|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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** | **Second Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Tebet 4, 5784 – December 15/16, 2023** | **Second 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 Tzuriel ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Gibora 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 Shlomo ben Abraham

His Excellency Adon Yaaqob 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** [**gkilli@aol.com**](mailto:gkilli@aol.com%20) **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**A Prayer for Israel**

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

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

**A Prayer for our Beloved Hakhamim**

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

**A special Prayer for our Beloved Hakham His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

We pray especially, 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!

**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!**

**Tebet 4, 5784, December 15/16, 2023**

**Shabbat: “VaY’hi BaChatsi” – “And it came to pass at midnight”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| וַיְהִי בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“VaY’hi BaChatsi”** | Reader 1 – Shemot 12:29-31 | Reader 1 – Shemot 13:1-5 |
| **“And it came to pass at midnight”** | Reader 2 – Shemot 12:32-36 | Reader 2 – Shemot 13:6-11 |
| **“Y sucedió que a la medianoche”** | Reader 3 – Shemot 12:37-39 | Reader 3 – Shemot 6:12-15 |
| Shemot (Exodus) 12:29-51 | Reader 4 – Shemot 12:40-42 |  |
| Ashlamatah:  Melachim bet (2 Kings) 19:35 – 20:7 | Reader 5 – Shemot 12:43-45 | **Monday / Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Shemot 12:46-48 | Reader 1 – Shemot 13:1-5 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 51:1-21 | Reader 7 – Shemot 12:49-51 | Reader 2 – Shemot 13:6-11 |
| N.C.: Mk 6:30-32; Lk 9:10a | Maftir – Shemot 12:49-51  2 Kings 19:35 – 20:7 | Reader 3 – Shemot 6:12-15 |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* The Last Plague and Israel’s Departure – Exodus 12:29-36
* Out of Egypt – Exodus 12:37-42
* Further Regulations Regarding the Passover – Exodus 12:43-51

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan** **for: Shemot (Exodus) 12:29-51**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 29. It came to pass at midnight, and the Lord smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who is in the dungeon, and every firstborn animal. | 29. ¶ And it was in the dividing, of the night of the fifteenth, that the Word of the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Mizraim, from the firstborn son of Pharoh, who would have sat upon the throne of his kingdom, unto the firstborn sons of the kings who were captives in the dungeon as hostages under Pharoh's hand; and who, for having rejoiced at the servitude of Israel, were punished as (the Mizraee): and all the firstborn of the cattle that did the work of the Mizraee died also. |
| 30. And Pharaoh arose at night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great outcry in Egypt, for there was no house in which no one was dead. | 30. And Pharoh rose up in that night, and all the rest of his servants, and all the rest of the Mizraee; and there was a great cry, because there was no house of the Mizraee where the firstborn was not dead. |
| 31. So he called for Moses and Aaron at night, and he said, "Get up and get out from among my people, both you, as well as the children of Israel, and go, worship the Lord as you have spoken. | 31. And the border of the land of Mizraim extended four hundred pharsee; but the land of Goshen, where Mosheh and the sons of Israel were, was in the midst of the land of Mizraim; and the royal palace of Pharoh was at the entrance of the land of Mizraim. But when he cried to Mosheh and to Aharon in the night of the Pascha, his voice was heard unto the land of Goshen; Pharoh crying with a voice of woe, and saying thus: Arise, Go forth from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship before the LORD, as you have said; |
| 32. Take also your flocks and also your cattle, as you have spoken, and go, but you shall also bless me." | 32. your sheep also take, and whatever of mine you have spoken about, and go; and nothing ask I of you except that you pray for me that I may not die. |
| 33. So the Egyptians took hold of the people to hasten to send them out of the land, for they said, "We are all dead." | 33. ¶ When Mosheh and Aharon, and the sons of Israel, heard the voice of Pharoh's weeping, they were not mindful, until he came himself, and all his servants, and all the Mizraee, and urged all the people of the house of Israel, that they might hasten to send them forth from the land; For, said they, if they prolong here one hour more, behold, we are all dead. |
|  | JERUSALEM: ¶ For, said the Mizraee, if Israel delay one hour (longer), behold, all Mizraim dies. |
| 34. The people picked up their dough when it was not yet leavened, their leftovers bound in their garments on their shoulders. | 34. And the people carried their dough upon their heads, being unleavened, and what remained to them of the paschal cakes and bitter things they carried, bound up with their raiment, upon their shoulders. |
| 35. And the children of Israel did according to Moses' order, and they borrowed from the Egyptians silver objects, golden objects, and garments. | 35. And the sons of Israel did according to the word of Mosheh, and asked of the Mizraee vessels of silver and vessels of gold. |
| 36. The Lord gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they lent them, and they emptied out Egypt. | 36. And the LORD gave the people favour and compassion before the Mizraee, and they brought forth to them, and they emptied the Mizraee of their riches. |
| 37. The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, the men, besides the young children. | 37. ¶ And the sons of Israel moved forth from Pilusin towards Succoth, a hundred and thirty thousand, protected there by seven clouds of glory on their four sides: one above them, that neither hail nor rain might fall upon them, nor that they should be burned by the heat of the sun; one beneath them, that they might not be hurt by thorns, serpents, or scorpions; and one went before them, to make the valleys even, and the mountains low, and to prepare them a place of habitation. And they were about six hundred thousand men, journeying on foot, none riding on horses except the children five to every man; |
| 38. And also, a great mixed multitude went up with them, and flocks and cattle, very much livestock. | 38. and a multitude of strangers, two hundred and forty myriads, went up with them, and sheep, and oxen, and cattle, very many. |
|  | JERUSALEM: A mixed multitude. |
| 39. They baked the dough that they had taken out of Egypt as unleavened cakes, for it had not leavened, for they were driven out of Egypt, and they could not tarry, and also, they had not made provisions for themselves. | 39. And they divided the dough which they brought out of Mizraim, which they had carried on their heads, and it was baked for them by the heat of the sun, (into) unleavened cakes, because it had not fermented; for the Mizraee had thrust them out, neither could they delay; and it was sufficient for them to eat until the fifteenth of the month Iyar; because they had not prepared provision for the way. |
| 40. And the habitation of the children of Israel, that they dwelled in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. | 40. ¶ And the days of the dwelling of the sons of Israel in Mizraim were thirty weeks of years, (thirty times seven years,) which is the sum of two hundred and ten years. But the number of four hundred and thirty years (had passed away since) the LORD spoke to Abraham, in the hour that He spoke with him on the fifteenth of Nisan, between the divided parts, until the day that they went out of Mizraim. |
| 41. It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass in that very day, that all the legions of the Lord went out of the land of Egypt. | 41. And it was at the end of thirty years from the making of this covenant, that Yitzhaq was born; and thence until they went out of Mizraim four hundred (years), on the self-same day it was that all the hosts of the LORD went forth made free from the land of Mizraim. |
| 42. It is a night of anticipation for the Lord, to take them out of the land of Egypt; this night is the Lord's, guarding all the children of Israel throughout their generations. | 42. Four nights are there written in the Book of Memorials before the LORD of the world. Night the first,--when He was revealed in creating the world; the second,--when He was revealed to Abraham; the third,--when He was revealed in Mizraim, His hand killing all the firstborn of Mizraim, and His right hand saving the firstborn of Israel; the fourth,--when He will yet be revealed to liberate the people of the house of Israel from among the nations. And all these are called Nights to be observed; for so explained Mosheh, and said thereof, It is to be observed on account of the liberation which is from the LORD, to lead forth the people of the sons of Israel from the land of Mizraim. This is that Night of preservation from the destroying angel for all the sons of Israel who were in Mizraim, and of redemption of their generations from their captivity. |
| 43. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover sacrifice: No estranged one may partake of it. | 43. ¶ \_\_\_ |
|  | JERUSALEM: ¶ It is a night to be observed and celebrated for the liberation from before the LORD in bringing forth the sons of Israel, made free from the land of Mizraim. Four nights are there written in the Book of Memorial. Night first; when the Word of the LORD was revealed upon the world as it was created; when the world was without form and void, and darkness was spread upon the face of the deep, and the Word of the LORD illuminated and made it light; and he called it the first night. Night second; when the Word of the LORD was revealed unto Abraham between the divided parts; when Abraham was a son of a hundred years, and Sarah was a daughter of ninety years, and that which the Scripture says was confirmed,--Abraham a hundred years, can he beget? and Sarah, ninety year old, can she bear? Was not our father Yitzhaq a son of thirty and seven years, at the time he was offered upon the altar? The heavens were (then) bowed down and brought low, and Yitzhaq saw their realities, and his eyes were blinded at the sight, and he called it the second night. The third night; when the Word of the LORD was revealed upon the Mizraee, at the dividing of the night; His right hand slew the firstborn of the Mizraee, His right hand spared the firstborn of Israel; to fulfil what the Scripture has said, Israel is My firstborn son. And He called it the third night. Night the fourth; when the end of the age will be accomplished, that it might be dissolved, the bands of wickedness destroyed and the iron yoke broken. Mosheh came forth from the midst of the desert; but the King Mashiach (comes) from the midst of Rome. The Cloud preceded that, and the Cloud will go before this one; and the Word of the LORD will lead between both, and they will proceed together. This is the night of the Pascha before the LORD, to be observed and celebrated by the sons of Israel in all their generations. |
| 44. And every man's slave, purchased for his money you shall circumcise him; then he will be permitted to partake of it. | 44. - - - |
| 45. A sojourner or a hired hand may not partake of it. | 45. A sojourner or a hired stranger will not eat thereof.  JERUSALEM: A sojourning man and a hireling born of the Gentiles will not eat of it. |
| 46. It must be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the meat out of the house to the outside, neither shall you break any of its bones. | 46. In his own company he will eat. You will not carry any of the flesh out of the house from (your) company, nor send a gift one to his neighbour; and a bone of him will not be broken for the sake of eating that which is within it. |
| 47. The entire community of Israel shall make it. | 47. All the congregation of Israel will mix together, this one with that, one family with another, that they may perform it. |
| 48. And should a proselyte reside with you, he shall make a Passover sacrifice to the Lord. All his males shall be circumcised, and then he may approach to make it, and he will be like the native of the land, but no uncircumcised male may partake of it. | 48. And if a proselyte sojourn with you, and would perform the pascha before the LORD, let every male belonging to him be circumcised, and so be made fit to perform it; and he will be as the native of the land: but no uncircumcised one of the sons of Israel will eat thereof. |
| 49. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who resides in your midst." | 49. One Law will there be as to appointments for the native and for the proselyte who sojourns among you. |
| 50. All the children of Israel did; as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. | 50. ¶ And all the sons of Israel did as the LORD had commanded Mosheh and Aharon, so did they. |
| 51. It came to pass on that very day, that the Lord took the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions. | 51. And it was on that same day that the LORD brought forth the sons of Israel from the land of Mizraim, with their hosts. |

