debts are released, and every person receives a second chance to extricate himself from his troubles. This law as well has a considerable economic price – it limits the credit market. Historical testimony teaches that the people of Israel had difficulty practicing the law governing the release of debts in the seventh year, and in the end Hillel made it irrelevant by instituting the prozbul,[[190]](#footnote-190) after he understood that limiting credit created an untenable situation, especially for the poor. Without a doubt, however, from here we can learn the moral inclinations of the Torah, which as a rule accepts free competition as a driving force from an economic perspective, but makes sure to repair at fixed intervals the damage that this causes.

Emphasis should be placed on a difference that was already noted above: The mitzvot of the jubilee year and the release of debts in the seventh year are not the same as the mitzva of giving charity. We are not dealing here with a private contribution on the part of one person on behalf of another, but rather with an all-embracing and uniform public system. Such a system is more efficient and also spares the poor person the humiliation of begging at his neighbor's doors.

Long term business relationships can not endure if we ‘rip people off’. Bad business dealings do not make for long term business relationships.

We are predominately spiritual creatures with a subordinate physical aspect. We are souls with a body. This is an important mental perspective. We must focus on the spiritual and use the physical to accomplish the spiritual goals. We must use our minds to impact our bodies. If we believe that something can be done, then it can be done. Nothing stands in the way of *desire*, nothing! The only thing that makes us different from robots is our *desire*. Robots do not have any desires. HaShem does NOT desire robots, neither does He desire one just avoids doing the negative mitzvot. HaShem desires our love, a love demonstrated by going above and beyond what the Torah demands.

The Hebrew language speaks truth and speaks about things as they really are. No other language is like this. To understand the relationship between wealth and charity, all we have to do is to look at the words:

The Hebrew word for *wealth* is: עשר.

The Hebrew word for *charity* is: עשר.

Now, because the same Hebrew word is used for both concepts, we know that these two concepts are intimately related. Thus we understand that the act of giving charity results in wealth. Note that charity comes first and the wealth follows.

Who knew that earning and spending of money, correctly, could allow us to dwell in HaShem’s tent? Who knew that speaking[[191]](#footnote-191) the truth in one’s heart could have benefits both in this world and in the next?

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:17-24 + 35:10**

| **Rashi’s Translation** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 33:13. ¶ **Hearken, you far-off ones, what I did, and know, you near ones, My might.** | 13. ¶ **Hear, you righteous/generous, who have kept My Law from the beginning, what I have done; and you penitent, who have repented to the Law ‎recently, acknowledge My might.** |
| 14. Sinners in Zion were afraid; trembling seized the flatterers, 'Who will stand up for us against a consuming fire? Who will stand up for us against the everlasting fires?' | 14. Sinners in Zion are shattered; fear has seized them. To the wicked whose ways are thieving they ‎say, "Who can dwell for us in Zion, where the splendour of the Shekhinah is like a devouring fire? Who can sojourn for us in Jerusalem, ‎where the wicked are about to be judged and handed over to Gehenna, everlasting burning?" |
| 15. He who walks righteously, and speaks honestly, who contemns gain of oppression, who shakes his hands from taking hold of bribe, closes his ear from hearing of blood, and closes his eyes from seeing evil. | 15. The prophet said, The righteous/generous will ‎sojourn in it, everyone who walks in innocence and speaks uprightly, who despises mammon of deceit, who removes his soul from ‎oppressors, who withholds his hands, lest they accept a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing those who spill innocent blood and averts his ‎eyes from looking upon those who do evil, |
| 16. He shall dwell on high; rocky fortresses shall be his defence; his bread shall be given [him], his water sure. | 16. He, his camping place will be in a high and exalted place, the sanctuary; his soul will ‎amply provide his food; his water will be sure as a spring of waters whose waters do not cease. |
| 33:17. The King in His beauty shall **your eyes behold**; they shall see [from] a distant land. | 17. **Your eyes will see** the glory of the ‎Shekhinah of the eternal king in his celebrity; you will consider and behold those who go down to the land of Gehenna. |
| 18. Your heart shall meditate [in] fear; where is he who counts, where is he who weighs, where is he who counts the towers? | 18. Your mind ‎will reckon up great things: ‎‎"Where are the scribes, where are the reckoners?" Let them come if they are able to reckon the number of the slain heads of the armies ‎of the mighty ones. |
| 19. A people of a strange tongue you shall not see, a people of speech too obscure to comprehend, of stammering tongue, without meaning. | 19. You will no more see the mastery of a strong people, the people whose obscure speech you cannot comprehend, ‎scoffing with their tongue because there is no understanding among them. |
| 20. See Zion, the city of our gathering; your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a tranquil dwelling, a tent that shall not fall, whose pegs shall never be moved, and all of whose ropes shall not be torn. | 20. You will look upon their downfall. Zion, city of our assemblies! **Your eyes will see** the consolation of Jerusalem in its prosperity, in its contentedness, like a tent which is not loosed, whose stakes are ‎never plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. |
| 21. But there, the Lord is mighty for us; a place of broad rivers and streams, where a galley with oars shall not go, and a great ship shall not pass. | 21. But from there the might of the LORD will be revealed to do good for us, ‎from a place of rivers going forth, overflowing, broad, where no fishermen's ship can go, nor any great sailboat can pass through. |
| 22. For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our ruler; the Lord is our king; He shall save us. | 22. For the LORD is our judge, who brought us by His might out of Egypt, the LORD is our teacher, who gave us the teaching of His ‎Law from Sinai, the LORD is our king; He will save us and take just retribution for us from the armies of Gog. |
| 23. Your ropes are loosed, not to strengthen their mast properly; they did not spread out a sail; then plunder [and] booty were divided by many; the lame takes the prey. | 23. In that time the ‎Gentiles will be broken of their strength, and will resemble a ship whose ropes are cut, which has no strength in their mast, which has ‎been cut, and it is not possible to spread a sail on it. Then the house of Israel will divide the possessions of the Gentiles, booty, and spoil ‎in abundance; although there are blind and lame among them, even they will divide booty and spoil in abundance. |
| 24. And the neighbor shall not say, "I am sick." The people dwelling therein is forgiven of sin. **{S}** | 24. From now on ‎they will not say to the people who dwell in safety all around the Shekhinah, "From You a stroke of sickness has come upon us"; the ‎people, the house of Israel, will be gathered and return to their place, forgiven of their sins.‎ **{S}** |
|  |  |
| 35:10. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come with shouting to Zion, Crowned with joy everlasting. They shall attain joy and gladness, while sorrow and sighing flee. | 10. And the redeemed of the Lord shall return because they shall be gathered from the midst of their captivity; and they shall come to Zion with a song, and they shall have everlasting joy, which shall not cease, and a cloud of glory shall over- shadow their heads; joy and gladness shall be found, and sorrow and sighing shall cease from them, namely, from the house of Israel. |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:17-24 + 35:10**

**17 The King in His beauty shall your eyes behold** (The Holy One, blessed be He, Who is a King, Him you shall see from a distant land where you are standing. You shall see the miracles and the greatness that I will perform for you, and a people of a strange tongue, of obscure speech, shall not see the Shechinah of the King in His beauty. [This does not appear in many editions.]) The King in His beauty shall your eyes behold. To you, O righteous man, I say that you shall merit to see the splendor of the Shechinah of the Omnipresent.

