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# TSEFET'S PERICOPE #78<sup>C</sup>

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## הַמְצֹרָה

“HaM’tsorá”

“of the lepper”

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 14:1-32

Ashlamatah: Isaiah 57:17-19 + 58:8-14

Special: Isaiah 60:1-22

Psalms 78:40-55

Pirke Abot IV:14

N.C.: I Tsefet (Peter) 5:5-11

Commentary by Dr. Eliyahu Ben Avraham (Walter Oakley)

BESB<sup>a</sup>

Greek

Likewise, you young ones (new) submit to the Elders. However, you should voluntarily submit to one another in all things being clothed in humility because **“If [one goes] to the scoffers, he will scoff; but [if he goes] to the humble, he evokes grace.”**<sup>b</sup> (Pro 3:34) <sup>6</sup> Be humble then under the mighty hand of G-d<sup>c</sup> so that he will elevate you in the appropriate season. <sup>7</sup> **Cast your burden on the L-rd, and He will bear you; He shall never allow a righteous man to falter.**<sup>d</sup> (Ps 55:23) <sup>8</sup> Be sober,<sup>e</sup> keep watch (wake up)<sup>f</sup>; the enemy your accuser (slanderer) as a lion roars, walks about seeking to devour. <sup>9</sup> Who you must resist being faithful, knowing that your suffering is *shared*, by your brethren throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> But G-d of all grace, the One who called us into His eternal glory in (*Yeshua the*) Messiah himself *who* suffered briefly,<sup>g</sup> may he perfect, establish and strengthen *you*. <sup>11</sup> To him be the honor and might forever, amen.

<sup>5</sup> Ὁμοίως νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις· πάντες δὲ ἀλλήλοις τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε ὅτι [Ὁ] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους ἀντιτάσσεται ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν <sup>6</sup> Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ <sup>7</sup> πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ’ αὐτόν ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν <sup>8</sup> Νήψατε γρηγορήσατε ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν διάβολος ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν καταπιεῖν· <sup>9</sup> ᾧ ἀντίστητε στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει εἰδότες τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων τῇ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι <sup>10</sup> Ὁ δὲ θεὸς πάσης χάριτος ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ ὀλίγον παθόντας αὐτὸς καταρτίσει στηρίξει σθενώσει <sup>11</sup> αὐτῷ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν

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<sup>a</sup> Beth El Study Bible – Translation and notes by Dr. Eliyahu Ben Avraham

<sup>b</sup> Rashi’s Translation

<sup>c</sup> הַמְצֹרָה הַמְצֹרָה

<sup>d</sup> Rashi - Ps 55:23

<sup>e</sup> Sobriety here is less associated with being drunk and more closely associated with being in a state of mental alertness as the next phrase intimates.

<sup>f</sup> γρηγορέω; 1 aorist ἐγρηγόρησα; (from ἐγρήγορα, to have been roused from sleep, to be awake, perfect of ἐγείρω; cf. Lob. ad Phryn., p. 118f;

<sup>g</sup> J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, 1930 pg 445

5 וְכֵן גַּם־אַתֶּם הַנְּעָרִים הַכְּנָעוּ לִפְנֵי הַזְּקֵנִים וְחִגְרוּ כוּלְכֶם שְׂפֹלוֹת רוּחַ בְּהַכְּנִיעַ אִישׁ  
 לְרֵעֵהוּ כִּי אֱלֹהִים לְלִצִּים יִלִּיץ וְלַעֲנָוִים יִתְּן־חַן: 6 הַשְּׂפִילוּ נַפְשְׁכֶם תַּחַת יַד־אֱלֹהִים הַחֲזִיקָה לְמַעַן יְרוֹמְם  
 אֶתְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ: 7 הַשְּׁלִיכוּ עָלָיו כָּל־יְהִבְכֶם כִּי הוּא יִדְאָג לָכֶם: 8 הַתְּעוֹרְרוּ שְׂקֵדוֹ כִּי יִרְיַבְכֶם הַשְּׁטָן  
 מִתְּהַלֵּךְ בְּאַרְיֵה שֹׂאֵג וּמִבְּקֵשׁ אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִבְלַע: 9 וְעַמְדַתֶּם נִגְדוּ חֲזִקִים בְּאַמוּנָה וּדְעוּ כִּי־עֲנָוִים כְּאֵלֹהִים  
 בָּאוּ גַם־עַל־אַחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּעוֹלָם: 10 וְאֱלֹהֵי כָל־הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר קָרָא אֶתְכֶם לְכַבּוֹדוֹ הַנְּצַחִי בְּמַשִּׁיחַ יִשׁוּעַ  
 אַחֲרֵי עוֹנוֹתְכֶם מַעַט הוּא יִשְׁלִים אֶתְכֶם וְיַחֲזֵק וְיַגְבִּיר וְיִיסַד: 11 לוֹ הַכְּבוֹד וְהַעֲזָ לְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים אָמֵן:

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## INTRODUCTION

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In this pericope, Hakham Tsefet shifts his focus to the “**younger ones**.” The Greek word νεωτεροι- *neōteroi* is shrouded in a bit of ambiguity. Noting what His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yoseph Ben Haggai recorded in the commentary I would like to offer two possibilities. Perhaps there is more than this. However, I want to work on two thoughts.

### **Pakidim:**

Some scholars suggest that the “*neōteroi*” could be a class of officers of lesser status than the Elders mentioned in the previous pericope. This thought is very plausible. The writing of Hakham Shaul in the book of Acts records the officers who served “at the bench.”<sup>h</sup> In Hakham Tsefet’s present pericope these “*neōteroi*” are singled out from the rest of the congregation. Therefore, we are looking at some special class or group that Hakham Tsefet feels it requisite to address. It may very well be that these “*neōteroi*” are in fact the Pakidim of the Esnoga (Synagogue). This would fit the context rather well. As His Eminence pointed out, the key word in verse 5 is ὑποτάσσω (*hupotassō*). This word is actually a compound word. ὑπό (*hupo*) is meaning, under and τάσσω (*tassō*) meaning, to put in order, to station and or to appoint, ordain, order. All of the definitions seem to fit the category of the Pakid. The Pakid under the authority of the Elders of the Esnoga served as its clerks and various ecclesiastical duties.

The language of the rest of the verse would seem to support this thesis. The Pakid are to submit to the Elders –Zakenim. Verse 6 tells us that they will be exalted – be elevated to a higher level in the appropriate season.

**Sanhedrin 4:3** *The Sanhedrin was [arranged] in the shape of a half of a round threshing floor [that is, as an amphitheater], so that [the judges] should see one another. And two judges’ clerks stand before them, one at the right and one at the left. And they write down the arguments of those who vote to acquit and of those who vote to convict. R. Judah says, “Three: one writes the*

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<sup>h</sup> This is usually translated “waited tables.” (Acts6:2)

*opinion of those who vote to acquit, one writes the opinion of those who vote to convict, and the third writes the opinions both of those who vote to acquit and of those who vote to convict.”*

Here we can see the Pakidim in their duties. In the following Mishnah, we will see the elevation of a Pakid.

***Sanhedrin 4:4*** *And three rows of disciples of sages sit before them. Each and every one knows his place. [If] they found need to ordain [a disciple to serve on the court], they ordained one who was sitting in the first row. [Then] one who was sitting in the second row joins the first row, and one who was sitting in the third row moves up to the second row. And they select for themselves someone else from the crowd and set him in the third row. [The new disciple] did not take a seat in the place of the first party [who had now joined in the court] but in the place that was appropriate for him [at the end of the third row].*

What I am impressed with in this Mishnah is that each talmid “knows his place.” I believe that this fits Hakham Tsefet’s thought. He might have said, “know your place – you will be elevated soon enough.”

I am a bit troubled by the idea that Hakham Tsefet has to address the Elders and the Pakidim. Nevertheless, all congregations have stages of development and growth. Likewise, there are awkward stages where everyone finds their rightful place and things begin to smooth out. Without doing a detailed forensic, it would be unlikely that we would ever be able to determine the exact events behind this treatise.

#### **New Converts:**

My second thought concerning the “*neōteroi*” is that they could possibly be “new converts.” There is some plausibility to this idea in the following facts. New converts often tend to be very zealous about their faith. This can be a problem for the more seasoned Elder who has seen all the problems that have to be addressed. Likewise, “new Converts” would have a hard time initially finding their place. Therefore, it might be requisite to admonish them to submit to the Elders. Even if this is not the case at present new converts was a very real issue among the Nazarene Sect.