**Reading Assignment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez**  By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by:  Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp.  (New York, 1979)  **Exodus II Vol. 5 – “redemption” pp. 87-130** | **Ramban: Exodus Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1973)  **pp. 146-161** |

**Welcome to the World of Pshat Exegesis**

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

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

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

**Rashi Commentary for: ‎ Shemot (Exodus) 12:29-51**

**29** **and the Lord**-Heb. וַה'. **Wherever it says, “and the Lord,” it means “He and His tribunal”** (Exod. Rabbah 12:4), for the “vav” is an expression of addition, like “so-and-so and (“vav”) so-and- so.”

**smote every firstborn**-**Even [a firstborn] of another nation who was in Egypt**.-[from Mechilta]

**from the firstborn of Pharaoh**-Pharaoh, too, was a firstborn, but he remained [alive] of the firstborn. Concerning him, He [God] says: “But, for this [reason] I have allowed you to stand, in order to show you My strength” (Exod. 9:16) at the Red Sea.-[from Mechilta]

**to the firstborn of the captive**-Because they rejoiced at Israel’s misfortune (Tanchuma 7), and furthermore, so that they would not say, “Our deity brought about this retribution” (Mechilta). The firstborn of the slave woman was included, because [Scripture] counts from the most esteemed to the lowest, and the firstborn of the slave woman is more esteemed than the firstborn of the captive. See commentary on Exodus 11:5.

**30** **And Pharaoh arose**-from his bed.

**at night**-Unlike the custom of kings, [who rise] three hours after daybreak.-[from Mechilta]

**he**-[arose] first, and afterwards his servants. This teaches us that he went around to his servants’ houses and woke them up.-[from Mechilta]

**for there was no house in which no one was dead**-If there was a firstborn, he was dead. If there was no firstborn, **the oldest household member was called the firstborn, as it is said: “I, too, shall make him [David] a firstborn”** (Ps. 89:28) (Tanchuma Buber 19). [Rashi explains there: I shall make him great.] Another explanation: Some Egyptian women were unfaithful to their husbands and bore children from bachelors. Thus they would have many firstborn; sometimes one woman would have five, each one the firstborn of his father (Mechilta 13:33).

**31** **So he called for Moses and Aaron at night**-[This] tells [us] that Pharaoh went around to the entrances [i.e., to the doors of the houses] of the city, and cried out, “Where is Moses staying? Where is Aaron staying?”-[from Mechilta]

**both you**-the men.

**as well as the children of Israel**-The young children.

**and go, worship the Lord as you have spoken**-Everything is as you said, not as I said. “Neither will I let Israel out” (Exod. 5:2) is nullified. “Who and who are going?” (Exod. 10:8) is nullified. “But your flocks and your cattle shall be left” (Exod. 10: 24) is nullified. [Instead,] take also your flocks and also your cattle. What is [the meaning of] “as you have spoken”? You too shall give into our hands sacrifices and burnt offerings (Exod. 10:25).-[from Mechilta]

**32** **Take… as you have spoken… but you shall also bless me**-[I.e.,] pray for me that I shall not die, for I am a firstborn.-[from Onkelos]

**33** **We are all dead**-They said, “This is not in accordance with Moses’ decree, for he said, ‘And every firstborn in the land of Egypt will die’ (Exod. 11:5), but here, the ordinary people too are dead, five or ten in one house.”-[from Mechilta] See Rashi on verse 30.

**34** **when it was not yet leavened**-The Egyptians did not permit them to tarry long enough for it to leaven.

**their leftovers**-Heb. מִשְׁאֲרֽתָם. The remaining matzah and bitter herbs.-[from Mechilta and Jonathan]

**on their shoulders**-Although they took many animals with them, they [carried the remaining matzoth and bitter herbs on their shoulders because] they loved the mitzvoth.-[from Mechilta]

**35** **according to Moses’ order**-that he said to them in Egypt: “and let them borrow, each man from his friend” (Exod. 11:2).-[from Mechilta]

**and garments**-These meant more to them than the silver and the gold, and [thus] whatever is mentioned later in the verse is more esteemed.-[from Mechilta]

**36** **and they lent them**-Even what they [the Israelites] did not request, they [the Egyptians] gave them. You say, “[Lend me] one.” [They responded,] “Take two and go!”-[from Mechilta]

**and they emptied out**-Heb. וַיְנַצְלוּ. Onkelos renders: וְרוֹקִינוּ, and they emptied out.

**37** **from Rameses to Succoth**-They were 120 “mil” [apart]. Yet they arrived there instantly, as it is said: “and I carried you on eagles’ wings.”-[from Mechilta]

**the men**-from 20 years old and older.-[from Song Rabbah 3:6]

**38** **a great mixed multitude**-A mixture of nations of proselytes.-[from Zohar, vol. 2, p. 45b]

**39** **and also, they had not made provisions for themselves** for the trip. [This verse] tells [of] Israel’s praise, [namely] that they did not say, “How will we go out into the desert without provisions?” Instead they believed and left. This is what is what is stated explicitly in the Prophets: “I remember to you the loving kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following Me in the desert, in a land not sown” (Jer. 2:2). Now what was the [Israelites’] reward? It is explained afterward: “Israel is holy to the Lord, etc.” (Jer. 2:3).-[from Mechilta]

**40** **that they dwelled in Egypt**-after the other dwellings in which they dwelled as foreigners in a land that was not theirs.-[from Mechilta]

**was four hundred and thirty years**-Altogether, from the time that Isaac was born, until now, were 400 years. From the time that Abraham had seed [i.e., had a child, the prophecy] “that your seed will be strangers” (Gen. 15:13) was fulfilled; and there were another 30 years from the decree “between the parts” (Gen 15:10) until Isaac was born. It is impossible, however, to say that [they spent 400 years] in Egypt alone, because Kehath [the grandfather of Moses] was [one] of those who came with Jacob. Go and figure all his years, all the years of his son Amram, and Moses’ 80 years; you will not find them [to be] that many, and perforce, Kehath lived many of his years before he descended to Egypt, and many of Amram’s years are included in the years of Kehath, and many of Moses’ years are included in Amram’s years. Hence, you will not find 400 years counting from their arrival in Egypt. You are compelled, perforce, to say that the other dwellings [which the Patriarchs settled] were also called being “sojournings” and even in Hebron, as it is said: “where Abraham and Isaac sojourned (גָּרוּ) ” (Gen. 35:27), and [Scripture] states also “the land of their sojournings in which they sojourned” (Exod. 6:4). Therefore, you must say that [the prophecy] “your seed will be strangers” [commences] when he [Abraham] had offspring. And only when you count 400 years from the time that Isaac was born, you will find 210 years from their entry into Egypt. This is one of the things that [the Sages] changed for King Ptolemy.-[from Mechilta, Meg. 9a]

**41** **It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass in that very day** [This] tells [us] that as soon as the end [of this period] arrived, the Omnipresent did not keep them [even] as long as the blink of an eye. On the fifteenth of Nissan, the angels came to Abraham to bring him tidings. On the fifteenth of Nissan Isaac was born; on the fifteenth of Nissan the decree of “between the parts” was decreed.-[from Mechilta]

**42** **It is a night of anticipation**-for which the Holy One, blessed be He, was waiting and anticipating, [in order] to fulfill His promise to take them out of the land of Egypt.

