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| Esnoga Bet Emunah **12210 Luckey Summit**  **San Antonio, TX 78252**  **United States of America**  **© 2024**  [**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**  **© 2024**  [**https://torahfocus.com/**](https://torahfocus.com/)  **E-Mail:** [**waltoakley@charter.net**](mailto:waltoakley@charter.net) |

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

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **Third Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Kislev 20, 5785 / December 20-21, 2024** | **Third Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

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

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

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

# Blessings Before Torah Study

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# 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.

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

***We pray for her Excellency Giberet Miriam bat Sarah***, Mi Shebeirach… He Who blessed our holy and pure Matriarchs, Sarah, Ribkah, Rachel and Leah, may he bless and heal Giberet Miriam bat Sarah and may He send her a complete recovery to her 248 organs and her 365 sinews. Please heal her, please heal her, please heal her and strengthen her and return her to her original strength. May He send her a complete recovery of her body and her soul from the heavens among the other sick of Yisrael, and we will say Amen ve amen!

# Shabbat “Asher Yaq’riv” – “Who presents”

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **אֲשֶׁר יַקְרִיב** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“Asher Yaq’riv”** | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 22:17-19 | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 23:9--14 |
| **“Who presents”** | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 22:20-23 | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 23:15-22 |
| **“que presente”** | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 22:24-28 | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 23:23-25 |
| Vayiqra (Leviticus) 22:17– 23:8 | Reader 4 – Vayiqra 22:29-31 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Yoel (Joel) 4:13-21 | Reader 5 – Vayiqra 22:30-33 | **Monday & Thursday**  **Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Vayiqra 23:1-3 | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 23:9--14 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 86:1-7 | Reader 7 – Vayiqra 23:4-8 | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 23:15-22 |
| N.C.: 1 Pet 5:5-11;  Lk 13:31-35 | Maftir – Vayiqra 23:4-8 | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 23:23-25 |

# Contents of the Torah Seder

        Quality of Offerings – Leviticus 22:17-25

        Further Directions in Regard to Sacrificial Animals – Leviticus 22:26-31

        Chillul Ha-Shem & Kiddush Ha-Shem – Leviticus 22:32-33

        Duty to Proclaim The Holy Days – Leviticus 23:1-2

        The Weekly Sabbath – Leviticus 23:3-4

        The Passover – Leviticus 23:5-8

**I encourage y’all to look for something especially interesting at the end of this seder.**

**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](about:blank)]:

**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 & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: Vayiqra (Leviticus) 22:17– 23:8

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 17. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, | 17. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 18.Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the children of Israel and say to them: Any man whatsoever from the house of Israel or from the strangers among Israel who offers up his sacrifice for any of their vows or for any of their donations that they may offer up to the Lord as a burnt offering | 18. Speak with Aharon and with his sons and with all the children of Israel: -A man, whether young or old, of the house of the family of Israel, or of the strangers who are in Israel, who will offer his oblation of any of their vows, or their free will offerings which they present before the LORD for a burnt sacrifice, |
| 19. **to be favorable for you**, [it shall be] an unblemished, male, from cattle, from sheep, or from goats. | 19. **to be acceptable for you, it will be perfect**, a male of the bullocks, of the lamb, or of the young goats. |
| 20. Any [animal] that has a blemish, you shall not offer up, for it will not be favorable for you. | 20. But anything that has a blemish you will not offer; for that will not be acceptable from you. |
| 21. And if a man offers up a peace offering to the Lord for declaring a vow or as a donation from cattle or from the flock **to be accepted, it shall be unblemished. It shall not have any defect in it.** | 21. And if a man will offer a consecrated victim before the LORD to fulfil a vow, or as a free will offering, from the herd, or from the flock, **it must be perfect to be acceptable; no blemish will be in it.** |
| 22. [An animal that has] blindness, or [a] broken [bone], or [a] split [eyelid or lip], or [one that has] warts, or dry lesions or weeping sores you shall not offer up [any of] these to the Lord, nor shall you place [any] of these as a fire offering upon the altar to the Lord. | 22. Whatever is blind, or broken-boned, or stricken in the eyelids, or whose eyes are stricken with a mixture of white and dark, or one filled with scurvy or the blotches murrain, you will not offer before the LORD, nor present an oblation of them on the altar before the LORD. |
| 23. As for an ox or sheep that has mismatching limbs or un-cloven hooves you may make it into a donation, but as a vow, it will not be accepted. | 23. A bullock or a ram that has superfluity or deficiency of the testicles, you may make a free will offering, but for a vow it will not be acceptable. |
| 24. [Any animal whose testicles were] squashed, crushed, pulled out, or severed, you shall not offer up to the Lord, and in your land, you shall not do [it]. | 24. That which is crushed, or ruptured, or diseased, or enervated, you will not offer to the Name of the LORD; and in your land you will not emasculate. |
| 25. **And from the hand of a gentile you shall not offer up as food for your God any of these [blemished animals], for their injury is upon them, there is a defect on them; they will not be accepted for you.** | 25. **And from the hand of a son of the Gentiles you will not offer the oblation of your God of any of these, because their corruption is in them; a blemish is in them, they are profane, they will not be acceptable for you.** |
| 26. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: | 26. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying |
| 27. When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain under its mother for seven days, and from the eighth day onwards, it shall be accepted as a sacrifice for a fire offering to the Lord. | 27. (to the effect that): What time you call to our mind the order of our oblations, as they will be offered year by year, being our expiatory offering for our sins, when on account of our sins (such sacrifices are required), and we have none to bring from our flocks of sheep, then will a bullock be chosen before him, in memorial of the righteousness/generosity of the elder who came from the cast, the sincere one who brought the calf, fat and tender, to Your Name. A sheep is to be chosen, secondly, in memory of the righteousness/generosity of him who was bound as a lamb on the altar, and who stretched forth his neck for Your Name's sake, while the heavens stooped down and condescended, and Yitzchaq beheld their foundations, and his eyes were blinded by the high things; on which account he was reckoned to be worthy that a lamb should be provided for him as a burnt offering. A kid of the goats is to be chosen likewise, in memorial of the righteousness/ generosity of that perfect one who made the savory meat of the kid, and brought it to his father, and was made worthy to receive the order of the blessing: wherefore Mosheh the prophet explains, saying: Sons of Israel, My people, When a bullock, or a lamb, or a kid is brought forth according, to the manner of the world, it will be seven days after its dam, that there may be evidence that it is not imperfect; and on the eighth day and thenceforth, it is acceptable to be offered an oblation to the Name of the LORD. |
| 28. An ox or sheep you shall not slaughter it and its offspring in one day. | 28. **Sons of Israel, My people, as our Father in heaven is merciful, so will you be merciful on earth:** neither cow, nor ewe, will you sacrifice along with her young on the same day. |
| 29. And when you slaughter a thanksgiving offering to the Lord, you shall slaughter it so that it should be acceptable for you. | 29. And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Name of the LORD, you will offer so as to be accepted. |
| 30. It shall be eaten on that day; do not leave it over until morning. I am the Lord. | 30. It will be eaten on that day, none will remain till the morning: I am the LORD. |
| 31. You shall keep My commandments and perform them. I am the Lord. | 31. And you will observe My commandments to do them I am the LORD who give a good reward, to them who keep My commandments and My laws. |
| 32. You shall not desecrate My Holy Name. I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel. I am the Lord Who sanctifies you, | 32. Nor will you profane My Holy Name, that I may be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctify you, |
| 33. Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to be a God to you. I am the Lord. | 33. having brought you forth redeemed from the land of Mizraim, that I may be to you Elohim: I am the LORD. |
|  |  |
| 1. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, | 1. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 2. Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: **The Lord's appointed [holy days] that you shall designate as holy occasions.** These are My appointed [holy days]: | 2. Speak with the sons of Israel, and say to them, **The orders of the time of the Festivals of the LORD, which you will proclaim as holy convocations**, these are the orders of the time of My festivals. |
| 3. [For] six days, work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a complete rest day, a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places. | 3. Six days will you do work, and the seventh day (will be) a Sabbath and a rest, a holy convocation. No manner of work may you do; it is a Sabbath to the LORD in every place of your habitations. |
| 4. These are the Lord's appointed [holy days], holy occasions, which you shall designate in their appointed time: | 4. These are the times of the Festivals of the LORD, holy convocations **which you will proclaim in their times**: |
| 5. In the first month, on the fourteenth of the month, in the afternoon, [you shall sacrifice] the Passover offering to the Lord. | 5. In the month of Nisan, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the suns (will be) the time for the sacrifice of the Pascha to the Name of the LORD. |
| 6. And on the fifteenth day of that month is the Festival of Unleavened Cakes to the Lord; you shall eat unleavened cakes for a seven-day period. | 6. And on the fifteenth day of this month the feast of unleavened cakes to the Name of the LORD. Seven days you will eat unleavened bread. |
| 7. On the first day, there shall be a holy occasion for you; you shall not perform any work of labor. | 7. On the first day of the feast a holy convocation will be to you; you will do no work of labor, |
| 8. And you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord for a seven-day period. On the seventh day, there shall be a holy occasion; you shall not perform any work of labor. | 8. but offer the oblation to the Name of the LORD seven days; in the seventh day of the feast will be a holy convocation; you will do no work of labor. |

## Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎ Vayiqra (Leviticus) 22:17 - 23:8

**18** **their vows** [when a person declares:] “It is incumbent upon me” [i.e., a personal commitment to bring a burnt offering," and therefore, if the animal he set aside is lost or blemished, he must fulfill his vow with a replacement animal, whereas];

**their donations** [when a person declares:] “Behold, [I hereby consecrate] this [animal for a burnt offering,” since the declaration falls on the animal rather than on the person, if the consecrated animal is lost or blemished, the person is not responsible]. - [*Meg.* 8a]

**19** **to be favorable for you** [God is saying here:] “Bring Me something that is worthy to appease (לִרְצוֹת) for you before Me, that will make you favorable (רָצוֹן) before Me.” [This word לִרְצֽנְכֶם has the meaning of] apaisement in French [like “appeasement” in English]. And what [animal] is worthy of attaining God’s appeasement?

**an unblemished, male, from cattle, from sheep, or from goats** But with burnt-offerings of birds, no unblemished or male [birds] are required, and it is not rendered invalid if it has a defect unless a limb is missing. - [*Torath Kohanim* 22:106]

**21** **for declaring a vow** For verbally designating [a particular animal. If he designated it merely in his mind, this does not obligate him as a vow]. - [*Sifthei Chachamim*]

**22** **[An animal that has] blindness** - עַוֶּרֶת. [This is] a noun, the feminine equivalent of עִוָּרוֹן, that the animal shall not have the defect of blindness.

**or [a] broken [bone]** [lit., “or broken,” i.e., the animal] shall not be [broken]. **or [a] split [eyelid or lip]** - חָרוּץ [lit. cut], an eyelid that was split or notched, and similarly, its lip which was split or notched.-[Torath Kohanim 22:113]

**or [one that has] warts** *Verrue [wart] in French.*

**or dry lesions** Heb. גָרָב, a type of lichen, as יַלֶּפֶת (see Rashi on 21:20). The יַלֶּפֶת is similar to “And Samson grasped (וַיִּלְפּֽת)” (Jud. 16:29) for it bonds (מְלַפֶּפֶת) itself to him until the day of [his] death, for it has no cure. - [Bech. 41a]

**you shall not offer up [(any of) these]** [This prohibition is stated] three times [here and in verses 20 and 25], as an admonition against (a) consecrating them, (b) slaughtering them and (c) dashing their blood. - [*Temurah* 6b]

**nor shall you place [(any) of these] as a fire-offering** [This is] an admonition against the burning them [on the altar]. - [*Temurah* 6b; *Torath Kohanim* 22:116]

**23** **mismatching limbs** i.e., one limb bigger than its [normal] counterpart. - [see Rashi on verse 21: 18 above and *Sifthei Chachamim* there; *Bech*. 40a]

**uncloven hooves** its hooves are uncloven [i.e., resembling those of a horse or donkey]. - [*Bech.* 40a] **you**

**may make it into a donation** [i. e., it may be sold, and its money donated] to the maintenance of the Holy Temple.

**but as a vow** for the altar. - [*Torath Kohanim* 22:118]

**it will not be accepted** What consecration comes to grant acceptance (לִרְצוֹת) ? I must say the consecration for the altar. - [Torath Kohanim 22:118] [See Sifthei Chachamim, Mizrachi, and Nachalath Yaakov]

**24** **[Any animal] whose testicles were squashed, crushed, pulled out, or severed** [These terms refer to damage] to the testicles or the membrum. - [*Bech.* 39b]

**squashed** Heb. וּמָעוּךְ, its testicles were squashed by hand.

**crushed** - וְכָתוּת, more severely crushed than מָעוּךְ

**pulled out** Heb. נָתוּק, torn off by hand, until the threads upon which they are suspended snapped, but they are still contained within the scrotum, and the scrotum was not torn off.