**they shall see [from] a distant land** Jonathan renders: You shall look and see those who go down to the land of Gehinnom.

**18 Your heart shall meditate [in] fear** When you see the princes and the savants of the heathens, who ruled during their lifetime, and who are now being judged in Gehinnom, your heart will meditate in terror, and you will say, “Where is the wisdom and the greatness of these men? Where is the one who, during his lifetime, would count and weigh every word of wisdom, for they would ask him every counsel of the kingdom?

**Where is he who counts the towers** This too is a matter of the kingdom. He is appointed over the houses of the kingdom, how many they are, and how many towers a certain city requires. Comp. (Ps. 48:13) “Encircle Zion and surround it, count its towers,” how many towers it requires.

**19 A people of a strange tongue** (נוֹעָז) like לוֹעֵז . These are all the heathens, whose language is not the holy tongue. ([Other editions read:] These are Assyria and Babylon, whose language is not the holy tongue.) ([Manuscripts read:] These are all the nations whose language is not the holy tongue.)

**you shall not see** You shall not esteem in your heart, for they shall all be dark and humble.

**speech...obscure** ( שָׂפָה , lit. lip.) Comp. (Gen. 11:1) “And all the land was one speech (שָׂפָה) .”

**of stammering tongue** (נִלְעָג לָשׁוֹן) . Comp. (32:4) “The tongue of the stammerers עִלְּגִים) (לְשׁוֹן ,” (and of obscure speech. All this is a foreign language, for they do not understand the holy tongue.)

**20 See Zion** But whom will you see in your heart to be regarded as a kingdom and a ruling power? Zion, which is the city of our meeting place.

**that shall not fall** (יִצְעָן) shall not be lowered. Comp. (Jud. 4:11) “Elon-bezaanannim בְּצַעֲנַנִּים) (אֵלוֹן ,” which is rendered as: the plain of pits (מִישׁוֹר אַגְנַיָּא) , which are pits in the fields, called kombes in O.F. Comp. (Baba Kamma 61b) “The pits of the earth (אַגְנֵי דְאַרְעָא) they are considered,” where water gathers from the mountains and the hills. I believe that the ‘beth’ of the word בְּצַעֲנַנִּים is not radical but is a prefix.

**whose pegs shall never be moved** (יִסַּע) The pegs with which they tie the ropes of the tent he shall not move them from the earth, from the place into which they are thrust. Comp. (I Kings 5:31) “And they quarried (וַיַּסִּעוּ) great stones.” Also (Jud. 16: 3), “And he plucked them (וַיִּסּעֵם) together with the bolt,” an expression of uprooting.

**21 But there** ‘But’ refers back to ‘whose pegs shall never be moved,’ and ‘shall not be torn.’ The evil shall not be, only the good. There the Lord shall be mighty for us, and the city shall be a place of rivers and streams, in the manner it is said in Ezekiel (47: 4f.): “And He measured a thousand (cubits), and He led me...a stream that I could not cross.” And so did Joel prophesy (4:18) “And a spring shall emanate from the house of the Lord,” that it shall become progressively stronger.

**a galley with oars** a ship that floats on the water.

a**nd a great ship** (וְצִי אַדִּיר) and a great ship [from Jonathan].

**22 For the Lord is our judge** Our prince and judge.

**23 Your ropes that draw the ship, you sinful city.** ([Mss. yield:] you, sinful Rome.)

**properly** prepared well.

**a sail** Heb. נס , the sail of a ship.

**they did not spread out a sail** They will not be able to spread the sail that guides the boat.

**then plunder [and] booty were divided** (עד) related to עֲדָאָה , plunder, in Aramaic.

**by many** Many will divide the plunder of the heathens. ([Mss. yield:] the plunder of Edom.) ([Others:] the nations.) ([Still others:] Sennacherib.)

**lame** Israel, who were weak until now.

**24 And the neighbor shall not say** (I.e., the neighbor of) Israel.

**“I am sick”** Because of this nation, this misfortune has befallen me, for

**The people Israel, who is called a people,** that dwells in Jerusalem, shall be forgiven of sin.

**Chapter 35**

**10 with joy of days of yore**: (Heb. שִׂמְחַתעוֹלָם, joy that is from days of yore, which they already experienced on the way of their Exodus from Egypt, “and the Lord was going before them by day” (Ex. 13:21).

**..shall flee:**The sadness and the sighing shall flee from them.

**Verbal Tallies**

By: HH Rosh Paqid Adon Hillel ben David & HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah

**Beresheet (Genesis) 18:1-33**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:17-24 + 35:2**

**Tehillim (Psalm) 15**

**Mk 1:40-45, Lk 5:12-15**

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Ashlamata are:**

LORD - יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

Appeared / behold / look / saw - ראה, Strong’s number 07200.

Sat / dwell - ישב, Strong’s number 03427.

Tent / tabernacle - אהל, Strong’s 05869.

Eyes - עין, Strong’s number 05869.

Lift up / forgiven - נשא, Strong’s number 05375.

Ground / land - ארץ, Strong’s number 0776.

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Psalm are:**

LORD - יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

Tent / tabernacle - אהל, Strong’s 05869.

**Beresheet (Genesis) 18:1** And the LORD <03068> appeared <07200> (8735) unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat <03427> (8802) in the tent <0168> door in the heat of the day;

2 And he lift up <05375> (8799) his eyes <05869> and looked <07200> (8799), and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw <07200> (8799) them, he ran to meet them from the tent <0168> door, and bowed himself toward the ground <0776>,

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:17** Thine eyes <05869> shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold <07200> (8799) the land <0776> that is very far off.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:20** Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle <0168> that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:21** But there the glorious LORD <03068> will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 33:24** And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell <03427> (8802) therein shall be forgiven <05375> (8803) their iniquity.