**this night is the Lord’s**-This is the night concerning which He said to Abraham, “On this night I will redeem your children.”-[from Mechilta]

**guarding all the children of Israel throughout their generations**-from that time onward, it [the Israelites] is guarded from harmful spirits, like the matter that is stated: “and He will not permit the destroyer, etc.” (above verse 23).-[from Mechilta]

**43** **This is the statute of the Passover sacrifice**-On the fourteenth of Nissan, this section was told to them.-[from Exod. Rabbah 19:5]

**No estranged one**-Whose deeds have become estranged from his Father in heaven. Both a gentile and an Israelite apostate are meant.-[from Mechilta]

**44** **you shall circumcise him; then he will be permitted to partake of it**-[I.e., he means] his master. [This] tells [us] that the [failure to perform the] circumcision of one’s slaves prevents one from partaking of the Passover sacrifice. [These are] the words of Rabbi Joshua. Rabbi Eliezer says: The [failure to perform the] circumcision of one’s slaves does not prevent one from partaking of the Passover sacrifice. If so, what is the meaning of “then he will be permitted to partake of it”? [“He” in this phrase is referring to] the slave.-[from Mechilta]

**45** **A sojourner**-This is a resident alien.-[from Mechilta] [I.e., a gentile who has accepted upon himself not to practice idolatry but eats carcasses.]

**or a hired hand**-This is a gentile. Now why is this [verse] stated? Aren’t they uncircumcised? And it is stated: “but no uncircumcised man may partake of it” (verse 48). But this refers to a circumcised Arab or a circumcised Gibeonite, who is a sojourner or a hired hand.-[from Mechilta]

**46** **It must be eaten in one house**-In one group, that those counted upon it may not become two groups and divide it. You say [that it means] in two groups, or [perhaps] it means nothing other than in one house as is its apparent meaning, and to teach that if they started eating in the yard and it rained, that they may not enter the house. Therefore, Scripture states: “on the houses in which they will eat it” (above verse 7). From here [we deduce] that the one who eats [the Passover sacrifice] may eat [it] in two places.-[from Mechilta]

**you shall not take any of the meat out of the house**-[I.e.,] out of the group.-[from Mechilta]

**neither shall you break any of its bones**-If it [the bone] is edible, e.g., if there is an olive-sized amount of meat on it, it bears the prohibition of breaking a bone; if there is neither an olive-sized amount of meat on it nor marrow [in it], it does not bear the prohibition against breaking a bone.-[from Pes. 84b]

**47** **The entire community of Israel shall make it**-Why was this stated? Because it says concerning the Passover sacrifice of Egypt: “a lamb for each parental home” (above verse 3), we might think that the same applies to the Passover sacrifice of later generations. Therefore, Scripture states: “The entire community of Israel shall make it.”-[from Mechilta]

**48** **he shall make a Passover sacrifice** We might think that everyone who converts must make a Passover sacrifice immediately. Therefore, Scripture states: “and he will be like the native of the land,” [indicating that] just as the native [makes the sacrifice] on the fourteenth [of Nissan], so must a proselyte [make it] on the fourteenth [of Nissan].-[from Mechilta]

**but no uncircumcised male may partake of it**-This includes one whose brothers died because of circumcision, [one] who is not considered an apostate in regards to circumcision, and [his disqualification] is not derived from “No estranged one may partake of it” (verse 43).-[from Mechilta]

**49** **There shall be one law-[This verse comes] to liken a proselyte to a native also regarding other commandments in the Torah.-[from Mechilta]**

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 51:1-21**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. For the conductor, a song of David. | 1. For praise; a hymn of David. |
| 2. When Nathan the prophet came to him when he went to Bath-sheba. | 2. When Nathan the prophet came to him when he had lain with Bathsheba. |
| 3. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your kindness; according to Your great mercies, erase my transgressions. | 3. Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Your kindness; according to the abundance of Your mercies, forgive my rebellion. |
| 4. Wash me thoroughly of my iniquity, and purify me of my sin. | 4. Cleanse me thoroughly from my iniquity, and make me clean from my sin. |
| 5. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. | 5. For my rebellions are manifest before me, and my sin is in front of me always. |
| 6. Against You alone have I sinned, and I have done what is evil in Your sight, in order that You be justified in Your conduct, and right in Your judgment. | 6. Before You, You alone, I have sinned, and that which is evil in Your presence I have done; so that You may make me righteous/generous when You speak, You will clear me when You give judgment. |
| 7. Behold, with iniquity I was formed, and with sin my mother conceived me. | 7. Behold, in iniquity was I born, and in sin my mother was pregnant with me. *Another Targum:* Behold, in iniquities my father thought to create me; and in the sin of the evil impulse my mother conceived me. |
| 8. Behold, **You desired that truth be in the hidden places, and in the concealed part** You teach me wisdom. | 8. Behold, **You desire truth in the inner being**; and **in the hidden place of the heart You will make wisdom known**. |
| 9. Purify me with a hyssop, and I will become pure; wash me, and I will become whiter than snow. | 9. You will sprinkle me like a priest who sprinkles with hyssop waters of purification made from the ashes of the heifer on the unclean, and I will be clean; You will wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. |
| 10. Make me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that You crushed exult. | 10. You will proclaim to me joy and jubilation; the limbs that You have purified will rejoice with a hymn. |
| 11. Hide Your countenance from my sins, and erase all my iniquities. | 11. Remove Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. |
| 12. Create for me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. | 12. A pure heart create for me, O God; and renew within me a spirit inclined to revere You. |
| 13. Do not cast me away from before You, and do not take Your holy spirit from me. | 13. Do not cast me from Your presence; and do not remove from me your holy spirit of prophecy. |
| 14. **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation**, and **let a noble spirit support me**. | 14. **Return Your Torah to me**, to exult in Your redemption; **and may the spirit of prophecy support me**. |
| 15. I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You. | 15. I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to Your presence. |
| 16. Save me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation; let my tongue sing praises of Your charity. | 16. Deliver me from the sentence of death, O Lord, God of my salvation; my tongue will rejoice in Your generosity. |
| 17. O Lord, You shall open my lips, and my mouth will recite Your praise. | 17. O Lord, open my lips with Torah, and my mouth will recount Your praise. |
| 18. For You do not wish a sacrifice, or I should give it; You do not desire a burnt offering. | 18. For You will not desire the holy sacrifice; when I give a burnt offering, You are not pleased. |
| 19. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; O God, You will not despise a broken and crushed heart. | 19. The holy sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a heart broken and purged, O God, You will not spurn. |
| 20. With Your will, do good to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. | 20. Show favour in your good will to Zion; You will complete the walls of Jerusalem. |
| 21. Then You will desire sacrifices of righteousness/justice/generosity, a burnt offering and a whole offering; then they will offer up bulls on Your altar. | 21. Then you will desire the sacrifices of righteousness/generosity, burnt offering and holocaust; then the priests will sacrifice bulls on Your altar. |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Tehillim (Psalms) 51:1-21**

**5** **and my sin is always before me** Since I regret [my sin] and worry about it, it is as though it is constantly before me, always.

**6** **Against You alone have I sinned**; Therefore, it is in Your power to forgive [me]. Even in my sin against Uriah, I sinned against You, for You warned against the matter.

**in order that You be justified in Your conduct** like במנהגך, in Your conduct. I had the strength to overpower my evil inclination, but, so that they should not say, “The servant overpowered his master,”for I said to You (Ps. 26:2), “Test me, O Lord, and try me,” and You tested me and I was not found perfect, in order that You should be justified and not I (Sanha. 107a). Another explanation:

**in order that You be justified in Your conduct** If You forgive me, You will be justified in Your judgment against all the wicked who do not repent, so that they will not be able to say, “If we had repented, it would not have availed us.”

**7** **Behold, with iniquity I was formed** Now how could I not sin when the main part of my creation was through coitus, the source of many iniquities? Another explanation: The main part of my creation is from a male and a female, both of whom are full of iniquity. There are many midrashim to this verse, but they do not fit the context of the psalm.

**conceived me** Heb. יחמתני, an expression of heat, as (Gen. 30:38): “And they came into heat (ויחמנה) when they came to drink.”

**8** **Behold, You desired that truth be in the hidden places** and behold, I confess to the truth, that I sinned.

**in the hidden places** Heb. בטחות. These are the reins, which are smooth. Menachem (p. 97), however, associated it with (Gen. 21:16): “as it were a bowshot (כמטחוי קשת) ”; and so (Job 38:36): “Who placed wisdom in the inward parts (בטחות).” And their interpretation is an expression of drawing, for just as a bow is drawn, so is their yearning for knowledge.