**or severed** Heb., וְכָרוּת, severed with an instrument, but still contained within the scrotum. squashed Heb. וּמָעוּךְ [Onkelos] renders this as וְדִימְרִיס, which is its equivalent in Aramaic, an expression of crushing.

**crushed** - וְכָתוּת, [Onkelos] renders this as וְדִירְסִיס, like, “[and he will smite] the great house into splinters (רְסִיסִים) ” (Amos 6: 11), little pieces; likewise, קָנֶה הַמְרֻסָּס, meaning “a reed that is broken into pieces” (Shab. 80b).

**and in your land, you shall not do** this thing, to castrate any livestock or wild animal, even of an unclean species. This is why [our verse] says here “in your land”-to include any species found in your land.-[*Torath Kohanim* 22:121] for it is impossible to say that castration is prohibited only in Eretz Israel ["your land,"] because [the prohibition of] castration is an obligation [associated with] the body [of a person], and every commandment associated with the body [of a person] applies both in the Land [of Israel] and outside the Land [of Israel]. - [Kid. 36b]

**25** **from the hand of a gentile** [lit., “and from the hand of a foreigner,” i.e.,] if a non-Jew brought a sacrifice and handed it over to the *kohen* to offer it up to Heaven, you shall not offer up on his behalf any blemished animal. And even though blemished animals are not deemed invalid as sacrifices from the children of Noah [i.e., by all non-Jews] unless they have a limb missing—that [rule] applies [only] to private altars in the fields. However, on the altar in the *Mishkan*, you shall not offer them up (*Temurah* 7b). You shall, however, accept an unblemished animal from them. That is why Scripture states earlier in this passage (verse 18 above), אִישׁ אִישׁ, “Any man whatsoever,” [where this double expression comes] to include non-Jews, who make vows and donations like Israelites. - [Temurah 2b]

**their injury** Heb. מָשְׁחָתָם, [as Onkelos renders it:] חִבּוּלְהוֹן, “their injury.”

**they will not be accepted for you** to atone for you.

**27** **When [an ox or a sheep or a goat] is born** [The expression “is born” comes] to exclude [from sacrifice an animal] delivered by Caesarean section. - [*Chul.* 38b]

**28** **it and its offspring** [This prohibition] applies to the female [i.e., the mother] animal, namely, that it is prohibited to slaughter a mother animal and its male or female offspring [on the same day]. The prohibition does not apply, however, to males [i.e., to the father animals], and it is permissible to slaughter the father animal along with its male or female offspring [on the same day]. - [*Chul.* 78b]

**[you shall not slaughter] it and its offspring** Also included [in this prohibition is slaughtering] its offspring and [then] it.-[*Chul.* 82a]

**29** **you shall slaughter it so that it should be acceptable for you** From the very beginning of your slaughtering, take care that it should be “acceptable for you.” And what makes it acceptable?"

**It shall be eaten on that day** [Now, although it has already been stated that thanksgiving-offerings must be eaten on the day of sacrificing (Lev. 7:15), the Torah repeats this here] exclusively to warn us that the slaughtering must be performed on this condition. Do not slaughter it with the intention of eating it on the next day, for if you have this invalidating intention in mind, the sacrifice will not be “acceptable for you” (Torath Kohanim 22:135) [Indeed, it will be rejected (פִּגּוּל ; see Rashi Lev. 7:18)]. Another explanation of לִרְצֽנְכֶם is: “knowingly.” From here, [we learn that] if someone slaughtered an animal in an incidental manner [i.e., according to Rashi, without intending to slaughter, just to pick up the knife or to throw it. According to Tosafoth, if he did not intend to slaughter, but only to sever the organs, or if he thought that it was an ordinary animal, and did not realize that it was to be slaughtered as a holy sacrifice], then [even though the animal is fit to be eaten as ordinary non-consecrated meat, nevertheless,] regarding being slaughtered as a holy sacrifice, it is deemed unfit. - [Chul. 13a] Now, although Scripture has already stated [that a sacrifice is “not acceptable” if, while slaughtering, one intended to eat it after its permissible time] in the case of sacrifices that may be eaten for two days (see Lev. 7:18), it specifies it again regarding those sacrifices that must be eaten on the same day (see Rashi Lev. 7:15), namely, that they [too] must be slaughtered with the intention of eating them within their permissible time.

**30** **It shall be eaten on that day** [As explained above (see preceding Rashi)], Scripture states this here only to warn us that the slaughtering must be performed with this intention. For if it meant to fix the time limit for eating it, this has already been stated, “And the flesh of his thanksgiving peace-offering [shall be eaten on the day that it is offered...]” (Lev. 7:15). - [*Torath Kohanim* 7:113]

**I am the Lord** Know Who decreed this matter, and do not perceive it as unimportant.

**31** **You shall keep [My commandments]** This refers to learning [God’s commandments and “keeping” them organized and memorized in one’s heart]

**and perform them** meaning [putting them into] action. - [*Mizrachi* ; *Torath Kohanim* 22:136]

**32** **You shall not desecrate [My Holy Name]** By transgressing My commandments intentionally. Now, is it not already implied by the verse “You shall not desecrate [My Holy Name,” that if you do not transgress, God’s Name will be sanctified? So] what do we learn by Scripture adding “I shall be sanctified [amidst the children of Israel]?” [It teaches us:] Surrender your life [and do not transgress God’s commandments], and [thus] sanctify My Name. Now, one might think [that this commandment applies even] in private [i.e., if he is not in the presence of ten or more Jews]. Scripture, therefore, says here “[I shall be sanctified] amidst the children of Israel” [i.e., one is obliged to sacrifice one’s life to avoid transgressing God’s commandments only in the presence of ten or more Jews]. And when one sacrifices oneself, one shall do so with the willingness to die, anyone who [submits to] sacrifices himself while assuming [that God will surely perform] a miracle [for him and save his life], for this person, God does not perform a miracle, for so we find in [the case of] Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, that [when the evil Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them into a fiery furnace], they did not submit themselves on the condition [that God would perform] a miracle, as Scripture says, "[Behold, there is our God Whom we worship; He can save us from the burning, fiery furnace and from your hands, O king!] But if not, let it be known to you, O king [that we will not worship your god, neither will we prostrate ourselves to the golden image that you have set up]!" (Dan. 3:1718). [We see here that whatever the outcome,] whether [God would] rescue [them] or not— [they declared, regardless] “Let it be known to you, O king [that we will not prostrate ourselves...]!”- [*Torath Kohanim* 22:137]