This week Hakham Tsefet makes its strongest connection to the special Ashlamatah of Isaiah 60:1-22. Yeshayahu speaks of the Gentiles who will come to the People of G-d; he speaks of the “nations” who “go by your light.” The light of the Jewish people is the Torah. These thoughts are paralleled in the book of Acts where the Jerusalem Council must decide how they will deal with the “Gentile Question.”

I have discussed this before in other places. The issue of gentile converts to Nazarene Judaism was both a very positive and negative event in history. The positive side is obviously the many gentiles joined and converted gaining access to the covenants of promise as Hakham Shaul says. However, the negative side of this issue is that the gentiles were predominantly Roman. This served as a big problem. Eretz Yisrael was subservient to Roman authority during the First Century. This new Roman convert needed to have the appropriate Jewish education to attend the Esnoga and be able to perform appropriately. This meant that the ruler (the Roman) had to submit to the subservient (The Jews). This role reversal eventually caused great problems for the Nazarene Jews. As you may have surmised the role reversal, eventually reversed. The now subservient Gentile became the dominant and the Nazarene Jew became acquiescent. By the middle of the second century, the early Church Fathers mention considerable differences and

antagonism between Jews and Gentile converts.<sup>i</sup> I will not try to rehash history here. I have only noted this possibility to explain the fact that the Gentile needed a great deal of education in order to serve in the Esnoga.

New converts would have needed both admonishment and encouragement. It is also possible that some of these “*neōteroi*” desired positional status in the Esnoga, such as Pakid or Elder. Before this could happen there must be an apropos education and faithfulness.

### **Synthesis:**

Having discussed these two possibilities, I would most likely choose the first selection and comments. While the second notation was in fact a problem, I do not believe this is the issue Hakham Tsefet is trying to address. Actually, the fact that we are in the sixth week of Nachamu seems to suggest comfort and reinforcement rather than actual rebuke. Therefore, it would seem plausible that the comments to the Pakidim are also exhortations and words of comfort. The subservient Pakid will experience promotion soon enough. Patience is a worthwhile virtue.

### **Clothed in humility:**

Regardless of all the above the dominant character that Hakham Tsefet is looking for in Esnoga leadership is humility. The offices of government require a firm hand. However, the fatherly figure is also compassionate understanding the needs and character of his children.

Here Hakham Tsefet uses a unique word. ἐγκομβόμαι (*egkomboimai*) is found only here in this pericope of Hakham Tsefet. This word seems to indicate that it was a special piece of clothing. I would surmise that the pakidim might have dressed in a particular type of garment and or clothing to indicate occupation and status. In court systems varied special uniforms and hats are worn. This uniform would have indicated their positional status to the rest of the congregation. A change in clothing would indicate the change in status. I am certain that if the Pakidim wore special garments that the Elders also wore special garments and clothing to indicate their status.

Some translators suggest that the word γκομβόμαι (*egkomboimai*) should be translated “adorn yourselves with humility.”<sup>j</sup> Other suggests that the word should be translated “a beautiful dress.”<sup>k</sup> Calvin suggests that this is an apron worn by slaves as an indication of humility.<sup>l</sup> If there is any validity to the remarks it is plausible to think that the Pakid was wearing some form of garment that may have indicated rank. Hakham Tsefet might have played on an idea telling that Pakid that his elevation would be forthcoming, therefore, wait patiently for the elevation.

From time to time, we lose sight of our place and position. Likewise, from time to time we are reminded of our place just as the above Pakidim knew their place we must ever be mindful of ours. Uniforms can be a positive reminder of that place. Therefore, Hakham Tsefet might have been saying, “look at your uniform.” The Pakid’s job is that of service to the Elder. However, promotion and elevation of status is ever occurring.

I would call your attention to the fact that the Kohanim all wore special clothing. During the first century the P’rushim were deeply committed to emulating the Kohanim.

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<sup>i</sup> Marvin Wilson, Our Father Abraham, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pg. 92

<sup>j</sup> Joh. Ed. Huther, Th.D, Commentary on the New Testament, Funk & Wagnall’s, Publishers, 1887, pg 341

<sup>k</sup> Ibid

<sup>l</sup> Ibid

## Elevation of Status:

This elevation of status makes me think that Hakham Tsefet was thinking of the Leper. His Eminence has already pointed out the connection with the word “Scoffer” in his commentary. I would insert the idea that once the Leper is free of his disease he is immersed, his cloths are washed and his head is shaved. It would be obvious to anyone that the person with the shaved head was a leper.