**and in the concealed part You teach me wisdom** And, in the heart,, which is concealed, You have taught me wisdom to confess.

**9** **Purify me with a hyssop** As one purifies the “mezora” and the one who became unclean through contact with a corpse.

**10** **Make me hear joy and gladness** The forgiveness of the sin.

**the bones that You crushed** when You were wroth with me.

**12** **Create for me a pure heart, O God** so that I do not stumble again.

**13** **and do not take Your holy spirit from me** that the holy spirit should not be withdrawn from me.

**14** **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation** The holy spirit, which has left me. **noble** Heb. נדיבה, an expression of nobility and leadership.

**15** **I will teach transgressors Your ways** and they will learn from me. They will repent if they see that You forgive me.

**16** **Save me from blood** that I should not die by the sword as a punishment for Uriah, whom I killed.

**17** **O Lord, You shall open my lips** Forgive me so that I will be able to open my lips to recite Your praise.

**18** **For You do not wish a sacrifice** Because a sacrifice of a sin offering is not brought for a willful transgression.

**or I should give it** For if You desired it, I would give it to You.

**20** **do good** to build Your Temple in its midst in the days of my son, Solomon.

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎51:1-21**

By: Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

In his monumental work, Shaarei Teshuva, Rabbeinu Yonah devotes the entire first section to a comprehensive discussion of the twenty principles of repentance. He quotes frequently from Psalms chapter 51, which he calls 'the Chapter of Repentance', because it is 'the basic foundation of all the principles of repentance'.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Indeed, every fiber of David's being was immersed in the spirit of repentance. Our Rabbis teach, 'Whoever wishes to repent should scrutinize the deeds of David'.[[2]](#footnote-2)

David is described as 'the man who made the yoke of repentance sublime'.[[3]](#footnote-3)

By virtue of David's devotion to constant self-improvement, his efforts merited special Divine assistance. G-d sent the prophet Nathan to inform him of his sin and to guide him on the path of return. David composed this psalm at that time.

Since the theme of this chapter is penitence and purity, it is customary to recite it on the Sabbath when the portion of the Red Heifer is read, in order to remind the congregation to purify itself in anticipation of the Passover festival.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The superscription for Psalms chapter 51 attributes authorship to David. Verse two goes on to tell us that David wrote this psalm, “When Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-Sheba”.

Who was Bath-Sheba that David should desire her when she ‘belonged’ to another man?

The *Midrash* relates that at the time David slew Goliath, Uriah the Hittite had not yet converted to Judaism. David was unsuccessful in his attempt to strip the chain-mail armor from the dead giant so that he could decapitate him, because David couldn’t find the knotted end of the metal thread which linked all the chain-mail hooks together. Then Uriah approached David and asked, ‘If I show you the knot, will you give me an Israelite woman for a wife?’ When David consented, Uriah showed him the knot, which had been tied on Goliath’s sole.

God was angry with David for promising a daughter of Israel to a gentile. He decreed that Bath Sheba, the woman who had been preordained to be David’s wife, should be Uriah’s wife first. The Sages say,[[5]](#footnote-5) ‘Bath Sheba was designated as David’s mate from the six days of Creation, but David took her before the proper time*.*[[6]](#footnote-6)

Now we can understand why David was *irresistibly* drawn to Bath Sheba. It is also interesting to notice how often David’s life was affected by Gentile converts, starting with Ruth. In this next incident we will see that Ruth also played a decisive result as it relates to David’s feelings as expressed in our psalm.

This psalm then describes the emotions that David felt after the incident with Bath Sheba. To begin to understand David’s feelings we need to know more of his story. Let’s start by looking at:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 51:7****Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Now let’s look at why David said this.[[7]](#footnote-7)

David’s father, Yishai, was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. After several years of marriage to his wife, Nitzevet, and after having raised several virtuous children, Yishai began to entertain personal doubts about his ancestry. True, Boaz was the leading Torah authority in his day, but his grandmother, Ruth, was a convert from the nation of Moab, as related in the Book of Ruth.

During Ruth’s lifetime, many individuals were doubtful about the legitimacy of her marriage to Boaz. The Torah specifically forbids an Israelite to marry a Moabite convert, since this is the nation that cruelly refused the Jewish people passage through their land, or food and drink to purchase when they wandered in the desert after being freed from Egypt.

Boaz and the sages understood this law, as per the classic interpretation transmitted in the “Oral Torah”, as forbidding the conversion of *male* Moabites (who were the ones responsible for the cruel conduct) while exempting female Moabite converts. With his marriage to Ruth, Boaz hoped to clarify and publicize this Torah law, which was still unknown to the masses.

Boaz died the night after his marriage with Ruth. Ruth had conceived and subsequently gave birth to their son, Oved, the father of Yishai. Some rabble-rousers at the time claimed that Boaz’s death verified that his marriage to Ruth the Moabite had indeed been forbidden.

Time would prove differently. Once Oved (called so because he was a true *oved*, servant of G-d), and later Yishai and his offspring were born, their righteous conduct and prestigious positions proved the legitimacy of their ancestry. It was unquestionable that men of such caliber could have descended from a forbidden union.

However, later in his life, doubt gripped at Yishai’s heart, gnawing away at the very foundation of his existence. Being the sincere individual that he was, his integrity compelled him to action.

If Yishai’s status was questionable, he was not permitted to remain married to his wife, a veritable Israelite. Disregarding the personal sacrifice, Yishai decided the only solution would be to separate from her, by no longer engaging in marital relations. Yishai’s children were aware of this separation.

After a number of years had passed, Yishai longed for an offspring whose ancestry would be unquestionable. His plan was to engage in relations with his Canaanite maidservant.

He said to her: “I will be freeing you, conditionally. If my status as a Jew is legitimate, then you are freed as a proper Jewish convert to marry me. If my status, however, is blemished and I have the legal status of a Moabite convert forbidden to marry an Israelite, I am not giving you your freedom, but as a *Shifchah Canaanite*, a Canaanite maidservant, you may marry a Moabite convert.”

The maidservant was aware of the anguish of her mistress, Nitzevet. She understood her pain in being separated from her husband for so many years. She knew, as well, of Nitzevet’s longing for more children.

The empathetic maidservant secretly approached Nitzevet and informed her of Yishai’s plan, suggesting a bold counter plan.

“Let us learn from your ancestress and replicate their actions. Switch places with me tonight, just as Leah did with Rachel,” she advised.

With a prayer on her lips that her plan succeed, Nitzevet took the place of her maidservant. That night Nitzevet conceived. Yishai remained unaware of the switch.

After three months, Nitzevet’s pregnancy became obvious. Incensed, her sons wished to kill their apparently adulterous mother and the illegitimate fetus that she carried. Nitzevet, for her part, would not embarrass her husband by revealing the truth of what had occurred. Like her ancestress Tamar, who was prepared to be burned alive rather than embarrass Judah,[[8]](#footnote-8) Nitzevet chose a vow of silence. And like Tamar, Nitzevet would be rewarded for her silence with a child of greatness who would be the forebear of Mashiach.

Unaware of the truth behind his wife’s pregnancy, but having compassion on her, Yishai ordered his sons not to touch her. “Do not kill her! Instead, let the child that will be born be treated as a lowly and despised servant. In this way, everyone will realize that his status is questionable and, as an illegitimate child, he will not marry an Israelite.”

***Tehillim (Psalms) 51:7****Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

The pathos is palpable! No wonder David wrote the words of this chapter of psalms! Because of the anguish behind David’s word, Chazal designated that they should be used extensively in our prayers so that they would express our feelings as we stand before HaShem.

This psalm, in which King David passionately gives voice to the heaviest burdens of his soul, refers to a period of twenty-eight years, from his earliest childhood until he was coronated as king of the people of Israel by the prophet Samuel.

From the time of his birth onwards, then, Nitzevet’s son was treated by his brothers as an abominable outcast. Noting the conduct of his brothers, the rest of the community assumed that this youth was a treacherous sinner full of unspeakable guilt.

We are first introduced to David when the prophet Samuel is commanded to go to Beit-Lechem to anoint a new king, to replace the rejected King Saul.

Samuel arrives in Beit-Lechem, and the elders of the city come out to greet him, nervous at this unusual and unexpected visit, since the elderly prophet had stopped circulating throughout the land. The elders feared that Samuel had heard about a grievous sin that was taking place in their city.[[9]](#footnote-9) Perhaps he had come to rebuke them over the behavior of Yishai’s despised shepherd boy, living in their midst.

Samuel declared, however, that he had come in peace, and asked the elders, and Yishai and his sons, to join him for a sacrificial feast. As an elder, it was natural for Yishai to be invited; but when his sons were inexplicably also invited, they worried that perhaps the prophet had come to publicly reveal the embarrassing and illegitimate origins of their brother. Unbeknownst to them, Samuel would anoint the new king of Israel at this feast. All that had been revealed to the prophet at this point was that the new king would be a son of Yishai.

**Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 16:6ff** *When they came, Samuel saw Eliav (Yishai’s oldest son), and he thought, “Surely G‑d’s anointed stands before Him!”*

*But G‑d said to Samuel, “Don’t look at his appearance or his great height, for I have rejected him. G‑d does not see with mere eyes, like a man does. G‑d sees the heart!”*

*Then Yishai called Avinadav (his second son), and made him pass before Samuel. He said: “G‑d did not choose this one either.”*

*Yishai made Shammah pass, and Samuel said, “G‑d has not chosen this one either.”*

*Yishai had his seven sons pass before Samuel. Samuel said to Yishai, “G‑d has not chosen any of them.”*

*At last Samuel said to Yishai, “Are there no lads remaining?”*

*He answered, “A small one is left; he is taking care of the sheep.”*

*So Samuel said to him, “Send for him and have him brought; we will not stir until he comes here.”*

*So he sent for him and had him brought. He was of ruddy complexion with red hair, beautiful eyes, and handsome to look at.*

*G‑d said: “Rise up, anoint him, for this is the one!”[[10]](#footnote-10)*

WOW! From the lowest of the despised to the greatest of honor, all in a matter of moments. What a turnaround! What a reward for a mother and son of uncommon valor!

The words of several verses of our psalm are easily recognized from our prayers. For example, v.51:17 is in the opening of the Amida for all prayer services. This chpter of psalms is also recited along with Parshat Parah, the Torah portion describing the ritual of the “red heifer” that is read in preparation for Passover. Thus we understand that this is a psalm of cleansing that goes hand-in-hand with the cleansing of uncleanness after coming in contact with a dead man or a grave. In our Torah portion Moshe fetches the bones of Yosef for the exodus, so this psalm is particularly fitting for this Torah portion. It is therefore a fitting psalm to prepare us for the crossing of the Reed Sea an immersion in a mikveh,[[11]](#footnote-11) which is our Torah portion for next week.

Now, perhaps we can begin to understand why we immediately recognize many of the phrases of this psalm.

Finally, there is a Midrash which explains why David was put into a no-win situation with Bath-sheba.

***Sanhedrin 107a*** *Rab Judah said in Rab's name: One should never [intentionally] bring himself to the test, since David king of Israel did so, and fell. He said unto Him, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Why do we say [in prayer] "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," but not the God of David?’ He replied, ‘They were tried by me, but thou wast not.’ Then, replied he, ‘Sovereign of the Universe, examine and try me’ — as it is written, Examine me, O Lord, and try me.[[12]](#footnote-12) He answered ‘I will test thee, and yet grant thee a special privilege;[[13]](#footnote-13) for I did not inform them [of the nature of their trial beforehand], yet, I inform thee that I will try thee in a matter of adultery.’ Straightway, And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed etc.**[[14]](#footnote-14) R. Johanan said: He changed his night couch to a day couch,[[15]](#footnote-15) but he forgot the halachah: there is a small organ in man which satisfies him in his hunger but makes him hunger when satisfied.[[16]](#footnote-16) And he walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.[[17]](#footnote-17) Now Bath Sheba was cleansing her hair behind a screen,[[18]](#footnote-18) when Satan came to him, appearing in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him, which broke the screen, thus she stood revealed, and he saw her. Immediately, And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath Sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her, and she came unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanliness: and she returned unto her house. Thus it is written, Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou host tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.[[19]](#footnote-19) He said thus: ‘Would that a bridle had fallen into the mouth of mine enemy [i.e., himself], that I had not spoken thus.’[[20]](#footnote-20)*

In II Samuel chapters 11 and 12, we find the incident I wish to examine a bit more to understand King David. In this incident, many folks see King David lusting after BatSheva, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah is a soldier in King David’s army. He is fighting the King’s battle when King David takes his wife in an adulterous relationship. After she becomes pregnant, King David has Uriah recalled from the battle and orders him to sleep with his wife, in order to cover up his sin. Afterwards, when Uriah refuses to sleep with BatSheva, King David Has Uriah killed in battle. After Uriah’s death, King David marries BatSheva.

Most folks understand that King David committed adultery and murder. These are the sins that they see King David committing.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

In fact, Chazal say:

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

This does not mean that King David was completely blameless, but it means that, technically, he did not commit any transgressions; he did not breach the Torah’s laws in any way. The reason he was punished so severely is that HaShem judges the righteous very strictly, and David’s actions were not proper for someone of his spiritual stature.

If we apply the principle of midda keneged midda, measure for measure, we get an entirely different picture. Further, if we examine the Sages, we see that there is more to this story than first meets the eye.

Was King David committing adultery? The Tanakh says no.

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

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

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

We know that Uriah had given his wife a “get” and was legally divorced. Chazal ask whether it was a permanent or a conditional get. David required a conditional get. The get is automatically revoked if the soldier returns from battle. In Uriah’s case, we see that Uriah did not give a conditional get. Uriah gave a permanent get. The fact that Uriah was a rebel might explain why Batsheba demanded a permanent get.

We can begin to understand Uriah’s rebellious nature by examing an illustrative event when Uriah was summoned home. When Uriah was called before David, he made reference to his general as “my master, Joab”. Although this form of address would have been proper in the presence of his commanding officer, referring to anyone other than the king as master in the presence of the king himself constituted an act of rebellion punishable by death.

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

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

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

Did King David lust, sexually, after Batsheva? No! King David did NOT lust after Batsheva. He had entirely conquered that evil inclination. The story makes it sound like Batsheva was taking a bath on her roof without any covering. Nothing could be further from the truth. Batsheva was coming out from the mikveh, the ritual immersion that women must must perform every month. As she exited the mikveh house, her exalted spiritual state attracted King David. He prophetically saw that he was to father Solomon with this woman. That is why he took her. Bathsheba was David’s true bashert, “predestined for David from the six days of Creation” but “he enjoyed her as an unripe fruit,” for he married her before the proper time, when the “fruit” was still unripe, neglecting to wait until after Uriah would die a [natural] death.

When King David acknowledged his sin, to Nathan the prophet, We can understand King David’s greatness because he understood what his sin was, while most of us would not have had a clue.

Despite his failure, when confronted by the prophet with his sin David immediately accepted responsibility for his actions with the words, “*Chotosi LaShem* I have sinned against God”.[[21]](#footnote-21) Although innocent of adultery and murder, sins against *man,* David had nevertheless sinned against God when he failed to uphold the divine will by manipulating the intent behind the law.[[22]](#footnote-22)

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

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

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

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

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

HaShem would never say this about an adulterous murderer.

R. Yosef Albo, in his Sefer ha-Ikkarim,[[23]](#footnote-23) notes that the teachings of Psalm 51 correspond to the fundamental elements of repentance as depicted by Rambam’s Hilkhot Teshuva (chap. 2), namely,

1. **leaving sin, regret for the past,**
2. **verbal confession in the present, and**
3. **resolution for correct conduct in the future.**

There is another teaching regarding repentance emphasized by Rambam: “**All the prophets, all of them, commanded regarding teshuva and Israel will only be redeemed by teshuva. And the Torah has promised that ultimately Israel will repent at the end of the exile and immediately they will be redeemed**”.[[24]](#footnote-24) When each of the individuals who collectively constitute Knesset Israel will engage in introspection and be spurred to whole-hearted repentance, society will be transformed and we will merit redemption.

In this psalm, King David reinforces the various lessons of teshuva and the manner in which we should engage in the repentance process with contrition, sincerity, and humbled hearts. Then, he concludes, will the final teaching of teshuva also become a manifest reality: “Do good in Your favor unto Zion, build the walls of Jerusalem.

I believe that v.8 of this chapter of Psalms captures my heart when I repent. This is my earnest prayer in order that I should avoid repeating my sins.

***Tehillim (Psalms) 51:8****Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; make me, therefore, to know wisdom in mine inmost heart.*

Let us prepare our hearts to seek this wisdom too.

**Ashlamata: Melachim bet (2 Kings) 19:35 – 20:7**

**Preface**: Chizkiyahu's repentance seems to have succeeded in canceling Mikha's prophecy regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Chizkiyahu (King Hezekiah) sends for Isaiah, and the prophet answers him:

**II Kings 19: 6-7** Thus says the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which you have heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will send another spirit in him, and he shall hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Indeed, Sancheriv is forced to leave Yehuda in order to fight Tirhaka King of Kush, but he warns Chizkiyahu in letters that he will yet return to Yehuda and capture it. Chizkiyahu once again prays in the Temple:

… Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech you, save You us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, even You only. (*II Kings 19:*15-19)

God answers him through Yishayahu:

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor throw a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city, says the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for My own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (II Kings 19:32-34)

Note: According to the prophet, God will defend Jerusalem and save it for His own sake and for the sake of His servant David – and not for the sake of Chizkiyahu. Thus we see that at this stage, the merits of David still exist and protect the city of Jerusalem.