**33** **Who took you out [of the land of Egypt]** on this very condition [i.e., to be willing to sacrifice your lives in sanctification of My Holy Name. - [*Torath Kohanim* 22:138] [And do not think that since it is an obligation, you will not receive reward for sacrificing yourselves, for]

**I am the Lord** faithful to give reward [to those who fulfill My Torah. -[*Torath Kohanim* 22:138]

**Chapter 23**

**2** **Speak to the children of Israel...The Lord’s appointed [holy days]** **Designate the [times] of the festivals so that [all of] Israel will become accustomed to them, [meaning] that they should proclaim leap years for [the Jews in] the Diaspora** who had uprooted themselves from their place to ascend to [Jerusalem for] the festivals, but who had not yet arrived in Jerusalem. [The leap year would enable them to arrive in time. Consequently, in ensuing years, they would not lose hope of arriving on time and would be encouraged to make the pilgrimage.]- [*Torath Kohanim* 23:139; *Levush Ha’orah.* See also *Mizrachi*, *Nachalath Ya’akov*, *Sefer Hazikkaron*, *Yosef Hallel*, *Chavel*]

**3** **[For] six days...** Why does the Sabbath [designated by God,] appear here amidst the festivals [designated by the Sanhedrin]? To teach you that **whoever desecrates the festivals is considered [to have transgressed as severely] as if he had desecrated the Sabbath, and that whoever who fulfills the festivals is considered as if he has fulfilled the Sabbath, [and his reward is as great]**. - [*Be’er Basadeh* ; *Torath Kohanim* 23:144]

**4** **These are the Lord’s appointed [holy days, holy occasions, that you shall designate]** In the earlier verse (verse 2), Scripture is referring to the proclamation of a leap year, **while here, Scripture is referring to sanctifying the new month [i.e., “designating” which day is the first of the month**, based on testimony of the sighting of the new moon. Both of these “designations,” therefore, have bearing on the establishment of the festivals.] - [*Torath Kohanim* 23:146]

**5** **in the afternoon** Heb. בֵּין הָעַרְבָּיִם, lit. between the two evenings. From six [halachic] hours [after dawn,] and onwards [until evening (עֶרֶב), i.e., nightfall.]

**the Passover offering to the Lord** Heb. פֶּסַח, the offering up of a sacrifice named “Pesach.” [The term “Pesach” here refers to the Pesach offering brought on the fourteenth of Nissan, not to the Passover Festival, which begins on the fifteenth. - [Be’er Heitev on Rashi]

**8** **And you shall bring a fire offering [to the Lord for a seven-day period]** These are the additional offerings [of Passover] delineated in *parshath Pinchas* (Num. 28:1625). Why are they mentioned here? To inform you that the additional offerings do not impede one another, [if some are omitted, as the Torah states:]

**And you shall bring a fire offering to the Lord** in any case. If there are no bulls, bring rams, and if there are neither bulls nor rams, bring lambs [as prescribed in Num. 28:19]. - [*Torath Kohanim* 23:152] **for a seven-day period** Heb. שִׁבְעַת יָמִים, lit., a “seven” of days. Wherever the שִׁבְעַת appears, it denotes a noun, and [thus, the expression here שִׁבְעַת יָמִים means “a week of days”; *septaine* in Old French [which is the noun, as opposed to *sept*, meaning the number seven. See *Mizrachi* on *Rashi* Exod. 10:22]. Likewise, every [construct expression like], שְׁמוֹנַת, שֵׁשֶׁת, חֲמֵשֶׁת, שְׁלֹשֶׁת [literally means, respectively, “an eight of,” "a six of," “a five of,” "a three of," [meaning a unit consisting of one of these numbers]. -[See *Gur Aryeh and Levush Haorah on Rashi Exod. 10:22 for the reason this type of expression is used here instead of simply* שִׁבְעָה יָמִים, “seven days.”]

**work of labor** Even types of work (מְלָאכוֹת) that are considered by you as labor(עֲבוֹדָה) and necessities, where a monetary loss may be incurred if one would refrain from them, for example, something that will be lost [if the activity is postponed]. I understood this from Torath Kohanim, where it is taught (23:187): “One might think that even during the intermediate days of the Festival, work of labor is prohibited...” [and the text concludes by teaching us that during those days, מְלֶאכֶת עֲבוֹדָה is permitted, and we know that the type of work that is permitted on the intermediate days is such work whose postponement would cause a loss (דָּבָר הָאָבֵד). Hence, we see that מְלֶאכֶת עֲבוֹדָה andדָָּבָר הָאָבֵד are synonymous, and that is what the Torah meant to prohibit on the festival holy days—namely, the first and seventh days of Passover, when even that type of work is prohibited].

**Reading Assignment**

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| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez**  By: Rabbi Yitzchok Magriso, Translated by:  Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp.  (New York, 1989)  **Leviticus II - Vol. 12– “Holiness” pp. 112-158** | **Ramban: Leviticus Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1974)  **pp. 349-368** |

# Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 86:1-7

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A prayer of David. O Lord, incline Your ear; answer me **for I am poor and needy.** | 1. A prayer that David prayed. Incline, O LORD, your ear; answer me, **for I am poor and needy.** |
| 2. Watch my soul for I am a pious man; save Your servant-You, my God-who trusts in You. | 2. Protect my soul, for I am pious; redeem Your servant, You, O my God, for I do put my trust in You. |
| 3. Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I call to You all the days. | 3. Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I will pray in Your presence all the day. |
| 4. Cause the soul of Your servant to rejoice, for to You, O Lord, I lift my soul. | 4. Gladden the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, will I lift up my soul in prayer. |
| 5. For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, with much kindness to all who call You. | 5. For You are the LORD, good to the righteous/ generous and forgiving to those who turn to His Torah and multiplying favor to all who pray in Your presence. |
| 6. Lend Your ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and hearken to the voice of my supplications. | 6. Hear, O LORD, my prayer; and accept the voice of my supplications. |
| 7. On the day of my distress I shall call You, for You will answer me. | 7. On the day of my distress, I will call to You, for You answer me. |

## Rashi’s Commentary for: Tehillim (Psalms) 86:1-7

**2** **for I am a pious man** that I hear my insults and my disgraces, and I am able to wreak vengeance; yet I remain silent. So it is in Aggadath Tehillim (Mid. Ps. 86:1). Another explanation: Our Sages explained in Berachoth (4a): [David said,] “Am I not a pious man, when all the kings of the Orient and the Occident sit in their glory, and I my hands are sullied with blood, with the sac, and with the afterbirth?”