However, my thought, which connects Hakham Tsefet to the Torah Seder, is that of the mikveh. The *mikveh* is about elevation of status. The Leper has been “cut off” from the rest of the camp. His status is that of non-existence per se. When the completely ceremonial process is finished, the Leper experiences an elevation from non-existence to communal relations. He is now “comforted” and “strengthened.” The whole motif of resurrection underpins this initiative.

## Proverbs, Psalms and Hakham Tsefet:

I have said a thousand times that scripture is interpreted contextually. Hakham Tsefet quotes Proverbs 3:34 in his Shabbat Sermon. The quoted Proverbs discourse is that of a Father speaking to his son concerning “wisdom and discretion.”<sup>m</sup> The two Hebrew words used for wisdom and discretion are תוֹשִׁיָּה (tûshîyâ) מְזִמָּה (m<sup>e</sup>zimmâ) The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament suggests that the root for תוֹשִׁיָּה (tûshîyâ) means *zāmam* is found only in the Qal stem. It is used mainly of the L-rd carrying out his purposes in judgment against wicked nations or of wicked men who devise schemes against G-d and the righteous. Franz Delitzsch suggests “an advancement of that which profits,” particularly true wisdom.<sup>n</sup> Both words seem to be judicial in nature. If this were true, we would have further evidence for the case that the “*neōteroi*” are most likely Pakidim.

I believe the entire section of Mishle (Proverbs) is worth quoting.

*Proverbs 3:21. My son, let them not depart from your eyes; guard sound wisdom and thought, <sup>22.</sup> and they shall be life for your soul, and grace for your neck. <sup>23.</sup> Then you shall go securely on your way, and your foot shall not stumble. <sup>24.</sup> If you lie down, you shall not fear, and when you lie down, your sleep shall be sweet. <sup>25.</sup> Be not afraid of sudden terror, or of the darkness of the wicked when it will come. <sup>26.</sup> For the L-rd shall be your trust, and He shall keep your root from being caught. <sup>27.</sup> Do not withhold good from the one who needs it when you have power in your hand to do it. <sup>28.</sup> Do not say to your fellow, "Go and return, and tomorrow I will give," though you have it with you. <sup>29.</sup> Devise no harm against your fellow, when he dwells securely with you. <sup>30.</sup> Do not quarrel with anyone without cause, if he did you no harm. <sup>31.</sup> Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways: <sup>32.</sup> for the perverse is an abomination to the L-rd, but His counsel is with the upright. <sup>33.</sup> The curse of the L-rd is in the wicked man's house, but He shall bless the dwelling of the righteous. <sup>34.</sup> **If [one goes] to the scoffers, he will scoff; but [if he goes] to the humble, he evokes grace.** <sup>35.</sup> The wise shall inherit honor, but the fools take disgrace as their portion. (Rashi)*

There are certain similarities between what Hakham Tsefet has outlined in his Shabbat sermon and the quoted Proverb. Scholars have noted that Hakham deviated from the LXX in his wording of Mishle here. His quotation is consistent with the Masoretic Hebrew original. His only deviation for the Hebrew original is his exchange of *Theos* for *Kyrios*.

The reason for this deviation is illusive. However, I have a single thought as to why this change may have occurred. Setting aside someone tampering with the text, I would suggest that Hakham Tsefet uses *Theos* rather than *Kyrios* as a means of understanding the severity of judgment placed on the officers of the Esnoga. However, this is hard to determine and only a “shot in the dark” concerning the idea for the switch.

I noted above that the fatherly figure is requisite in the Esnoga. Here in Mishle we see a father giving Torah Wisdom to his son. Looking at the above cited Mishle we can see that it could be broken down into a neat concise sermon outline. What connects the Mishle and the Tehillim? The answer to the question lies in the Torah Seder. The Torah Seder deals with the Leper and his cure. We have learned that Leprosy is caused by the *lashon hara*. In the case of Mishle it is the scoffer. In the case of Tehillim (Psalms) it is the “smooth buttery words of his mouth” that catches our attention.

Interestingly enough the quote from Psalms deal with slander and deceit with words.