Deliverance comes that very night:

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord, went out and smote in the camp of Assyria a hundred and eighty five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. (*Ibid*. v. 35)

Sancheriv himself returned to Nineve, where he was murdered (*II Kings 19:*36-37).

Yishayahu's prophecy already alluded that the deliverance would be miraculous: "For I will defend this city, to save it." The absolutely miraculous nature of the deliverance bears a certain irony: Chizkiyahu thought to save Yehuda and Jerusalem by entering into an alliance with the superpowers and fortifying the city; in the end, however, it became clear that all the practical preparations and alliances were of no value – Egypt was indeed the staff of a broken reed, as Ravshake had warned – and salvation came in an absolutely miraculous manner, through no human intervention.

t should be noted that while Jerusalem was saved, the rest of Yehuda suffered utter ruin – ruin that constituted the beginning of the destruction of the kingdom, for the archeological findings indicate that many of the cities of Yehuda did not recover before the exile to Babylonia.

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 35. And it came to pass on that **night** that an angel of the **Lord** went out and **slew** one hundred eighty-five thousand of the camp of Assyria. And they arose in the morning, and behold they were all dead corpses. | 35. And on that night the angel of the LORD went forth and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 and they got up in the morning, and behold all of them were dead corpses. |
| 36. And Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, left and went away, and he returned and **dwelt** in Nineveh. | 36. And Sennacherib the king of Assyria moved and went and returned and dwelt in Niniveh. |
| 37. And he was prostrating himself in the **house** of Nisroch his god, and Adramelech and Sharezer, his sons, **slew** him with a sword, and they fled to the **land** of Ararat, and his son Esarhaddon reigned in his stead. | 37. And he was worshipping at the house of Nisroch his idol, and his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him by the sword and escaped to the land of Kardu (Ararat, Northern Kurdistan). And Essarhaddon his son ruled in his place. |
|  |  |
| 20:1. In those days Hezekiah became critically ill, when Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet came to him, and said to him, "So has the Lord said, 'Give orders to your household, for you are going to die and you shall not live.' " | 1. In those days Hezekiah grew sick to death, and Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet came unto him and said to him”Thus said the LORD: Take account over the men of your house, for you are dying and will not recover from your sickness.” |
| 2. And he turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, | 2. And he turned his face to the wall of the house of the sanctuary, and prayed before the LORD, saying: |
| 3. "Please, O Lord, remember now, how I walked before You truly and wholeheartedly, and I did what is good in Your eyes." And Hezekiah wept profusely. | 3. Accept my petition LORD. Remember now that I served before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and I did what was good before You.” And Hezekiah wept a great weeping. |
| 4. And it was when Isaiah had not gone out to the inner court, and the word of the Lord came to him, saying, | 4. And Isaiah had not gone forth to the middle court, and a word of prophecy from before the LORD was with him, saying: |
| 5. "Return and say to Hezekiah the ruler of My people, 'So has the Lord God of your father David said, "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold I shall heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. | 5. “Return, and you will say to Hezekiah the king of My people: “Thus said the LORD the God of David your father, Your prayer has been heard before Me. Behold, I am healing you. On the third day you will go up to the house of the sanctuary of the LORD. |
| 6. And I will add fifteen years to your life and I will save you from the hand of the king of Assyria, I will save you and this city, and I will protect this city for My sake and for the sake of My servant David.' " | 6. And I will add unto your days fifteen years, and I will rescue from the hand of the king of Assyria you and this city, and I will protect this city on account of My Memra and on account of David My servant.“ |
| 7. And Isaiah said, "Take a cake of pressed figs." And they took [one] and placed it on the boil, and it was healed. | 7. And Isaiah said: ”Take a cake of figs.” And they took (it) and placed (it) on the boil, and he was healed,” |

**Rashi’s Commentary on 2 Kings 19:35 – 20:7**

**35 And it came to pass on that night** when Sennacherib returned from [warring] with Cush, and he came as far as Nob, which was near Jerusalem. one hundred eighty-five thousand All of them were heads of companies.

**36 and dwelt in Nineveh** That is the capital of the land of Assyria. [In Isaiah 37:37, Rashi adds,] as it is said (Gen. 10:11), “From that land Ashur came out, and he built Nineveh...”

**37 the temple of Nisroch his god** a board from Noah’s ark slew him They heard him that he said he would slaughter them before him if they (sic) (he-kara) [would save him so that the princes of the kingdom, whose sons perished because of him, would not kill him].

**1 In those days** Three days before Sennacherib’s downfall, Hezekiah became ill, and the third day, when he went up to the house of the Lord, was the day of Sennacherib’s downfall, and it was the [first] festive day of Passover.

**for you are going to die** in this world.

**and you shall not live** in the world to come, for you have not married, as it is stated in Berachoth 10b.

**4 had not gone out to the inner court...** The Holy One, Blessed be He, hastened to inform him of his cure before the report would spread in the city that the death sentence had been decreed as a punishment upon Hezekiah, as is stated in Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 10:2).

**6 and I will save you from the hand of the king of Assyria** We learn that before Sennacherib’s downfall he became ill.

**7 a cake of pressed figs** [Heb. Develet TeEnim], lit. a pressed cake of figs. When they are fresh, they are called TeEnim, figs, and when they are pressed into a round cake, they are called Develet. and placed it on the boil, and it was healed [This was] a miracle within a miracle, for even healthy flesh - when you place a cake of pressed figs upon it, decays, yet the Holy One, Blessed be He, puts an injurious substance upon vulnerable tissue and it becomes healed.

**Hakham’s comments on our ashlamata**

Our Ashlamata opens by describing how King Hezekiah defeated the Assyrian army. This ashlamata contains a hint that needs to be expanded in order to comprehend how much mankind has fallen through the ages - *yeridat hadorot.*[[25]](#footnote-25) This brief commentary was written so that we can understand that we are the generation that is like the dead skin on the soles of the feet.

The Midrash[[26]](#footnote-26) teaches us that there were four kings who, when faced with the prospect of battle, each requested something else of HaShem: David, Assa, Yehoshafat, and Chizkiyahu.[[27]](#footnote-27)

**David HaMelech** when faced with war said: “I will pursue my enemies and overtake them, and will not return until they are destroyed”.[[28]](#footnote-28) HaShem accepted David’s prayer as we read: “and David smote them from twilight until the evening of the next day”.[[29]](#footnote-29)

**King Assa[[30]](#footnote-30)** stood up and implored HaShem: I do not possess the strength to kill them, rather I will pursue them and You will kill them. Once again, HaShem accepted the king’s prayer, and: “Assa and the people with him pursued them to Gerar, and the Ethiopians fell, for lack of vitality, for they were crushed before HaShem and before His camp”.[[31]](#footnote-31)

When it was time for **Yehoshafat[[32]](#footnote-32)** to wage war against the people of Ammon, he said: I do not possess the strength to pursue or to kill, I will simply sing songs of praise to You, and You will wage the war. HaShem accepted this prayer as well: “as soon as they began their exuberant song and praise, HaShem set up ambushers against the Children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who were attacking Yehuda, and they were struck down”.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Finally, the Midrash concludes with **King Chizkiyahu** (Hezekiah) who said: I do not possess the strength to pursue or to kill or to sing songs of praise, I am going to go to sleep while You wage war. HaShem accepted this prayer as well, as the pasuk states: “and it was that very night, an angel of HaShem went out and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand people of the Assyrian camp.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Shortly thereafter their king Sanncherib was forced to leave Eretz Israel eventually being killed.[[35]](#footnote-35)

It would *appear* that Chizkiyahu displayed the highest level of bitachon, trust, he was so confident that HaShem would fight his war that he took himself off to sleep.

Chazal[[36]](#footnote-36) teach us that because Chizkiyahu was such a great Tzaddik who influenced the entire population of Yehuda such that they all became talmidei Hakhamim,[[37]](#footnote-37) HaShem wished to make him Mashiach, however because he did not sing songs of praise to HaShem following his miraculous victory over Sanncherib[[38]](#footnote-38) he was not worthy of this.[[39]](#footnote-39) How do we reconcile this seeming contradiction: On the one hand Chizkiyahu was on a level that he had no need to sing praise, on the other hand, his not doing so is viewed as a great shortcoming?

I believe that there is no contradiction. In order to win the battle there was no need for Chizkiyahu to pray to HaShem or to sing His praises, HaShem would wage the war and Chizkiyahu need not get involved at all. Following the great miracle, however, Chizkiyahu should have thanked HaShem by praising Him for all He had done for himself and the Jewish people. It was his not demonstrating this gratitude that cost him the opportunity to become Mashiach.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Do we have a right to do as Chizkiyahu and simply sit back and express bitachon, trust, that HaShem will handle everything without so much as uttering a prayer? Certainly not! One is only permitted to act in such a fashion when prophets or the Hakhamim of Israel tell us that a miracle will definitely occur. When Am Israel[[41]](#footnote-41) arrived at Yam Suf[[42]](#footnote-42) they were certain that everything was going to turn out for the best. Moshe Rabbenu who was sent by HaShem to take the Jewish people out of Egypt had instructed them to proceed onwards towards the sea. HaShem had informed them that they were going to be safe, all they needed to do was to place their trust in Him. Similarly, Yeshayahu HaNavi informed Chizkiyahu that although Sanncherib wished to capture Yerushalayim, he had nothing to fear. In the absence of such a prophecy, however, a person may not follow in the footsteps of Chizkiyahu and assume that HaShem will provide a miracle for him. Who says that HaShem wishes to provide a miracle for him?