**3** **all the days** **All the days of the exile, which is day for the wicked and night for the righteous**. It is explained in this manner in Aggadath Tehillim (Mid. Ps. 86:2).

**4** **I lift my soul** I direct my heart.

**8** **like Your works** Who places the heavenly beings before the earthlings.

**10** **and perform wonders, You, O God, alone** Before the angels were created, heaven and earth were created. Therefore, all the nations will glorify Your name.

**13** **from the lowest depths of the grave** It is customary for adulterers to be put into the depth of the grave, and from there You saved me, for Nathan the prophet said to me (II Sam. 12:13): “Also the Lord has removed your sin.”

**14** **willful transgressors have risen against me** Doeg and Ahithophel.

**and they did not place You before themselves** They did not remember what they saw, that Samuel anointed me on Your orders.

**16** **the son of Your maidservant** The son of the maidservant humbles himself before his master more than the slave purchased with money, because the son of the maidservant was born in the house and was raised in his master’s bosom.

**17** **Grant me a sign for good** so it may be apparent to others that You have forgiven me.

**and let my enemies see** the sign and be ashamed. But the Holy One, blessed be He, did not listen to him to grant the sign during his lifetime. Instead, [it came] in his son Solomon’s lifetime when the gates clung to each other and did not open until he said (II Chron. 6:42): “Do not turn back the face of Your anointed; remember the kind deeds of David Your servant.”

## Meditation from the Psalms

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎86:1-7**

By: Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David

David composed this psalm when he was still in exile and fleeing from Saul. He prayed for divine deliverance from the power of those who sought his life.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This is no ordinary composition, for David himself describes it as a תפלה, prayer. Indeed, these verses describe the essential purpose of prayer, which should be not so much to obtain the desired assistance from God as to reassure the supplicant that G-d is near in all moments of distress and danger. The awareness of G-d’s intimate concern and close attention to a man’s troubles is itself the response to his supplications.[[2]](#footnote-2)

David composed this prayer as a supplication to G-d to save him from his many enemies.[[3]](#footnote-3) Specifically, it was the threat of King Saul which aroused David to express his feelings before G-d.[[4]](#footnote-4) But David did not seek mere safety from his foes. Rather he yearned for the opportunity to enhance the glory of G-d in the eyes of the entire word, for David recognized that the ultimate purpose of his existence was the glorification of G-d’s Name.

From this psalm, we derive some of the most striking passages of our liturgy which proclaim this theme. One of them is: *There is none like You among the gods, my Lord, and there is nothing like Your works*.[[5]](#footnote-5) This verse is recited as the Torah scroll is taken from the Holy Ark to be read in public, for the Divine teachings contained in the Torah are the most splendid and impressive of all G-d’s works.

*Ayalah Shelucha[[6]](#footnote-6)* notes that it is significant that this psalm of David has been placed in the middle of a series of works composed by Korach’s sons (psalms 84, 85, 87, 88).[Indeed, this is the only work in the entire third *Book of Tehillim* that is ascribed specifically to David *(Torat Chesed).] Ayalah Shelu­chah* explains that in the previous psalm, Korach’s sons prescribe a formula for spiritual fulfillment: *kindness and truth met together* (85:11).In this psalm, David corroborates this formula, for he feels confident that HaShem will come to his aid, *for a man who practices kindness am I.[[7]](#footnote-7)*

Our chapter of Psalms contains an interesting word that I would like to explore in greater detail. This word is found in the following pasuk:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 86:17*** *Work in my behalf a sign* (ot - אוֹת) *for good; that they that hate me may see it, and be put to shame, because Thou, LORD, hast helped me, and comforted me.*

I would like to examine the signs (ot - אוֹת) or omens that HaShem uses to communicate with His people. As with all signs, they have significance only to those who see them. For example, if a solar eclipse is a sign, then it is only a sign to those who actually see the eclipse. If the rainbow is to be a sign, then it is a sign to those who see it. If the rainbow is visible in Seattle (they have lots of rainbows in Seattle), then its message is to those who see it in Seattle. It has no meaning to those in Vancouver, B.C.

Keep this in mind as we examine the various signs that HaShem uses to communicate. We will explore some of these signs and try to understand what we are to learn from these signs. Pay attention to the *audience* of the sign.

The first use of *signs* in the Tanach,[[8]](#footnote-8) is in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:14*** *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for* ***signs****, and for festivals, and for days, and years:*

This word *signs* – ot - **אות** is the focus of this study. I will look at the uses of the Hebrew word in the above passage. Later, we will examine the equivalent Greek word. The Hebrew word, “sign”, is defined in Strong’s as:

226 ‘owth, ot - אות; prob. from 225 (in the sense of appearing); a single (lit. or fig.), as a flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, etc.: - mark, miracle, (en-) sign, token.

Rashi says the following about ‘signs’:

**2 [If there will arise among you a prophet...] and he gives you a sign** Hebrew אוֹת , [meaning a sign] in the heavens, as it is stated in the case of Gideon [who said to the angel]: “then show me a sign (אוֹת) “ (Shoftim [Judges] 6:17), and then it says [further], “let it be dry only upon the fleece [and upon all the ground let there be dew]” (Shoftim [Judges] 6:39).

Thus, we learn that anytime we see an *ot*, a sign, we are looking at a reference to the celestial object.

The Hebrew word for sign, ot - אות, gives us significant insight into HaShem’s plans. Ot - אות, has a vav between an alef and a tav. The vav (ו) is the Hebrew letter that is often used for the prefix ‘and’. It is the letter of connection. The alef (א) is the first letter of the Hebrew alefbet. The tav (ת) is the last letter of the Hebrew alefbet. Thus, the **Hebrew word ‘ot –** אות’**, sign, carries the connotation of something that connect the beginning and the end**.