*Psalms 55:17 I shall call to G-d, and the L-rd will save me. <sup>18</sup> Evening, morning, and noontime, I speak and moan, and He hearkened to my voice. <sup>19</sup> He redeemed my soul with peace from the battle that came upon me, because of the many [people who] were with me. <sup>20</sup> May G-d hear and answer them, and the One who dwells from time immemorial forever, for there is no passing for them, and they did not fear G-d. <sup>21</sup> He stretched forth his hands against him who was at peace with him; he profaned his covenant. <sup>22</sup> Smooth were the buttery words of his mouth but his heart was set on war; his words were softer than oil, but they are curses. <sup>23</sup> **Cast your burden on the L-rd, and He will bear you; He shall never allow a righteous man to falter.** <sup>24</sup> But You, O G-d, shall lower them to the Pit of Destruction; men of blood and deceit shall not live half their days, but I will trust in You.*

It seems VERY evident that Hakham Tsefet is perfectly aware of the Torah Seder. However, his genius blends the Torah Seder, **HaM'tsorá** with **Shabbat Nachamu 6** and **Yad Elohim HaHazaqah** as His Eminence has aptly pointed out.

### **The Adversary the Devil:**

Hakham Tsefet uses the word “διάβολος (*diabolos*).” This word actually means one who is prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely. Again, we have a connection to the Leper who has suffered for his *lashon hara*. ἀντίδικος (*antidikos*) is often translated “adversary.” Here the adversary is an enemy or opponent. This is clarified when we address the real opponent of life, the *yetzer hara*.

### **The Roaring Lion:**

Having been born under the sign of the Lion in the month of Av I immediately felt related to this verse. My relation was not in thinking of myself as a lion. I thought of my *yetzer* also born under the sign of the Lion, who is ever-present and always hungry. In the language of the Authorized Version, “he walks about seeking whom he may devour.” Other translations say “swallow,” “consume” ect. This aspect of our nature is the most valiant warrior and adversary. I

have heard it said that the greater the soul the greater the *yetzer hara*. I must admit that my *yetzer hara* is a worthy adversary.

The evening (bedtime Shema) addressed the issue of the evil inclination before we go to sleep.

*On going to bed one says from Hear, oh Israel to And it shall come to pass if ye hearken diligently. Then he says: "Blessed is He who causes the bands of sleep to fall upon my eyes and slumber on my eyelids, and gives light to the apple of the eye. May it be Thy will, O Lord, my God, to make me lie down in peace, and set my portion in Thy law and accustom me to the performance of religious duties, but do not accustom me to transgression; and bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me and let not the **evil inclination** have sway over me. And deliver me from evil hap and sore diseases, and let not evil dreams and evil thoughts disturb me, and may my couch be flawless before Thee, and enlighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death. Blessed art Thou, oh Lord, who givest light to the whole world in Thy glory."*<sup>o</sup>

Morning prayers also have a petition before G-d the guard us from the *yetzer hara*.

*And may it be your will, Adonay, Our G-d and G-d of our fathers, to make us study Torah regularly, and hold fast to Your commandments. Do not bring us into the grasp of sin, nor into the grasp of transgression. Do not cause us to be tested nor **scorned** (nor to be held in contempt). Distance us from the **Evil inclination** and bond us to the good inclination. Grant us love, favor, kindness and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, and bestow bountiful kindness upon us. Blessed are You Adonay, bestower of bountiful kindness upon His people Yisrael."*<sup>p</sup>

The Prophet Ezekiel also uses the "roaring lion." It is amazing that this passage connects the present pericope with the previous.

*Eze 22:25-27 " <sup>25</sup> "The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a **roaring lion** tearing the prey; they have **devoured people**; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. <sup>26</sup> "Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. <sup>27</sup> "Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get **dishonest gain.**"*

Perhaps Hakham Tsefet has this passage in mind as he lectures on this Shabbat. The conspiracy of the Prophets is like a roaring lion and the perversion of the Priesthood and the Princes are like ravening wolves tearing for dishonest gain.

We are told in Rabbinic sources that this nemesis is the actual agent which drives on to perfection. (My interpretation) However, this nemesis MUST be mastered. If it is not mastered it can cause devastating consequences to the soul.

*Avot 2:11. R. Joshua said: an evil eye, the EVIL INCLINATION,<sup>q</sup> and hatred for [one's fellow.] creatures put a man out of the world."*

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<sup>o</sup> Talmud Bavli Berachot 60b

<sup>p</sup> Siddur Lev Eliezer, Eastern Book Press Inc (Siddur Linear Transliteration with English Translation fro Weekdays) pg 9

<sup>q</sup> For a full treatment of the subject, v. Schechter, Some aspects of Rabbinic Theology, p. 24.