Why do each of these kings wage war in a different manner? Why is there no consistency?

Chazal teach that the different techniques for waging war was due to *yeridat hadorot*,[[43]](#footnote-43) an erosion in people’s level from one generation to the next. Let’s examine this descent of the generations in more detail, as provided by the Midrash.[[44]](#footnote-44)

During **David HaMelech’s** tenure as King, the Bne Israel reached an **unparalleled level of righteousness**, trusting HaShem unequivocally, realizing that only His power, not theirs, could achieve victory in war. David, therefore, felt comfortable asking HaShem to allow him to fight his enemies via conventional methods of warfare. He was acutely aware that when he triumphed, the people would be clear in the belief that it was really HaShem Who had waged war for them.

**Assa’s** generation was **not on the exalted spiritual level** that David enjoyed. Assa knew that his contemporaries’ trust in HaShem was not very serious, and, therefore, he feared that if the enemy were to be defeated in a conventional war, the people would mistakenly believe that it was their own doing, not that of HaShem. Thus, Assa asked HaShem to perform a miracle in which his enemies would be defeated even before he could pursue them. In this manner, the people would be cognizant that it was HaShem Who had catalyzed the success, not the people.

**Yehoshaphat** lived in a generation **farther removed** from HaShem than his predecessor had. Thus, he felt that even if they were to pursue the enemy, the people would feel that they had played a role in triumphing over their enemies. Therefore, he asked HaShem to defeat them entirely on His own, while he merely would sing a song of praise. The less his people were to be involved, the smaller the chance that they would believe in their own strength.

**Chizkiyahu’s** (Hezekiah) generation had **deteriorated** beyond that of Yehoshaphat, to the point that Chizkiyahu felt that even a song might be presented in the wrong light. The people might think that the song had some mystical incantation, and it was because of their song that they had defeated the enemy. Therefore, Chizkiyahu asked HaShem to do it all, thereby not allowing the people to err and believe that they had produced the defeat. They had to see clearly that it was all HaShem and that they had not been more than spectators.

The midrash’s language and context demonstrates that this is an illustration of *yeridat hadorot*, an erosion in people’s level from one generation to the next. David’s approach was the healthiest of the four. He merited taking an active role in fighting for/with HaShem, as Avigayil[[45]](#footnote-45) said: “For my master does fight the wars of HaShem”.[[46]](#footnote-46) The least commendable of the four is Chizkiyahu, who did not even have the strength to properly sing to HaShem. In fact, HaShem was willing to make that battle the apocalyptic war[[47]](#footnote-47) and Chizkiyahu would have been Mashiach had he sung songs of praise.[[48]](#footnote-48)

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra of Shmot (Ex.) 11:1-12:-51**

By: H. Em Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School of Hakham Shaul**  **Tosefta**  **Luqas (Lk) 9:10a** | **School of Hakham Tsefet**  **Peshat**  **Mordechai (Mk) 6:17-32** |
| **But when he reprimanded Herod the Tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the wicked things Herod had done, Herod also added this to them all: he locked Yochanan the Immerser up in prison.**  **When the Sh’l’achim** (apostles – emissaries) **returned (**to Yeshua)**, they gave him an account of all that they had done.** | **For Herod himself had sent and had Yochanan, the Immerser arrested and bound (him) in prison because Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, had married her. For Yochanan, the Immerser told Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”** Therefore, **Herodias had a grudge against him. They wanted him put to death but could not do so, for Herod was afraid of Yochanan the Immerser, knowing that he was a Tsaddiq – righteous/generous and holy man**, **and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed, but he used to enjoy listening to him. The convenient day came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his nobles, military commanders, and the leading men of Galil. When Herodias’s daughter came in and danced, she won Herod’s favor along with his dinner guests**. **The king told the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you, up to half of my kingdom.” And she went out to her mother and said, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of Yochanan the Immerser.”** **Immediately, she came and hurried into the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of Yochanan the Immerser on a platter.” And although the king was very sorry, *because* of his oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her. Immediately, the king sent an executioner and commanded** him**to returnhis head. And he went and had him beheaded in prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.** **When his talmidim** (disciples) **heard** about this, **they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb.**  **And** when t**he Sh’l’achim** (apostles - emissaries) **were synagogued by Yeshua,** they **told him everything, even what they did and what they taught.[[49]](#footnote-49) And he said to them, “Come now by yourselves, to a quiet[[50]](#footnote-50) place and rest a while.” (For there were many** people**coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.** |
|  | |
|  | |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Exodus 12:29-51** | **Psalms 51** | **2 Kings19:35-20:7** | **Mk 6:17-32** | **Lk 3:19-20; 9:10a** |

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

The connection between the Nazarean Codicil and the Torah reading is immediate.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mordechai (Mk.) 6:30** | **Sh’mot 12:21** |
| **The Sh’l’achim** (apostles – emissaries) **were synagogued by Yeshua** | Moses **summoned all the elders of Israel** and said to them, |

**Emissaries of the Master**

We recently saw the **Sh’l’achim – emissaries** dispatched, “sent out.” We cannot believe that they were mindlessly sent by the Master to just wherever they felt like going. As we will see, they are **Sh’l’achim – emissaries** of the Master. Therefore, they are to do the Master’s bidding per se. The word “Apostle” (**Sh’liach – emissary**) needs understanding in the Jewish environment in which Mordeachai/The Nazarean Codicil was written, contrary to the majority opinion of Christian scholars. The definition of an “Apostle” is given to us in Mishnah Berakhot 5:5 – “A person’s representative (Hebrew: **Shaliach** – “sent-out-one”) is as the person himself.” The dispatching of the talmidim or principle of agency extends one’s realm of influence and power. The doctrine of agency teaches us that if an “Apostle” is “sent out,” it is as if the person himself went on that mission. Thus, we have used the word “**Sh’l’achim**.” Wherever the **Sh’l’achim** went, they were going out as “plenipotentiary agents” of His Majesty Messiah King Yeshua, the Messiah of all the Jewish people. Here, we have the often-used Semitic idea that politics and religion are intimately intertwined. We can also derive a vital principle from these words. The Talmidim returned to the Master in a state of much-needed rest. This principle shows that the one who dispatches, that is, apostolizes agents, can do far greater exploits through his agents without depleting his own power. The phrase “**there were many** people**coming and going**” shows the extensive amount of “ministry” that the talmidim were involved in. It also indicates that the Master had used the principle of agency to further his mission.

Furthermore, this pericope shows that the Master’s talmid was an integral part of his success in ministry. The pericope helps us understand that the official work of a Talmid is to be an agent of his Hakham. In this sense, the title “Apostle” refers to the agent of the Hakham as an extension of himself.

In the present Torah Seder, Moshe gathers the “Elders” of the B’ne Yisrael. Therefore, we would see that Yeshua has elected his council of “Elders” per se. Moshe gathered the Elders because they would have to act as his agents in each family and clan, selecting their Pesach lamb. Therefore, as Sh’liachim of His Majesty Messiah King Yeshua, the Messiah of all the Jewish people, we are not into criticizing or meddling in the good or bad policies of the Gentile powers and governments. We might say that Pharaoh and his “government” are unable to have any measure of control or influence over the B’ne Yisrael. The main thrust of Jewish “**Sh’l’achim**” is to establish communities/colonies of people who accept truthfully, sincerity, and love the whole governance of G-d through the Bate Din. And where these institutions (Bate Din) usually exist, we are not bothered by the powers of the Gentile government. We need to remember that our message is political, religious, ethical, and legal, simultaneously harmoniously intertwined. Messiah’s debriefing includes a period of repose. Therefore, this requires an opportunity to “get away” from the masses. Similarly, the Torah Seder shows Moshe preparing the B’ne Yisrael for the great “get away!”

In the present pericope, like our Torah Seder, the Sh’l’achim were “**Synagogued**” by the Master. The Greek here has **συναγονται – Sunagonte,** **συνάγω** – *sunago*, meaning to lead, assemble. Commonly, this translates as “congregated,” but it is a word derivative of “Synagogue.” Therefore, we might understand that Moshe “**Synagogued**” the Elders of the B’ne Yisrael. We can also derive practical halakhic applications here. Where there is a **Synagogueing”** an issue or matter needs addressing.