Ot, signs, are used for a variety of purposes. The moon, for example, is used as an ominous sign to the Jews when it is eclipsed, because Jews reckon time by the moon. The Midrash provides some insight into the celestial signs:

***Midrash Rabbah - Genesis VI:1*** *AND HASHEM SAID: LET THERE BE LIGHTS (I, 14). R. Johanan began thus: Who appointest the moon for seasons (Ps. CIV, 19). R. Johanan commented: The orb of the sun alone was created to give light. If so, why was the moon created? ‘For seasons’: in order to sanctify new moons and years thereby.[[9]](#footnote-9) R. Shila of Kefar Temarta[[10]](#footnote-10) said in R. Johanan’s name: Yet even so, The sun knoweth its coming (ib.): from the sun one knows its coming [sc. of the month], for we count the beginning of the month only from sunset. Justa Habra[[11]](#footnote-11) said in R. Berekiah’s name: And they journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month, etc. (Num. XXXIII, 3): but if you count by the moon, then so far there were only thirteen sunsets?[[12]](#footnote-12) Hence it follows that we count not from the moon but from sunset. R. ‘Azariah said in R. Hanina’s name: The orb of the sun alone was created to give light; yet if so, why was the moon created? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw that the peoples of the world would treat them as divinities. Said the Lord: ‘If they are two, opposed to each other,[[13]](#footnote-13) and yet the peoples of the world treat them as divinities, how much more would they do so if there were but one!’ R. Berekiah said in R. Simon’s name: Both were created in order to give light, as it says, AND LET THEM BE FOR LIGHTS, etc. AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS: this refers to the Sabbaths[[14]](#footnote-14); AND FOR SEASONS: to the three pilgrimage festivals; AND FOR DAYS: to the beginnings of the months; AND YEARS means the sanctification of the years.[[15]](#footnote-15)*

Thus, we see that HaShem uses celestial signs, as communicated by the sun, moon, and stars. These signs are meant to communicate their message to those who see them for their intended purpose. The use of the sun, moon, and stars for signs, is a dramatic way to communicate to the those on earth. When the moon is eclipsed, for example, it is visible to more than half the world’s population.

Rashi says that we should read *omen* rather than *signs*, in Bereshit 1:14, for when the luminaries are eclipsed it is an ill omen for the world,[[16]](#footnote-16) as in the verse:

***Jeremiah 10:2*** *‘Be not dismayed at the* ***signs*** *of heaven’*

The Talmud tells us about the meaning of an eclipsed moon when used as an omen:

***Succah 29a*** *It was taught: R. Meir said, Whenever the luminaries are in eclipse, it is a bad omen for Israel since they are inured to blows. This may be compared to a school teacher who comes to school with a strap in his hand. Who becomes apprehensive? He who is accustomed to be daily punished. Our Rabbis taught, When the sun is in eclipse it is a bad* ***omen*** *for idolaters; when the moon is in eclipse, it is a bad* ***omen*** *for Israel, since Israel reckons by the moon and idolaters by the sun. If it is in eclipse in the east, it is a bad* ***omen*** *for those who dwell in the east; if in the west, it is a bad* ***omen*** *for those who dwell in the west; if in the midst of heaven, it is bad* ***omen*** *for the whole world. If its face is red as blood, [it is a sign that] the sword is coming to the world; if it is like sack-cloth, the arrows of famine are coming to the world; if it resembles both, the sword and the arrows of famine are coming to the world. If the eclipse is at sunset calamity will tarry in its coming; if at dawn, it hastens on its way: but some say the order is to be reversed. And there is no nation which is smitten that its gods are not smitten together with it, as it is said, And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. But when Israel fulfills the will of the Omnipresent, they need have no fear of all these [omens] as it is said, Thus saith HaShem, ‘Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the nations are dismayed at them, the idolaters will be dismayed, but Israel will not be dismayed’.*

But when you comply with the will of HaShem, you need not worry about punishment. There are many such verses in the Tanach alluding to the heavenly bodies as omens, for example, in reference to Hezekiah in:

***Melachim (II Kings) 20:9*** *This* ***sign*** *shall you have ... the shadow shall go back ten degrees.*

Thus, the sun’s movement was the sign for King Hezekiah. In this next verse, HaShem is indicating that he will use celestial events as signs of the end of the age.

***Yoel (Joel) 3:3*** *and I will exhibit* ***wonders*** *in the heavens and the earth.*

According to many of the Sages, *signs* refers to the luminary’s function as man’s guide (i.e. compass) as navigational aids.[[17]](#footnote-17)

HaRechasim leBik’ah comments: They are ‘signs’ of HaShem’s greatness in two ways: (1) they are constant signs and symbols of His omnipotence, as in the verse:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 40:26*** *Lift up your eyes on high and behold Who has created these things;*

(2) and that they sometimes diverge from their natural course to comply with His will as when the sun stopped for Joshua:

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 10:12-14*** *On the day HaShem gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to HaShem in the presence of Israel: “O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.” So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when HaShem listened to a man. Surely HaShem was fighting for Israel!*

The **Book of Jasher**, chapter 88:59, records this:

*59 And Joshua and all the fighting people went up from Gilgal, and Joshua came suddenly to them, and smote these five kings with a great slaughter. 60 And the Lord confounded them before the Children of Israel, who smote them with a terrible slaughter in Gibeon, and pursued them along the way that goes up to Beth Horon unto Makkedah, and they fled from before the Children of Israel. 61 And whilst they were fleeing, the Lord sent upon them hailstones from heaven, and more of them died by the hailstones, than by the slaughter of the Children of Israel. 62 And the Children of Israel pursued them, and they still smote them in the road, going on and smiting them. 63 And when they were smiting, the day was declining toward evening, and Joshua said in the sight of all the people, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the nation shall have revenged itself upon its enemies. 64 And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Joshua, and the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens, and it stood still six and thirty times, and the moon also stood still and hastened not to go down a whole day. 65 And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel.[[18]](#footnote-18)*

Another very visible sign, is the sign of the Noachide covenant and has come to represent the Gentiles who have turned to HaShem and now follow the Noachide commands. The rainbow is a sign of the Noachide covenant.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 9:12-17*** *And HaShem said, “This is the* ***sign*** *of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the* ***sign*** *of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between HaShem and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” So HaShem said to Noah, “This is the* ***sign*** *of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”*

What is the message communicated by the rainbow to those who see it? To answer this question, we need to understand what it means when a rainbow does not appear:

***Soncino Zohar, Vayikra, Section 3, Page 15a*** *R. Jose continued: ‘What is the meaning of “this (zoth) is to me”, in the verse quoted? Said the Holy One, blessed be He, The waters of Noah have caused me to reveal zoth in the world, as it is written, “zoth (this) is the sign of my covenant with them, my bow have I set in the heaven” (Gen. IX, 12, 13), as much as to say, there is none who heeds the glory of My Name which is alluded to by the word zoth. Hence it is one of the signs of a saintly and virtuous man that the rainbow does not appear in his days and the world does not require this sign while he is alive. Such a one is he who prays for the world and shields it, like Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai, in whose days the world never required the sign of the rainbow, for he was himself a sign. For if ever punishment was decreed against the world he could annul it.*

Chazal have taught that the rainbow appears when HaShem sees that the world deserves to be flooded, He then puts His bow in the sky to let the people of that place know that they deserve to be destroyed by a flood. Thus, the flood in Noah’s day came because the people were wicked. **Thus, the message of the rainbow sign is to encourage the people to repent of their wicked deeds.**

In the narrative of Noah, the Hebrew root for *covenant* appears eight times. The number of people saved via the ark is eight (Noah, three sons and their wives). The sign of the covenant (Bereshit 9:12) is the *rainbow*, with a gematria of eight hundred. The word *rainbow*, in all forms, appears eight times in the Torah. This is interesting because the number eight is also associated with the sign of the covenant that HaShem made with Avraham.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:9-14*** *Then HaShem said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the* ***sign*** *of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner--those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”*

We circumcise Jewish males on their eighth day of their life. So, what does *eight* have to do with signs and covenants? We learned elsewhere that the number eight always alludes to a departure from the *natural* world, and entry into the supernatural world. This suggests that the Noachide covenant will bring the Gentile who obeys the Noachide commands, into the olam haba. In the same way the covenant of circumcision is meant to bring the Jews into the olam haba.

The writer of the book of Romans indicates that the sign of circumcision is a seal of the righteousness that Avraham had by **faithful obedience** to HaShem’s command.

***Romans 4:9-12*** *Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the* ***sign*** *of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*

There was another covenant which also had signs. The covenant that HaShem made with Israel at Sinai came with specific commands that are signs. The first sign is that they would worship at Mt. Sinai. Following this first sign, the Bne Israel would be given the Shabbat as a sign. This sign would be used to cause us to remember that HaShem makes us holy, to cause us to remember that HaShem created the world, and finally to cause us to know that He is HaShem.

***Exodus 3:12*** *And HaShem said, “I will be with you. And this will be the* ***sign*** *to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship HaShem on this mountain.”*

***Exodus 31:13*** *“Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a* ***sign*** *between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am HaShem, who makes you holy.*

***Exodus 31:17*** *It will be a* ***sign*** *between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days HaShem made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.’“*

***Ezekiel 20:11-12*** *I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. Also, I gave them my Sabbaths as a* ***sign****: between us, so they would know that I HaShem made them holy.*

***Ezekiel 20:19-20*** *I am HaShem your HaShem; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a* ***sign****: between us. Then you will know that I am HaShem your G-d.”*

Sabbath is a sign of the covenant that HaShem made with the Bne Israel at Sinai. No Gentile may observe the Shabbat under pain of death. When Jews observe the Shabbat, they confirm the covenant at Sinai.

Shabbat is presented here as a *sign*, because, with the introduction of the Mishkan (Shemot 25:1ff), HaShem’s Presence will become manifest among the people. Shabbat is the weekly sign of that constant Presence. Unlike the physical Mishkan, the existence of which has not always been assured in our history, Shabbat is an eternal (for your generations) focal point and sign of our ongoing encounter with HaShem.

Another sign of the Sinai covenant, is recited in the Shema, twice a day by observant Jews. The command of tefillin and mezuzah are signs of the Sinai covenant.

***Deuteronomy 6:4-9*** *Hear, O Israel: HaShem our God, HaShem is one. Love HaShem your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as* ***symbols*** *on your hands and bind them on your foreheads* (tefillin)*. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates* (mezuzah)*.*

These signs of tefillin and mezuzah were important enough that HaShem reiterated them. To fulfill this command, pious Jews will lay tefillin six days a week, during the morning prayer service (shacharit). We do not lay tefillin on Shabbat because Shabbat is a sign and we do need two covenantal signs.

***Deuteronomy 11:16-20*** *Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then HaShem’s anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain, and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land HaShem is giving you. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as* ***symbols*** *on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

Tefillin were to be a constant reminder of the Exodus. The hand Tefillin are to be a “sign for you”, indicating a sign for you to see and which will remind us; and the head Tefillin are to be a remembrance (zikkaron), a commemoration for you to remember that HaShem took us out. This wording is nearly identical to the two terms used to describe the blood on the doors (ot lakhem), Shemot 12:12ff, and the celebration of that day (zikkaron).

Not only were mezzuzot to be signs on our doorposts, but blood was once used on the doorposts as a sign. We will see that the blood on the doorposts of the houses in Egypt were a sign to the HaShem to pass over that house.

***Exodus 12:12-13*** *“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the G-ds of Egypt. I am HaShem. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*

In addition to the blood on the doorposts, the celebration of Pesach (Passover), itself, was to be a sign. Who sees a Pesach seder? Clearly all the participants at that seder. Any others to witness the seder would be accidental.

***Exodus 13:4-10*** *Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving. When HaShem brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites--the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey--you are to observe this ceremony in this month: For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to HaShem. Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. On that day tell your son, ‘I do this because of what HaShem did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ This observance will be for you like a* ***sign*** *on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of HaShem is to be on your lips. For HaShem brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year.*

Pesach was a sign for the Jews. More than that, the Pesach seder is a rehearsal for our redemption. It is not some stale, meaningless ritual. It is a rehearsal for our redemption!

While the seder spoke to the Jews, the miracles that HaShem did in Egypt were signs for the Egyptians *and* the Jews. These signs were so important that HaShem is going to repeat them multiple times throughout the Tanach, and He will also cause us to remember them multiple times every day, and multiple times during the year.