*Avot 4:1 Ben Zoma says, "Who is a sage? He who learns from everybody, "as it is said, From all my teachers I have gotten understanding (Ps. 119:99). "Who is strong? He who overcomes his desire, (**Evil Inclination**) "as it is said, He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Prov. 16:32). "Who is rich? He who is happy in what he has, "as it is said, When you eat the labor of your hands, happy will you be, and it will go well with you (Ps. 128:2). ("Happy will you be—in this world, and it will go well with you—in the world to come.") "Who is honored? He who honors everybody, "as it is said, For those who honor me I shall honor and they who despise me will be treated as of no account (1 Sam. 2:30)."*

*Avot 4:22 He would say, "Those who are born are [destined] to die, and those who die are [destined] for resurrection. "And the living are [destined] to be judged— "so as to know, to make known, and to confirm that he is God, "he is the one who forms, "he is the one who creates, "he is the one who understands, "he is the one who judges, "he is the one who gives evidence, "he is the one who brings suit, "and he is the one who is going to make the ultimate judgment. "Blessed be he, for before him are not guile, forgetfulness, respect for persons, bribe taking, "for everything is his. "And know that everything is subject to reckoning. "And do not let your **evil impulse** persuade you that Sheol is a place of refuge for you. "For despite your wishes were you formed, despite your wishes were you born, despite your wishes do you live, despite your wishes do you die, and despite your wishes are you going to give a full accounting before the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he."*

Jeremiah captures the idea of Hakham Tsefet's words with regards to the lion, the enemy and the idea of watching.

*Jer 5:6 " Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them, A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them; A leopard will **watch** over their cities. Everyone who goes out from there shall be torn in pieces, Because their transgressions are many; Their backslidings have increased."*

### **Why does Hakham Tsefet address the *yetzer hara* in this present pericope?**

It seems very evident to me that there is a subtle illusion to Yom Kippur in the Torah Seder. I believe that Hakham Tsefet sees this subtlety and weaves it into his pericope by mention of the adversary. The ceremonial cleansing of the leper requires two twittering, chattering birds. One is ritually slaughtered, and the other is released in an open field. On the minute level, the ceremony is reminiscent of the two goats that are a part of the Yom Kippur service. Consequently, we see the subtle illusion to Yom Kippur and the need to master the *yetzer hara*.

However, I believe we also have a reference to Rosh haShanah.

A distinctive feature of Rosh Hashanah is the shofar blast, which fulfills the biblical command for a "blast of shofarot" in Leviticus 23:24 and Numbers 29:1. 100 blasts are sounded from the Esnoga on each day of Rosh Hashanah, using four different tones. The shofar is not blown if Rosh Hashanah falls on a Sabbath. The great Rabbi Maimonides regarded the shofar blast as

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<sup>r</sup> II ARN. Ch. XXX, <sup>2</sup>out of this world and out of the world to come. A man who hates everybody will draw upon himself the hatred of all others and this is likely to bring him to a premature and unnatural end (v. B.). Maim.: Greed for wealth (= the evil eye), a surfeit of lustfulness (= the evil inclination) and a bad disposition (= hatred of one's fellows), which is melancholia, have the effect of making one loathe the world and of inducing him to take up the life of a recluse not out of ascetic piety, but because he is insatiably envious of, and grudging towards, his fellow-men. This would no doubt also have deleterious physical effects, and cause his premature death.

*"[it calls out] Awake, awake, O sleeper, from your sleep; O slumberers, arouse yourself from your slumbers; examine your deeds, return in repentance, and remember Your Creator. Those of you who forget the truth in the follies of the time, and go astray the whole year in vanity and emptiness [i.e., what the yetzer hara loves to peddle to us] look to your souls; improve your ways and your works. Abandon, every one of you, his evil course and the thought that is not good." <sup>s</sup>*

This saying is reminiscent of the words of Hakham Shaul in varied places.<sup>†</sup> Consequently, I would be lead to believe that the idea of Rosh haShannah and "waking" is related from antiquity.

The shofar can also be seen as announcing that the Divine Court is now in session, with the Honorable Holy One of Blessing presiding.

His Honor Rosh Pakid Hillel Ben David has stated the following concerning these matters...