**Tehillim (Psalm) 15**:1 « To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. » How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD <03068>? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

**Tehillim (Psalm) 15**:**4** 4 In whose eyes <05869> a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.death;

**Hebrew:**

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Seder**  **Gen 18:1-33** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is. 33:14-17 + 35:10** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **lk;a'** | ate, eat | Gen 18:8 | Isa 33:14 |
| **rm;a'** | said, speak, say | Gen 18:3 Gen 18:5 Gen 18:6 Gen 18:9 Gen 18:10 Gen 18:12 Gen 18:13 Gen 18:15 Gen 18:17 Gen 18:20 Gen 18:23 Gen 18:26 Gen 18:27 Gen 18:28 Gen 18:29 Gen 18:30 Gen 18:31 Gen 18:32 |  |
| **#r,a,** | earth | Gen 18:2 Gen 18:18 Gen 18:25 | Isa 33:17 |
| **aAB** | advanced,  come, bring | Gen 18:11 Gen 18:19 Gen 18:21 | Isa 35:10 |
| **rb;D'** | said, words | Gen 18:5 Gen 18:19 Gen 18:27 Gen 18:29 Gen 18:30 Gen 18:31 Gen 18:32 Gen 18:33 | Isa 33:15 |
| **%l;h'** | walking | Gen 18:16 Gen 18:22 Gen 18:33 | Isa 33:15 |
| **!Agy"** | sorrow, grief |  | Isa 35:10 |
| **hwhy** | LORD | Gen 18:1 Gen 18:13 Gen 18:14 Gen 18:17 Gen 18:19 Gen 18:20 Gen 18:22 Gen 18:26 Gen 18:33 | Isa 35:10 |
| **yKi** | since, that | Gen 18:5 Gen 18:20 |  |
| **ble** | yourselves, heart | Gen 18:5 |  |
| **~x,l,** | bread | Gen 18:5 | Isa 33:16 |
| **~yIm;** | water | Gen 18:4 | Isa 33:16 |
| **!mi** | to, so | Gen 18:14 | Isa 33:15 |
| **!t;n"** | gave, given | Gen 18:7 Gen 18:8 | Isa 33:16 |
| **!yI[;** | eyes | Gen 18:2 Gen 18:3 | Isa 33:15 Isa 33:17 |
| **l[;** | opposite, toward, since | Gen 18:2 Gen 18:5 Gen 18:16 Gen 18:19 |  |
| **~ynIP'** | before. Face | Gen 18:8 Gen 18:16 Gen 18:22 |  |
| **hq'd'c** | righteousness | Gen 18:19 | Isa 33:15 |
| **ha'r'** | appeared, looked, see, behold | Gen 18:1 Gen 18:2 Gen 18:21 | Isa 33:15 Isa 33:17 |
| **bWv** | return | Gen 18:10 Gen 18:14 Gen 18:33 | Isa 35:10 |
| **[m;v'** | listen, hear | Gen 18:10 | Isa 33:15 |
| **hn"['** | replied, answer | Gen 18:27 |  |

**Greek:**

| **Greek** | **English** | **Torah Seder**  **Gen 18:1-33** | **Ashlamatah**  **Is. 33:14-17**  **+ 35:10** | **Peshat**  **Mk/Jude/Pet**  **Mk 1:40-45** | **Remes 1**  **Luke**  **Lk 5:12-16** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ἀκούω | heard | Gen 18:10 | Isa 33:15 |  | Luk 5:15 |
| ἀνήρ | men | Gen 18:2  Gen 18:16  Gen 18:22 |  |  | Luk 5:12 |
| ἀπέρχομαι | went forth | Gen 18:33 |  | Mar 1:42 | Luk 5:13  Luk 5:14 |
| ἀποκρίνομαι | responding,  answering | Gen 18:9  Gen 18:27 |  |  |  |
| ἅπτομαι | touched |  |  | Mar 1:41 | Luk 5:13 |
| ἀρνέομαι | denied | Gen 18:15 |  |  |  |
| ἄρχομαι | began | Gen 18:27 |  | Mar 1:45 |  |
| γίνομαι | came to pass | Gen 18:11  Gen 18:12  Gen 18:18 |  |  | Luk 5:12 |
| δεικνύω | show |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| δίκαιος | righteous,  just | Gen 18:23 Gen 18:24  Gen 18:25  Gen 18:26  Gen 18:28 |  |  |  |
| δύναμαι | able |  |  | Mar 1:45 | Luk 5:12 |
| ἐγγίζω | approaches | Gen 18:23 |  |  |  |
| εἴδω | see, known | Gen 18:2  Gen 18:19 | Isa 33:15 |  | Luk 5:12 |
| ἐκτείνω | stretch out |  |  | Mar 1:41 | Luk 5:13 |
| ἔξω | outside |  |  | Mar 1:45 |  |
| ἔπω | speak,  say,  spoken | Gen 18:3  Gen 18:5  Gen 18:6  Gen 18:9  Gen 18:10  Gen 18:13  Gen 18:15  Gen 18:17  Gen 18:20  Gen 18:23  Gen 18:26  Gen 18:27  Gen 18:28  Gen 18:29  Gen 18:30  Gen 18:31  Gen 18:32 |  | Mar 1:42  Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:13  Luk 5:14 |
| ἔρημος | wilderness |  |  | Mar 1:45 |  |
| ἔρχομαι | come | Gen 18:21  Gen 18:22 |  | Mar 1:40  Mar 1:45 |  |
| εὐθέως | immediately |  |  | Mar 1:42  Mar 1:43 | Luk 5:13 |
| εὐθύς | straight |  | Isa 33:15 |  |  |
| εὑρίσκω | found | Gen 18:3  Gen 18:28  Gen 18:29  Gen 18:30  Gen 18:31  Gen 18:32 |  |  |  |
| ἡμέρα | day | Gen 18:11 |  |  |  |
| θέλω | want |  |  | Mar 1:40  Mar 1:41 | Luk 5:12  Luk 5:13 |
| θεός | GOD | Gen 18:1 |  |  |  |
| θεραπεύω | cured |  |  |  | Luk 5:15 |
| ἰδού | behold | Gen 18:2  Gen 18:9 |  |  | Luk 5:12 |
| ἱερεύς | priest |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| ἵστημι | to stand | Gen 18:2  Gen 18:22 |  |  |  |
| καθαρίζω | cleanse |  |  | Mar 1:40 Mar 1:41  Mar 1:42 | Luk 5:12  Luk 5:13 |
| καθαρισμός | cleansing |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| καταλαμβάνω | taking it in,  overtake |  | Isa 35:10 |  |  |
| κηρύσσω | proclaiming |  |  | Mar 1:45 |  |
| κρίνω | judge | Gen 18:25 |  |  |  |
| κύριος | LORD | Gen 18:1 Gen 18:13 Gen 18:14 Gen 18:17 Gen 18:19 Gen 18:20 Gen 18:22 Gen 18:26 Gen 18:33 | Isa 35:10 |  | Luk 5:12 |
| λαλέω | speaking | Gen 18:19 Gen 18:27 Gen 18:29 Gen 18:30  Gen 18:31  Gen 18:32  Gen 18:33 | Isa 33:15 |  |  |
| λέγω | saying | Gen 18:12  Gen 18:13  Gen 18:15 |  | Mar 1:40  Mar 1:41  Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:12 |
| λέπρα | leprosy |  |  | Mar 1:42 | Luk 5:12 |
| λόγος | word |  |  | Mar 1:45 | Luk 5:15 |
| μᾶλλον | more, rather |  |  |  | Luk 5:15 |
| μαρτύριον | testimony |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| μηκέτι | no longer |  |  | Mar 1:45 |  |
| ὁδός | way | Gen 18:5  Gen 18:19 | Isa 33:15 |  |  |
| ὄνομα | name |  |  |  |  |
| ὁράω | appeared | Gen 18:1  Gen 18:21 | Isa 33:17 | Mar 1:44 |  |
| παραγγέλλω | exhorted |  |  |  | Luk 5:14 |
| πᾶς | all, things | Gen 18:18  Gen 18:19  Gen 18:24  Gen 18:25  Gen 18:26  Gen 18:28 |  |  |  |
| ποιέω | made,  make | Gen 18:5  Gen 18:6  Gen 18:7  Gen 18:8  Gen 18:17  Gen 18:19  Gen 18:25 |  |  |  |
| πόλις | city | Gen 18:24  Gen 18:26  Gen 18:28 |  | Mar 1:45 | Luk 5:12 |
| προστάσσω | assigned |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| προσφέρω | offer |  |  | Mar 1:44 | Luk 5:14 |
| πρόσωπον | face | Gen 18:16 |  |  | Luk 5:12 |
| τεσσαράκοντα | forty | Gen 8:6  Gen 18:29 |  |  |  |
| τόπος | place | Gen 18:24  Gen 18:26  Gen 18:33 | Isa 33:14 | Mar 1:45 |  |
| χείρ | hand |  | Isa 33:15 | Mar 1:41 | Luk 5:13 |