**A Place of Rest**

The weekly assembly, “Synagogueing” of the Jewish people, is for the sake of the Moed, a divine appointment prophetically addressing the spiritual needs of the coming week. Moshe’s address prepared the B’ne Yisrael for the coming week. Likewise, when we enter Shabbat, we can say goodbye to the previous week. We can also reflect on our week to see our spiritual accomplishments. Similarly, we should review our failed spiritual attempts. Yeshua has gathered “**Synagogued**” his talmidim for the sake of debriefing. Not only has he brought them for debriefing, but he has gathered them for “rest,” i.e., Shabbat.

**B’resheet (Gen.) 1:31** God saw all that He **had made**, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

The cited passage from B’resheet shows us that reflection is part of our preparation for Shabbat. Yeshua wants to be able to debrief his talmidim in a quiet place away from all the business of life. This debriefing gives a location for teaching and instruction.

One of the main techniques used in Psychology, Intelligence, and many other areas is the “Debrief.” The “Debrief” allows the person/s to learn what they did wrong and how to improve, as well as what they did right or excelled at doing, and at the same time, it prevents “burn-out” and generates a general sense of well-being and pride in being a member of a team with a good leader. Many are books and articles in the Christian world about ministerial or professional “burn-out,” and the reason for this is that the work is not collegial (i.e., at least, “two by two”), and there is no leader to lead a “Debriefing Session.” But, where the wise counsel of our Sages tossed out as useless and despised, what else can be expected? Lawlessness, indeed, has its nefarious reward.

To be a genuine Talmid of the Master requires much work in parallel within and without the individual, and this should be done in teams, not by oneself, as it is most dangerous and lethal to your faith and mental well-being. Also, regular debriefing sessions conducted by a skilled practitioner result in the perfection of skills and the promotion of pride, camaraderie, and an overall sense of well-being. From this perspective, discipline has nothing to do with people warming pews. Still, active agents of the Master carefully carry out his mission with precision and effectiveness while promoting best practices and personal well-being.

Judaism is a place and people of the community—communities building on relationships. Boarders and “halakhah” strengthen relationships. Therefore, communal activities need to be controlled by halakhot. The Master had dispatched (Apostled) his Talmidim into the community with his Mesorah. Moshe gave the Mesorah to the Elders of the B’ne Yisrael by instructing them on how many people they should try to feed with one sheep, what that sheep should look like, and other pertinent criteria for Pesach.

**Come Away**

The ministry of the Master transformed the Galil. The Galil had been the home of paganism and idolatry before it carried them away into Babylon. The ministry of the Master, in conjunction with his talmidim, took place in an area of backward practice of the Northern Kingdom and transformed it into the cradle of Judaism for the future. The Galil was the latter home of Yochanan Ben Zakkai and the last place where the Great Sanhedrin sat before it disassembled. These people and Bate Din could not have transitioned from Eretz Yisrael into the Diaspora without the preparatory work of Yeshua and his talmidim. Yeshua called his talmidim “away” from the history of a degraded Galil into the heights of Judaism’s “Governance of G-d.” His “apostles,” as his agents, called all the inhabitants of the Northern Galil “away” from their sordid history in preparation for their departure on a global mission of tikun. However, this would not have been possible.

1. If the Master had not dispatched his talmidim as his Emissaries
2. And if they had not taught the Mesorah of the Master

Acceptance of the Master, Messiah of all Yisrael, transformed the Galil possible. The Galil had become the new Gan Eden. From this, New Eden sprang the waters from the four rivers[[51]](#footnote-51) of Rabbinic Hermeneutics, such as the Mishnah, Tosefta, and the halakhic Midrashim. From the second through the fourth centuries, they produced the bulk of rabbinic materials from the Galil. The fourth through the eighth centuries made much of the Targumic literature, thousands of piyyutim, and sermonic midrashim.[[52]](#footnote-52) From the first century through the eighth, the Galil was the cradle of present-day Judaism. While many scholars want to refute the thought that the Master and his talmidim influenced the area, we can hardly imagine the power of his ministry in that region. In a measure, Judaism “went out” of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) but not the Galil because the Master “apostolized” talmidim.

**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:**

**Tevet 11, 5784, December 22/23, 2023**

**Shabbat: “Qadesh Li” – “Sanctify unto Me”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **“קַדֶּשׁ-לִי”** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“Qadesh Li”** | Reader 1 – Shemot 13:1-5 | Reader 1 – Shemot 14:15-17 |
| **“Sanctify unto Me”** | Reader 2 – Shemot 13:6-10 | Reader 2 – Shemot 14:18-21 |
| **“Conságrame”** | Reader 3 – Shemot 13:11-16 | Reader 3 – Shemot 14:22-25 |
| Shemot (Exodus) 13:1 – 14:14 | Reader 4 – Shemot 13:17-22 |  |
| Ashlamatah:  Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 31:8-16 + 19 | Reader 5 – Shemot 14:1-4 | **Monday / Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Shemot 14:5-8 | Reader 1 – Shemot 14:15-17 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 52:1-11 | Reader 7 – Shemot 14:9-14 | Reader 2 – Shemot 14:18-21 |
|  | Maftir: Shemot 14:11-14 | Reader 3 – Shemot 14:22-25 |
| N.C.: Mk 6:33-44; Lk 9:10b-17 | Jeremiah 31:8-16 + 19 |  |

**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 Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham

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

1. Shaarei Teshuva 1:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Midrash Shocher Tov 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Moed Katan 16b [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This opening was edited from *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources*. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sanhedrin107a [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. see *Maharal* and *Torat Chaim, Sanhedrin ibid. 2* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The following is an excerpted and edited section of an essay by Chana Weisberg, titled: Nitzevet, Mother of David, The bold voice of silence. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Genesis chapter 38, and Midrashim and Commentaries on that chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 16:6–12. As Samuel held the horn of oil, it bubbled, as if it could not wait to drop onto David’s forehead. When Samuel anointed him, the oil hardened and glistened like pearls and precious stones, and the horn remained full. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. ***1 Corinthians 10:2*** *And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Tehillim (Psalms) 26:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Lit., ‘I will do something for thee.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. II Shmuel (Samuel) 11:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. I.e., he cohabited by day instead of night, that he might be free from desire by day. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. With regard to human passion, ‘the appetite grows by what it feeds on’. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Or ‘beehive’ (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Tehillim (Psalms) 17:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. I.e., ‘would that I had not asked God to try me’. By a play on words, ‘on (E.V. ‘I am purposed’) is connected with זממא ‘a bridle’, and the second half of the verse is explanatory of the first: ‘Would that my mouth had been bridled, so that I would not have to admit now, "Thou hast proved etc."’ [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Shmuel bet (2 Samuel) 12:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Zohar 2:107a [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Sefer ha-Ikkarim IV:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Hilchot Teshuva 7:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Lit. the descent of the generations (due to the effects of sin). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Midrash Rabbah - Lamentations 4:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Hezekiah [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Tehillim (Psalms) 18:38 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Shmuel I (Samuel) 30:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Yehoshafat’s father. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Divrei HaYamim II (Chronicles) 14:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The prophet told Yehoshafat that he would not have to defend himself, because the enemy armies would destroy each other: For the children of Amon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir [Edom] to utterly slay and destroy them and when they had annihilated the inhabitants of Seir they all helped to destroy one another (II Chronicles 20:23). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Divrei HaYamim II (Chronicles) 20:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Melachim II (Kings) 19:35 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Yalkut Shimoni Shmuel II remez 2, 163 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Chazal or Ḥazal (Hebrew: חז”ל‎) is an acronym for the Hebrew “**Ḥ**akhameinu **Z**ikhronam **L**iv’rakha”, “Our Sages, may their memory be blessed”), is a general term that refers to all Jewish sages of the Mishna, Tosefta and Talmud eras, essentially from the times of the final 300 years of the Second Temple of Jerusalem until the 6th century CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Torah scholars – Rabbis. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Sennacherib king of the Assyrian Empire. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Sanhedrin 94a [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 4:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The people of Israel [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The Sea of Reeds, also known as the Red Sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Lit. the descent of the generations (due to the effects of sin). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Avigayil was David’s wife. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 25:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Of Gog u’Magog. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid. 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. We see here the honest relation of all that they had experienced. This was for the sake of learning at the hands of a Hakham. Only, after hearing their reports could the Master begin to teach his talmidim how to better themselves in ministry. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. **Eρημος** – *eremos* referring to a place of seclusion, away from the demands of ministry. This shows us that each of us involved in the ministry of the Master must also have times of personal refreshment and relaxation. This would correspond to the Hebrew word **כּחד** – *kâchad*, meaning secret. The Peshat meaning is to find a place of seclusion away from the masses where repose can take place. Allegorical interpretation means that Yeshua, The Master took them to a place where he could teach them the So’od meaning of their experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. B’resheet (Gen.) 2:10 Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The Jewish Seminary of America. (1992). *The Galilee in Antiquity.* (L. I. Levine, Ed.) MA: Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Introduction xviii [↑](#footnote-ref-52)