*The command seems to be that we know the season, but not the day or the hour. Yom Teruah is the ONLY moed (appointment) that we do not know the day or the hour in which to keep it. Therefore, we have to be on the alert and watch for it. The Rabbinic suggestion that we not sleep on Yom Teruah*

*Why do we sound the Shofar? What is it supposed to accomplish? The Sefer HaChinuch (Book of Education) tells us that we must understand the nature of "man", human beings. As 'man' is a creature from the physical realm, he is only aroused and inspired to action by something stirring, something that will cause him to snap out of the ordinary routine. We see this concept in practice at a time of war: In order to stir up the troops, shofarot are sounded, in hope that this arouses and motivates the soldiers to action. On Rosh HaShana, we do the same. We "awaken," by means of the Shofar, all who are to be judged on this day. We try to incite all who have sinned to plead with HaShem and request mercy from Him when judging. HaShem is receptive, as he is gracious, compassionate and forgiving, of those who return to Him with a complete heart. If the sounding of the Shofar has its intended effect, HaShem will graciously accept the repentance of all on Rosh HaShana.*

*The sound that emanates from and the shape of the Shofar are meant to inspire us as well. The Sefer HaChinuch writes that the Shofar is a reminder that man should strive to break the impulses of his heart which are evil with the sinful cravings of the world. How does the sound of the Shofar accomplish this? The actual sound emitted from the Shofar is broken; it is not one straight note, but a series of staccato blasts. The broken sound reminds us that we have a job of "breaking" to do as well, the breaking of our evil inclination. The shape of the Shofar is not straight like a shofar. Rather, the end of the Shofar is curved and bent. This bent shape is to remind us that we should bend our hearts in subservience to HaShem."<sup>u</sup>*

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<sup>s</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchot Teshuvah "Laws of Repentance" 3:4; Quoted in Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* (2001), 623.

<sup>†</sup> Romans 13:11, "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to **awake out of sleep**; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed." Ephesians 5:14 "Therefore He says: "**Awake, you who sleep**, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." (I realize that this passage is dealing with the resurrection. However, it serves to solidify the thought that "awakening" and Rosh haShanah were related from antiquity.) See also " Joel 3:9 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! **Wake up** the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up." And Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

<sup>u</sup> <http://www.betemunah.org/teruah.html>

## So, how is Hakham Tsefet related to Rosh haShanah?

*v8 Be sober, keep **watch (wake up)**; the enemy the accuser (slanderer) as a lion roars, walks about seeking to devour.*

### In Summary:

Regardless of who the Shabbat Sermons was intended, we find comfort, strength and **Yad Elohim HaHazaqah** in this week's pericope. An Esnoga needs to function like a well-oiled machine. This can only be accomplished if "everyone knows his place." And, he is functioning in that place to the best of his ability. Likewise, we ALL must be clothed in humility. Here I believe that the information applies to everyone in the Esnoga. Not, just the Elders, Pakidim and governing body. This applies to each member as well as to the governing body. His Eminence has shared with us stories of how one small incident can become a major ordeal. In short, I believe the words of Hakham Tsefet can be summed by his words in verse 5 and 6...

**You should voluntarily submit to one another in all things being clothed in humility.**

**Be humble then under the mighty hand of G-d so that he will elevate you in the appropriate season.**

Amen vamen

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## CONNECTIONS TO THE TORAH READINGS THIS WEEK

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I believe that we have discussed the connections to the Torah Seder itself sufficiently. However, I will summarize here in brief.

### Torah Seder:

The first connection I see to the Torah Seder is the clothing of humility. While the word used in Hakham Tsefet is unique, it still connects thematically with the washed clothing (garments) of the Leper. The rags that the Leper was reduced to were without a doubt "clothing of humility."

I next saw the Lepers immersion and ceremonial cleansing as a connection to Hakham Tsefet's Pericope. Again, there is a thematic connection. The immersion and ritual ceremony are an elevation in status. This matches Hakham Tsefet's promotion. "Be humbled under the mighty hand of G-d so that he will elevate you in the appropriate season."

His Eminence has found a connection to **Yad Elohim HaHazaqah** this week. See His commentary for further details.

### Tehillim 78:40-55:

The key connecting word to Tehillim χείρ (kheir) – hand (Hebrew Yad). His Eminence found this connecting phrase to the Torah Seder. I believe that it fits here is Tehillim as well.