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra Of B’resheet (Gen.) Gen. 18:1-33**

**“Vayera Alav” “And appeared”**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hakham Shaul’s School of Tosefta**  **(Luqas 5:12-15)** | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**  **(Mark 1:40-45)** |
| **And now it happened when he** (Yeshua) **was in one of the cities there was a man full of leprosy. When he saw Yeshua, he fell on his face begging him saying “Master if you choose** (desire) **you have the power to make me clean. Then Yeshua stretched his hand over him, to send him away** (to the Kohanim) **saying to him, “My will** (desire) **for you is to be clean.” and saying to him see that you never speak** Lashon HaRa – gossip **against anyone; Go and show yourself to the Kohen** (Priest) **and offer for your cleansing what Moshe** in the Torah and Oral Torah **has commanded as a witness** of teshuba **for them” Now after these events the reputation[[192]](#footnote-192) of Yeshua spread throughout the region and many congregations gathered to hear him and to be cured of their diseases.** | **And a leper appeared** (came) **[[193]](#footnote-193) to him** (Yeshua) **begging him on his knees,** Master[[194]](#footnote-194) **if you so desire, you have the power to make me clean.[[195]](#footnote-195) And Yeshua being moved with indignation stretched his hand out towards him, to send him away[[196]](#footnote-196) [to the Kohanim] saying[[197]](#footnote-197) to him, “My will[[198]](#footnote-198) (desire) for you is to be clean.” And immediately the leprosy went from[[199]](#footnote-199) him and he was clean.[[200]](#footnote-200) And after harshly reprimanding[[201]](#footnote-201) him** for gossip – Lashon HaRa **he** (Yeshua) **sent him away[[202]](#footnote-202) immediately,[[203]](#footnote-203) saying see[[204]](#footnote-204) never speak** Lashon HaRa – gossip **against anyone;[[205]](#footnote-205) now go show yourself to the Kohen** (Priest) **and offer for your cleansing what Moshe** in the Torah and Oral Torah **has commanded as a witness** of teshuba **for them”** (the Kohanim)**. And he** (Yeshua) **went out and publicized the chief principles of the Mesorah so much that Yeshua could not openly appear in the city but was constrained to staying in remote places** where he devoted time to the prayers**,** because **people came to him from everywhere.** |
|  | |

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

**Yeshua and the Torah**

C.S. Mann notes Yeshua’s consonant moral attitude and relation to the “Law” [Torah].[[206]](#footnote-206) While Mann finds this a revelation, we see it as normative to daily life within the circles of Yeshua’s influence. The present materials tell us that Yeshua upheld the Torah, Oral Torah, and its ritual requirements along with its ceremonial aspects, since all is but one indivisible Torah.

**Compassion or Reprimand?**

**And a leper came to him (Yeshua) begging him on his knees, [Master] if you so desire, you have the power to make me clean.**

And now it happened when he (Yeshua) was in one of the cities there was man full of leprosy.

Scholars find trouble with Yeshua’s indignation.[[207]](#footnote-207) They cannot understand the great difficulty found in interaction with a leper. The most reasonable answer to this problem is “remember what the Lord God did to Miriam’ (Deut. 24:8).” If Miriam, the sister of Moshe was excommunicated from interaction with the B’ne Yisrael and the Divine Presence **how much the more** should a lowly leper from the regions of the Galil be rejected and reprimanded. Hooker[[208]](#footnote-208) joins in with Marcus[[209]](#footnote-209) in their explanation that this leper had a *shade* – demon due to similar Greek expressions. While this is not entirely impossible we do not find the language of exorcism in the present text with the exception of the Greek word ἐκβάλλω (*ekballo*). Due to the harsh language and attitude Yeshua possesses in this pericope we do not find this evidence strong enough to concur with their assessment. This phrase strengthens the nature of Yeshua’s indignation towards the leper who has appeared in public amidst the congregation. If the leper is repentant, we do not see any indication in the text. Neusner citing (Sifra CLV:i.8) says …

(Sifra CLV:i.8): “…saying” (Lev. 14:35) — The priest will say to him words of reproach: “My son, plagues come only because of **gossip**, as it is said, ‘Take heed of the plague of leprosy to keep very much and to do, remember what the Lord God did to Miriam’ (Deut. 24:8).[[210]](#footnote-210)

If, in the cited text we see the indignation and “reproach” by the Kohanim (Priests) **how much the more** should we note the consternation of Yeshua HaMashiach concerning this slanderous plague. The Lukan Tosefta further illustrates reason for consternation. “And now it happened when he (Yeshua) was **in one of the cities**.”

Lev 14:45 "He will therefore tear down the house, its stones, and its timbers, and all the plaster of the house, and he will take *them* **outside the city** to an unclean place.

Here we see that the contents of the house and the leper are relegated to their place “**outside the city**.” The Lukan Tosefta sees the leper in violation of Halakhah mandated in the Torah. His entry into the city is a desecration of Torah prohibition with further disregard for others. This demonstrates the deep disregard for G-d, Torah, and humanity. Firstly, because he has spoken Lashon HaRa against his neighbor, and secondly because he jeopardizes others with his contagious condition both physically and spiritually.

The Leper comes to Yeshua in need of “mercy. He also comes in simple trust that Yeshua will have compassion on him in his situation. Simple “trust” or “faith” as some would have it is not enough to merit forgiveness and cleansing. Many translations suggest that Yeshua was in fact “compassionate” towards the leper. Close scrutiny of the text does not lend itself to this translation. The text clearly demonstrates Yeshua’s indignation. Consequently, we see Yeshua’s balanced approach as an authorized Hakham. He is perfectly capable of demonstrating compassion in those cases where it is merited. Yet, in the present case he sternly reprimands (rebukes) the leper for his violation of Torah. Yeshua as a representative of the Torah, Oral and Written would naturally find offense in those who freely violated its commands.

**And after harshly reprimanding him** for gossip – Lashon HaRa

Scholars stumble over the Greek phrase ἐμβριμάομαι (*embrimaomai*). They try to translate and interpret this phrase from classical secular Greek sources. Their idiotic explanations try to make Yeshua growl like a dog or snort like a horse.[[211]](#footnote-211) The phrase is a hyperbole to demonstrate the extreme disdain for the cause that brings this miraculous leprosy and his reprimand of the leper’s avoidance of Torah obligations. This is because ἐμβριμάομαι (*embrimaomai*) finds no suitable translation into English.

While some scholars suggest that the cleansed leper is disobedient to the reprimand of Yeshua we find no such case in the present materials. Most translations have Yeshua saying, “do not tell anyone” to the leper however, this phrase should be translated “**never speak [Lashon HaRa – gossip] against anyone.**”[[212]](#footnote-212) While we have noted above that the leper meets the consternation of Yeshua, we see the language of rebuke rather than an indication of disobedience to Yeshua’s command. This is not to suggest that it is impossible for the leper to have disregarded Yeshua’s command. We are simply not given that information noting that he is commanded NOT to speak Lashon HaRa.

**Yeshua, a Hands On Hakham?**

**[Master] if you so desire, you have the power to make me clean. And Yeshua being moved with indignation stretched his hand out towards him, to send him away [to the Kohanim] saying to him, “My will (desire) for you is to be clean.” And immediately the leprosy went from him, and he was clean. And after harshly reprimanding him [for gossip – Lashon HaRa] he (Yeshua) sent him away immediately,**

Traditional readings of the materials of Hakham Tsefet and Luqas would indicate that Yeshua placed his hands on the leper to confer upon him a cleansing/healing. As we have noted in the footnotes above this cannot be the case in the present context. Aπτω (*haptomai*) by its literal “Greek” definition means to touch something or someone, which should well fit our Peshat text. However, we CANNOT accept that Yeshua, an authorized Rabbi (Hakham) would willingly touch a leper, making himself unclean unless the situation absolutely mandated it. Therefore, we are forced by hermeneutic principle to see how ἅπτω (*haptomai*) is used in the LXX. Cross – linguistic hermeneutics can be used to determine the truth of what Yeshua does. Cross – linguistic hermeneutics is the exegesis of a piece of Scripture in one language i.e., Greek or Hebrew, trying to determine its meaning from the Hebrew Tanakh, understanding that all things must be interpreted from the Torah. This principle builds on Hillel's 3rd rule, **Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad** and the 4th **Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages. Application of this hermeneutic demonstrates that the Greek word ἅπτω (*haptomai*) in mirrored in the Hebrew word H7971 **שָׁלַח** (*shalach*) meaning to send away. Therefore, Yeshua does “stretch forth” his hand, only to point for the leper’s departure. The “compassion” attributed to Yeshua may very well have been compassion for the congregation he was speaking to. The infectious disease of Lashon HaRa shows up as soon as the leper makes his entry. Yeshua’s compassion is that of a Hakham for his talmidim. The pandemic plague must not be permitted entry to the city of scholars.

**“My will (desire) for you is to be clean”**

It is true that Yeshua desired ritual purity for the leper. This is because as a personification of the Torah Yeshua wanted this leper to do teshuba and return in faithful obedience to Torah observance. Therefore, the will of the Master is such that he wants **immediate** conformity to Torah Oral and Written. As such, he “desires” the cleansing/healing of the leper. Consequently, Yeshua’s desire of “cleansing” for the leper may very well have been preventative medicine for the congregation rather than the leper himself.

**Peroration**

The criminal offense of Lashon HaRa is punished with a greater punishment than its deed.

**m. Arakhin 3:5** It turns out that the one who says something with his mouth [suffers] more than the one who actually does a deed. For so we find that the decree against our forefathers in the wilderness was sealed only on account of evil speech [Num. 13:32],[[213]](#footnote-213)

**b. Arakhin 15a** It ﻿ was taught R. Eleazar b. Perata said, **Come and see** **how great the power of an evil tongue is!** Whence do we know [its power]? From the spies: for if it happens thus to those who bring up an evil report against wood and stones, **how much more** **will it happen to him who brings up an evil report against his neighbour!** But whence [follows] that? Perhaps it is as explained by R. Hanina b. Papa; for R. Hanina b. Papa said: A stark thing did the spies say in that hour, as it is written: For they are stronger than we. Do not read: than we but then He: as it were, even the Master of the house cannot remove his utensils from here! Rather, said Rabbah in the name of Resh Lakish: Scripture said, Even those men that did bring up an evil report against the land, **died by the plague** against the Lord, i.e., [they died just] **because of the evil report which they had brought up**.

We cannot help but notice that the typical phrase “Come and hear” has been replaced by the Kabbalistic phrase “Come and See.” We understand that the phrase is teaching us just how vicious the sin of Lashon HaRa actually is. Furthermore, we find here Yeshua in agreeance with this Mishnah and Gemara. While we are not given the details of the leper’s Lashon HaRa we can aptly see that Yeshua abhors this criminal offence.

**אמן ואמן סלה**

**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

**Blessing After Torah Study**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Next Shabbat:**

**Sabbath: “VayaVou Sh’nei HaMal’akhim”**

**“And came the two angels”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים |  |  |
| **“VayaVou Sh’nei HaMal’akhim”** | Reader 1 – B’resheet 19:1-3 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 20:1-3 |
| **“And came the two angels”** | Reader 2 – B’resheet 19:4-11 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 20:4-6 |
| **“Y llegaron, los dos ángeles”** | Reader 3 – B’resheet 19:12-14 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 20:7-9 |
| Bereshit (Genesis) 19:1-38 | Reader 4 – B’resheet 19:15-23 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Shaftim (Judges) 19:16-24 + 20:27 | Reader 5 – B’resheet 19:24-26 |  |
|  | Reader 6 – B’resheet 19:27-30 | Reader 1 – B’resheet 20:1-3 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 16:1-11 | Reader 7 – B’resheet 19:31-38 | Reader 2 – B’resheet 20:4-6 |
| N.C.: Mark 2:1-12  Luke 5:16 | Maftir – B’resheet  Judges 19:16-24 + 20:27 | Reader 3 – B’resheet 20:7-9 |

**A picture containing text, clipart

Description automatically generated**

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

Special thanks to Her Honor Giberet Giborah bat Sarah for her diligence and extremely extraordinary ability to spot anomalies