Psa 78:42 They did not<sup>G3756</sup> remember<sup>G3403 G3588</sup> his **hand**<sup>G5495</sup> <sup>G1473</sup> *the day*<sup>G2250</sup> of which<sup>G3739</sup> he ransomed<sup>G3084</sup> them<sup>G1473</sup> from out of<sup>G1537</sup> *the hand*<sup>G5495</sup> of one afflicting;<sup>G2346</sup>

1Pe 5:6 Be humbled<sup>G5013</sup> then<sup>G3767</sup> under<sup>G5259</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> fortified<sup>G2900</sup> **hand**<sup>G5495</sup> <sup>G3588</sup> of G-d!<sup>G2316</sup> that<sup>G2443</sup> he should exalt you<sup>G1473 G5312</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> time;<sup>G2540</sup>

The theme of Tehillim 78:40-55 is that of being under the "mighty hand of G-d."

## Ashlamatah: Isaiah 57:17-19 + 58:8-14 & Special Ashlamatah: Isa 60:1-22

Isa 58:10 and<sup>G2532</sup> should give<sup>G1325</sup> to ones hungering<sup>G3983</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> bread<sup>G740</sup> from<sup>G1537</sup> your soul,<sup>G5590 G1473</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> [<sup>2</sup> the soul<sup>G5590</sup> <sup>3</sup>being **humble**<sup>G5013</sup> <sup>1</sup>should fill up],<sup>G1705</sup> then<sup>G5119</sup> [<sup>2</sup>shall rise<sup>G393</sup> <sup>3</sup>in<sup>G1722</sup> <sup>4</sup>the<sup>G3588</sup> <sup>5</sup>darkness<sup>G4655 G3588</sup> <sup>1</sup>your light],<sup>G5457 G1473</sup> and<sup>G2532</sup> <sup>G3588</sup> your darkness<sup>G4655 G1473</sup> shall be as<sup>G5613</sup> midday.<sup>G3314</sup>

**Special Ashlamatah:** Isa 60:14 And<sup>G2532</sup> they shall go<sup>G4198</sup> to<sup>G4314</sup> you<sup>G1473</sup> being in awe --<sup>G1165.1</sup> sons<sup>G5207</sup> of the ones<sup>G3588</sup> **humbling**<sup>G5013</sup> you.<sup>G1473</sup> And<sup>G2532</sup> [<sup>5</sup>shall do obeisance at<sup>G4352</sup> <sup>6</sup>the<sup>G3588</sup> <sup>7</sup>soles<sup>G2487 G3588</sup> <sup>8</sup>of your feet<sup>G4228 G1473</sup> <sup>1</sup>all<sup>G3956</sup> <sup>2</sup>the ones *who* <sup>G3588</sup> <sup>3</sup>provoked<sup>G3947</sup> <sup>4</sup>you].<sup>G1473</sup> And<sup>G2532</sup> you shall be called,<sup>G2564</sup> City<sup>G4172</sup> of *the* LORD ,<sup>G2962</sup> Zion<sup>G\*</sup> of Holy<sup>G39</sup> Israel.<sup>G\*</sup>

1Pe 5:6 Be **humbled**<sup>G5013</sup> then<sup>G3767</sup> under<sup>G5259</sup> the<sup>G3588</sup> fortified<sup>G2900</sup> hand<sup>G5495 G3588</sup> of God!<sup>G2316</sup> that<sup>G2443</sup> he should exalt you<sup>G1473 G5312</sup> in<sup>G1722</sup> time;<sup>G2540</sup>

Here it is easily seen that the connection is that of humility and humbling. **Yad Elohim HaHazaqah**

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### RELATED MITZVOT

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**P77** For a leper to bring a sacrifice after he becomes clean, as it is written "and on the eighth day" (Leviticus 14,10).

**P110** For the cleansing from leprosy, whether leprosy of a man or leprosy of a house, to be done with cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet wool, two birds, and spring water, as it is written "this shall be the law of the leper" (Leviticus 14,2).

**P111** For the leper to shave all of his hair, as it is written "on the seventh day, he shall shave all his hair" (Leviticus 14,9).

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### RELATED MISHNAYOT

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Tractate Nega'im

Challah 4:11

Shekelim 5:3

Eduyyot 3:7

Kelim 1:1, 4-5

Parah 1:4, 8:8, 11:8

Zavim 5:6,10

**Shalom U'Brachot**