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

1. "After him." In our text of Rashi: "after the state of his health." [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Verse 2 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. "One angel does not carry out two commissions." (Beresheet Rabba 50:2 ‎and mentioned in Rashi here.) But, continues Rarnban, these two missions given to the angel Raphael - healing Abraham and rescuing Lot from Sodom - do not violate ‎the principle. See text. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It is as if he was sent on a new mission in another place after he had completed his mission in a different place. For it is clear that the ‎principle of one angel not carrying out two commissions applies only to two simultaneous commissions, as explained in Mizrachi's commentary on Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Since ‎healing and rescue are missions with a common purpose, one angel could be charged with both missions. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Verse 8 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibn Tibbon's translation, 11,42: in ‎Al Charizi, Chapter 43. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Verse 2 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Verse 3 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In other words, why does Scripture begin the chapter with the statement, *And the Eternal appeared to him*, when in the detailed account of the ‎vision it is explained that he saw only angels? [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The author of the Moreh Nehuchim. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Ecclesiastes 5:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Since the vision concerning the preparation ‎and the eating of the meal were not relevant to the prophecy of the birth of Isaac. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Further, 32:25. The reference deals with Jacob wrestling with the angel. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid" Verse 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 28:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 19:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., Verses 17-21. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ramban partially agrees with Rambam's ‎position. He says that wherever seeing or hearing an angel is mentioned in Scripture, it refers to a vision since the human senses cannot perceive an angel. However, ‎wherever Scripture ascribes human appearances to the angels, as in the case of Abraham, then their presence is sensually perceived. Other differences of opinion ‎between Ramban and Rambam regarding prophecy are mentioned further on in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Moreh Nebuchim , 11,41. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Megillah 3 a. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi-three prophets who lived at the beginning of the second Temple. The Men of the Great Assembly redacted the books of the Bible. See Baba Bathra 15 a. They placed the book of Daniel in the section of the Writings. (Ibid., 14 b). ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Daniel 9: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. From the beginning of Chapter 10 there. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 10:4. As for his friends, see ibid., Verse 7. Tradition specifies that these were Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. (Megillah 3a.) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. She was not a ‎prophetess even though angels appeared to her. (Above, 16:7). Ramban thus differs with Rambam, who had said that all prophets received the prophecy through ‎the medium of an angel. Rambam's position is defended as fol1ows: Rambam's intent was not that whenever an angel is seen it is an instance of prophecy. Rather ‎his intent was that whenever prophecy comes to any of the prophets it comes through an angel. However, it is possible that an angel may appear for the purpose of ‎conveying information to one who is not a prophet. This was the case with Daniel and Hagar. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. In Megillah 14a, the Rabbis list seven prophetesses who arose ‎in Israel: Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther. Hagar however was not listed among them. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Guide of the ‎Perplexed, II, 42. See ‎Friedlander's note on bath kol, p. 199, n.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Exodus 6:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Vayikra Rabba 1:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Hosea 12:11. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Numbers 12:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. I Kings 13:18. From this you might argue that the prophets themselves attributed their prophecy to an angel. This is not correct, as is explained in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid., Verse 9. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid., Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Bamidbar Rabba 20:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Numbers ‎22:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid., ‎ 22:20. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Further, ‎22:12. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. 1:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Leviticus 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Further, 22:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Numbers 22:3l. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. II Kings 6:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Further, 37:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. According to the Sages the man who wrestled with Jacob was the angel of Esau (Beresheet Rabba 77:2), and the man who found Joseph was the angel Gabriel ‎‎(Tanchuma Vayeshev 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Exodus 3:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Zechariah 1 :14, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Beresheet Rabba 48:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. That is, the angels really did not eat. Rather as soon as a ‎dish of food was brought, it was consumed by fire. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Judges 13:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Above, 17:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Leviticus ‎‎9:23. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Psalms 17:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Further, ‎32:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Mechilta Shirah 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Exodus 15:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid., 14:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Numbers 14:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Since, as Ramban explains, the appearance of ‎the Eternal to Abraham was in the merit of his having fulfilled the commandment of circumcision, one might ask: Why then are these two events presented in two ‎different sections rather than in one consecutive chapter? It is to this point that Ramban now addresses himself. "Now do not be concerned, etc.," for the events are ‎after all connected. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Above, 17:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Verse 10 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Baba Metziah 86b. Also quoted in Rashi above. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Beresheet Rabba 48:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Exodus 20:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. As Scripture concludes: *I will come unto you and bless you*. (Exodus 20:25.) ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Proverbs 16:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ruth 2:6. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. I Kings 5:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Exodus ‎14:9. Meaning "encamping alongside the sea." Here too alav means "standing alongside him." [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. A word whose end is voweled with a ***kamatz*** stands by itself and ‎is not in construct form. This is not the case with a word whose end is voweled with a ***patach***. Thus, ***Adonay*** voweled with a ***kamatz***; must have reference only ‎to G-d, but ***Adonay*** voweled with a ***patach***, has a "profane" sense and does not refer to G-d. Ramban continues: Since we find the word in this verse written in the ‎books with a ***kamatz***; and Abraham was speaking to the angels, it must be because he referred to them by the name of their Master. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Adonay. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. See Ramban, Exodus 20:3 and Leviticus 18:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Leviticus 20:22. ‎According to the author of Kesef Mezukak, the verse here should be [ibid. 18:5]: *You will keep My statutes, and Mine ordinances, which if a man do ....* **Here, as ‎in the succeeding examples, the verse begins with a plural and ends with a singular because the Torah speaks to each person.** [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid.; 18:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ibid., 19:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Deuteronomy 4:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. The book of Deuteronomy. See ibid., 17:18, for origin of the expression. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., 11 :26. Here He speaks to the whole congregation as ‎a unit and not to each person individually. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Beresheet Rabba 48:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. According to this opinion, the word Adonay does not refer to G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Verse 4 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Proverbs 25:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Since it should have stated, "We will do as you have said," and instead it says, "So you do, as you have said," Abraham ibn Ezra takes ‎it to mean "So do, as you have spoken: And I will take a morsel of bread, and do not trouble yourself for more." [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. 48:13, with changes. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See above. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Above, 14:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid., 16:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Rashi. See Seder Beresheet, [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Verse 14 here. The words of the angel, in Verse 10 here, *I will certainly return unto you*. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Further, 21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Verse 14 here. It ends with the ‎promise: *At the same time I will return unto you*. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. II Samuel 11:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Above, 17:21. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Deuteronomy 30:3. ‎Ramban's intent is as follows: The word ***ve'shov*** there means "and He will bring back." Here too the word ***ashuv*** means "I will bring back a time, like the present, ‎in which you will be alive, and in which time, in addition to your being alive, Sarah will have a son." [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Exodus 23:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Verse 12 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. I Chronicles 29:14. Here the word "come" is not found in the Hebrew but is added to complete the thought. Likewise, Ramban suggests, in our own verse here, ‎the expression "to cause it to happen" is to be added: "Is anything too hard for G-d to cause it to happen?" [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Further, 49:20, [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Deuteronomy 17:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Hidden and apart. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. See above note, that Sarah was regarded as a prophetess. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Abraham. In Megillah 14a, Rashi quotes the Hilchoth Gedoloth listing the forty-eight prophets who arose in Israel, and the three patriarchs are listed among them. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Verse ‎‎10 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Judges 13:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Psalms 2:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid., 126:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Above, 17:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Amos 3:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. See I Kings 22:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Isaiah 38:10. The word "said" here means "thought." [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. II Samuel 21 :16. Here too the word "said" means "thought." [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. E.g., *And Esau said in his heart*, ‎further, 27:41. See Ramban there. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Proverbs 10:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Abraham. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Psalms 33:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Verse ‎‎19 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Jeremiah 23:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Ruth 2:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Exodus 33:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Our Rashi has a different text. See notes in my Hebrew commentary, p. 110. See also Note 125 further. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Exodus 33: 12. The sense would thus be: "I ‎have made you great in name." [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Psalms 144 :3. The sense here then would be: "What is man before You that You have given him greatness?" [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Ramban ‎thus differs with Rashi, who said that if you take the sense of the verse to be, "I know of him that he will command," then the word ***lema'an*** does not fit the context. ‎Ramban proceeds to show from Exodus 23:12 that the words ***lema'an yanuach*** mean ***she'yanuach*** (that he may rest); here likewise, ***lema'an asher yetzaveh*** means ‎***she'yetzaveh*** (that he will command). Thus, the word ***lema'an*** is seen to fit into the context. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Exodus 23:12. See Note above. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Job 36:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Psalms ‎‎33:18. See Moreh Nebuchim III, 51, where Rambam's theory on Divine Providence is seen to be similar to that which Ramban expresses here. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Verse 22 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. According to Ibn Ezra, Verse 22, which states, ***And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, and Abraham stood yet before ‎the Eternal***, actually took place before our present verse for it was after the angels had walked toward Sodom that G-d said to Abraham, ***The cry of Sodom and ‎Gomorrah ...*** However, Verse 22 was entered later in the account in order to let us know the time of G-d's word to Abraham - ***the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.*** ‎‎- was when they came to Sodom. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Verse 23 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Verse 22 here. According to this interpretation, Abraham did not pray before he began saying, ***Will You ‎also sweep away***. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. See Exodus 32:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Verse 33 here. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. The homiletical interpretation of Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Psalms 89:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Ibid., 14:2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Ibn Ezra's comment is found in Verse 21 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. See Isaiah 2:6. Ramban says that "the mystery" suggested here by Ibn Ezra as an ‎explanation of the verse comes to him from the philosophers who please themselves with theories which are "the offspring of aliens." Ibn Ezra's "mystery" ‎explanation is that G-d's knowledge of earthly matters is general, rather than detailed. Ramban rejects this concept as "foreign" to the Torah. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Yerushalmi Ta'anith II, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Micah 1:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Exodus 2:25. ‎He knew of the suffering of the children of Israel and directed His mercy upon them. Here, likewise, Ramban teaches that the word ***eida'ah*** (I will know) bespeaks ‎Divine mercy. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Verse 17 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Ramban understood the verse as Onkelos rendered it, namely, that the word ***ha'aph*** does not mean "will also", but it ‎means "the anger." The verse reads: "will the anger of G-d sweep away." See Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. At the end of Verse 20 here. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Verse 25 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Malachi 3:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. With righteousness/generosity. (Tur quoting and interpreting Ramban.) [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Isaiah 5:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Literally, "the king, the ‎Justice," implying that the King is Justice. (See my Hebrew commentary, p. 112.) This prayer is said on the ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. ‎‎(Berachoth 12b). [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. In Verse 24 here. One for the attribute of justice, and one for mercy, as explained above. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. That Abraham thought that they would be ‎judged only by Divine justice, and G-d told him that they would be judged with Divine mercy. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Verse 26 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. The Tetragrammaton signifies Divine ‎mercy, while the Name beginning with Aleph Dnlet signifies Divine justice. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Verse 28 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Verse 29 here. ‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Noah, his three sons, and their wives. (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Verse 30 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Verse 31 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Why then did Abraham not plead for nine men who, in ‎association with G-d, would be ten, and thus save one city, for the principle of using G-d as a tenth was not declared invalid; rather, it was previously inapplicable ‎since there were not forty-five righteous inhabitants. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Sifra, Leviticus 26:8. The wording of the quotations used here is that of Rashi in his ‎commentary to the Torah. (Ibid). [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. "And thus." The Tur quoting Ramban writes, "Perhaps." [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. In other words, having admitted the principle of association in the case of forty-five, there could not be any difference between a larger and smaller group of ‎righteous/generous men with respect to the principle of association. Hence Abraham did not have to ask for nine, for in association with G-d there would be ten, and one city ‎would be saved. But without the principle of association there might be a difference between a larger and smaller group. Hence Abraham had to ask for forty, thirty, ‎twenty and ten. All this is to satisfactorily explain the interpretation of Rashi. Ramban's own position is made clear further in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. See Proverbs 15:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Jeremiah 5:1. ***If you can find a man, if there be any that does justly.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Verse 21 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Further, 19:27-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Makkoth 24a [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Shmuel bet (1 Samuel) 6:6. In this passage, The ark was being carried incorrectly by an oxen cart. When the cart went into a rut and the ark was in danger of falling, Uzza reached out and steadied the ark. For this misdeed, Uzzah was killed by HaShem. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. *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-171)
172. TaRYaG is the gematria for the number “613” (*tav* - ת *=* 400, *resh* - ר *= 200, yod* - י *=* 10, and *gimel* - ג *=* 3). [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. I.e., reduced them to eleven leading virtues. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Tehillim (Psalm) 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. King Yehoshafat illustrates this. When he would see a Hakham, he would rise from his throne, kiss him, and say ‘Avi Rebbi... ‘ [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Yerushalmi, Peah 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Rav Chayim Yitzchak Aharon Rappaport [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. 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-178)
179. In Makkoth 24a [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Rav Safra was a prominent Babylonian Amora of the fourth generation of the amoraic era. Safra studied under R. Abba, then went abroad with two colleagues, R. Kahana and R. Huna the son of R. Ika. He debated the Halakha with Abaye and Rava, and was most probably a disciple of Rava, who would sometimes impose various tasks upon him. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Tehillim (Psalm) 15:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. The Talmud refers to the 613 commandments as *taryag* mitzvot. Classical Jewish sources assign a numerical value to each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is treated not as a mere utilitarian collection of word components but as a conveyor of esoteric information through the Kabbalistic medium of *gematria.* Thus, the *gematria* of *taryag* is 613 *(tav =* 400, *resh = 200, yud =* 10, and *gimel =* 3). The tradition of *taryag* mitzvot was developed by Rabbi Simlai of the Talmud, reasoning as follows: Scripture tells us that Moses commanded the Torah (Pentateuch) to the Children of Israel. The *gematria (num*erical equivalent) of the four Hebrew letters of the word *Torah* is 611. Add to this the two commandments which all of Israel heard from God Himself at Mt. Sinai and you have a total of 613 *- taryag.* [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. The following study is based on a lecture given by Rabbi Daniel Lapin at the Ludwig von Mises Institute, Lou Church memorial lecture in religion and Economics. Rabbi Lapin’s lecture was titled: *What is Morally Right About Economic Freedom.* [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. New businesses have sprung up just to bring those with junk together with those who want such junk. Can you say ‘EBay’? [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Shemot (Exodus) 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Bereshit (Genesis) 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Bereshit (Genesis) 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. The following excerpt is from a shiur given by Rav Chaim Navon, titled: THE TORAH'S APPROACH TO ECONOMICS. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. See, R. Samson Raphael Hirsch, commentary to Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. The Prozbul (Hebrew: פרוזבול‎ of Greek origin, i.e., προσβολή) was established in the waning years of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by Hillel the Elder. The writ, issued historically by rabbis, technically changed the status of individual private loans into the public administration, allowing the poor to receive interest-free loans before the Sabbatical year while protecting the investments of the lenders. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. This the verbal tally with the Torah portion: Spoken / Speak - דבר, Strong’s number 01696. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Verbal connection to B’resheet 18:10, Yeshayahu 33:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Verbal connection to B’resheet 18:2

     **ἔρχομαι** (1) of persons; (a) as coming forward publicly *come, appear, show up*  [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Some manuscripts have the address of “Sir” i.e., Master before the query. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. The requirement of cultic purity had inner value and justification as a symbol pointing to something more profound. *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. (3:417). **καθαρίζω (***katharizo*) here implies 1. Healing and consequent 2. Cleansing. We note here that the notion of being “made” clean does not fit the translation, being absent from the text. Therefore, we must translate this phrase contextually from the principle of Torah mitzvoth and hermeneutic principle of Rov. Furthermore, we cannot find here anything more that an authorized Rabbi who inspects a leper to see if he is “clean” – ritually pure. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. ἅπτω (*haptomai*) by its literal “Greek” definition means to touch something or someone. However, we CANNOT accept that Yeshua an authorized Rabbi would willingly touch a leper, making himself unclean. Therefore, we are forced by hermeneutic principle to see how ἅπτω (*haptomai*) is used in the LXX. Cross – linguistic hermeneutics is the exegesis of a piece of Scripture in one language i.e., Greek or Hebrew, trying to determine its meaning from the Hebrew Tanakh. Understanding that all things must be interpreted from the Torah. This principle builds on Hillel's 3rd rule,  **Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad** and the 4th **Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages. Application of this hermeneutic demonstrates that the Greek word ἅπτω (*haptomai*) in mirrored in the Hebrew word H7971 **שָׁלַח** (*shalach*) meaning to send away. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Verbal connection to B’resheet 18:3 and Psalms 13:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. The play on Hebrew words here as it would have appeared in the original Hebrew text is a play on words. It is my desire (**רֹצֶה**) bears the idea of “**running** towards something.” Therefore, we might see the immediacy of the next phrase, Greek (**εὐθύς (***euthus*) “immediately”. Furthermore, in this notion we see a verbal/thematic connection to B’resheet 18:2, “Abraham (**רוּץ** *ruts*) ran from his tent.” [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Verbal connection to B’resheet 18:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. The connotation here is that the leper is clean – ritually pure. However, we should understand that he is “pure” of the disease. Yet, he is still in a state of ritual impurity until he is pronounced clean by the appropriate Kohen (Priest). We also note here that there is an allusion to the restoration of the priesthood to the firstborn. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. First let us take up the matter of punishment for specific sins or crimes. Here is a clear statement that individuals shape their own fate. The person afflicted with the ailment described at Lev. 13–14, here translated as “plagues” or “plague of leprosy,” has brought the illness upon himself by gossiping, and Scripture contains ample proof of that fact…

     (Sifra CLV:i.8): “…saying” (Lev. 14:35) — The priest will say to him words of reproach: “My son, plagues come only because of gossip, as it is said, ‘Take heed of the plague of leprosy to keep very much and to do, remember what the Lord God did to Miriam’ (Deut. 24:8). “And what has one thing to do with the other?” “But this teaches that she was punished only because of gossip.” “And is it not an argument *a fortiori*?” “If Miriam, who did not speak before Moses’ presence, suffered so, one who speaks ill of his fellow in his very presence, how much the more so?”

     Not only gossip, but other sins bring on specific penalties, arrogance too:

     R. Simeon b. Eleazar says, “Also because of arrogance do plagues come, for so do we find concerning Uzziah, “as it is said, ‘And he rebelled against the Lord his God and he came to the Temple of the Lord to offer on the altar incense and Azariah the priest came after him and with him priests of the Lord, eighty strong men, and they stood against Uzziah and said to him, It is not for you to do, Uzziah, to offer to the Lord, for only the priests the sons of Aaron who are sanctified do so. So forth from the sanctuary. And Uzziah was angry,’ etc. (2 Chron. 26:16).”

     Gossip is penalized by an attack of whatever disease, if any, is represented by the word “plagues” or by the skin-ailment under discussion here. God has spelled out in the Torah both sins and the penalty attaching to them. (Sifra CLV:i.8): “…saying” (Lev. 14:35) — The priest will say to him words of reproach: “My son, plagues come only because of gossip, as it is said, ‘Take heed of the plague of leprosy to keep very much and to do, remember what the Lord God did to Miriam’ (Deut. 24:8). [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. The Greek language is harsh here further indicating Yeshua’s displeasure in the leper. ἐκβάλλω (*ekballo*) is translated “cast out” more often than not. The leper is ejected, cast out of the presence of the Tsaddiq. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Thematic connection to B’resheet 18:2, 6, 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Verbal/thematic connection B’resheet 18:1 See/Appear. The Greek word **ὁράω (***horao*) make allusion to So’od materials buried in the vocabulary of the Peshat. Here “seeing”- **ὁράω (***horao*) contains the idea of coming to a spiritual awareness of the root of his leprosy. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Cf. Lev 19:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Mann, C. (1986). *Mark, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (The Anchor Bible).* New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. p. 218 [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. arcus, J. (2000). *Mark 1 - 8, A new translation with commentary* (The Anchor Bible Series ed.). New Haven: Doubleday (Yale University). p. 209 [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Hooker, M. D. (1991). *Black’s New Testament Commentaries: The Gospel According to Saint Mark.* London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd. pp. 78ff [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Marcus, J. (2000). *Mark 1 - 8, A new translation with commentary* (The Anchor Bible Series ed.). New Haven: Doubleday (Yale University). pp. 205ff [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Neusner, J., Neusner, J., Avery-Peck, A. J., Green, W. S., & Museum of Jewish Heritage (New York, N. Y. (2000). *The encyclopedia of Judaism*. "Published in collaboration with the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York." (3:1412). Brill "With more than 100 lengthy essays, this exceptional work on Judaism covers more than its historical framework. The Encyclopedia of Judaism provides complete and accurate coverage of Judaism--everything from its history, beliefs, and observances, from the beginning to modern times. It is an excellent source written by scholars."--"Outstanding Reference Sources," American Libraries, May 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Stein, R. H. (2008). *Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament: Mark.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic. p. 107 [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Cf. Lev 19:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Neusner, J. (1988). *The Mishnah: A new translation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. p. 813 [↑](#footnote-ref-213)