***Deuteronomy 4:32-35*** *Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day HaShem created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of HaShem speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any G-d ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things HaShem your HaShem did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? You were shown these things so that you might know that HaShem is G-d; besides him there is no other.*

***Deuteronomy 6:20-23*** *In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws HaShem our G-d has commanded you?” Tell him: “We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but HaShem brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes HaShem sent miraculous signs and wonders--great and terrible--upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers.*

***Deuteronomy 26:8*** *So HaShem brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with* ***miraculous******signs*** *and wonders.*

***Deuteronomy 11:1-7*** *Love HaShem your G-d and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of HaShem your G-d: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; The signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; What he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how HaShem brought lasting ruin on them. It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the desert until you arrived at this place, And what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things HaShem has done.*

***Exodus 13:15-16*** *When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, HaShem killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to HaShem the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.’ And it will be like a* ***sign*** *on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that HaShem brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand.”*

***Deuteronomy 7:17-20*** *You may say to yourselves, “These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?” But do not be afraid of them; remember well what HaShem your G-d did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the* ***miraculous signs*** *and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which HaShem your G-d brought you out. HaShem your G-d will do the same to all the peoples you now fear. Moreover, HaShem your HaShem will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished.*

***Deuteronomy 34:10-12*** *Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom HaShem knew face to face, Who did all those* ***miraculous signs*** *and wonders HaShem sent him to do in Egypt--to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.*

***Deuteronomy 29:2-4*** *Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them: Your eyes have seen all that HaShem did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those* ***miraculous signs*** *and great wonders. But to this day HaShem has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.*

***Psalms 78:43*** *The day he displayed his* ***miraculous signs*** *in Egypt, his wonders in the region of Zoan.*

***Nehemiah 9:9-11*** *“You saw the suffering of our forefathers in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea. You sent* ***miraculous signs*** *and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters.*

***Psalm 105:26-28*** *He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his* ***miraculous signs*** *among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness and made the land dark--for had they not rebelled against his words?*

***Psalm 135:9*** *He sent his* ***signs****: and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.*

***Jeremiah 32:20*** *You performed* ***miraculous signs****: and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with* ***signs*** *and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror.*

So, clearly HaShem intended to send a message to His people *and* to the Egyptians. We can also see from the context of the above passages, that we are to communicate this sign to our children. Not only that, but we learn from the haggada that each Jew is to see himself as he was redeemed from Egypt. It is not a faded historical event, but rather it is a living memory in each Jew because *he was there*!

These signs are so important for us to remember! Why you might ask? Let me suggest that the mighty miracles (signs) that HaShem performed for us in Egypt were birth pangs to cause us as a people to be born. Further, these signs are prophetic in that these signs will be used by HaShem when He takes His people out of the lands of the world and plants us in the land of Israel, forever. Get to know these signs! Memorize them and constantly recall them. You will see them again!

So, what is the meaning of our pasuk?

***Tehillim (Psalms) 86:17*** *Work in my behalf a sign* (**ot** - **אוֹת**) *for good; that they that hate me may see it, and be put to shame, because Thou, LORD, hast helped me, and comforted me.*

David asked, “Please display publicly that You have forgiven my sin, so that my enemies will see it and be put to shame.” However, God did not show this sign to David in his own lifetime, but waited until David’s son, Solomon, dedicated the Temple. During the dedication, the gates of the Temple refused to open until Solomon invoked the merit of David’s blessed memory[[19]](#footnote-19)

***Shabbat 30a*** *After Solomon concluded the construction of the Temple, he desired to bring the Ark into the Holy of Holies. However, the gates became fastened to each other [and they could not be opened]. Solomon then offered twenty-four ‘cries of prayer’ but still he was not answered. He then began to recite these verses, ‘Raise up your heads O gates, and be uplifted, you everlasting entrances, so that the King of Glory may enter.’ Thereupon the gates ran after him and opened their mouths to swallow him, saying ‘Who is the King of Glory?’ [They thought that Solomon haughtily meant himself.] Solomon replied, ‘HaShem, the mighty and strong’.*

*He then repeated [his plea] and said, ‘Raise up your heads O gates, and raise up, you everlasting entrances so that the King of Glory may enter. Who then is the King of Glory! HaShem of legions, He is the King of Glory, Selah.*

*Still Solomon was not answered. But as soon as Solomon said, ‘O God, turn not away the face of Your anointed, remember the pious deeds of David, Your servant’,[[20]](#footnote-20) he was immediately answered, and the gates opened. At that moment the faces of David’s enemies turned black [with humiliation] like the bottom of a [burnt] pot. ׳Then it became known to all that the Holy One, Blessed be He, had forgiven David that sin.’*

So, David’s son[[21]](#footnote-21) was granted the sign, the את, that David prayed for. David may very well have noticed the repeated use of the word ‘son’, בן, in the beginning of our Torah portion.

# Ashlamatah: Yoel (Joel) 4:13-21

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 13. Stretch out a sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, press, for the winepress is full; the vats roar, for their evil is great. | 13. Put the sword into them, for the time of their end has arrived; go down and tread their warrior dead like grapes that are trodden in the winepress; pour out their blood, for their wickedness is great. |
| 14. Multitudes [upon] multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. | 14. Army upon army in the valley of judicial decision; for near is the day which will come from the Lord in the valley of judicial decision. |
| 15. The sun and the moon have darkened, and the stars have withdrawn their shining. | 15. Sun and moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their brightness. |
| 16. And the Lord shall roar from Zion, and from Jerusalem He shall give forth His voice, and the heavens and earth shall quake, and the Lord is a shelter to His people and a stronghold for the children of Israel. | 16. And the Lord will call from Zion, and from Jerusalem he will lift up his Memra. and the heavens and earth will tremble. But the LORD is a support to His people and a help to the children of Israel. |
| 17. And you shall know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, My holy mount, and Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall no longer pass through there. | 17, And you will know that I the LORD your God have caused My Shekinah to dwell in Zion, My holy mountain; and Jerusalem will be holy and strangers will never again pass through it. |
| 18. And it shall come to pass on that day that the mountains shall drip with wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the springs of Judah shall flow with water, and a spring shall emanate from the house of the Lord and water the valley of Shittim. | 18. And at that time. the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with goodness. all the watercourses of the house of Judah will flow with water; and a spring will come forth from the Sanctuary of the LORD and will water the Valley of Acacias, |
| 19. And Egypt shall become desolate, and Edom shall be a desert waste, because of the violence done to the children of Judah, because they shed innocent blood in their land. | 19. Egypt will become a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, because of the violence done to the people of Judah in whose land they shed innocent blood. |
| 20. But Judah shall remain forever, and Jerusalem throughout all generations. | 20. But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem for generation after generation, |
| 21. Now should I cleanse, their blood I will not cleanse, when the Lord dwells in Zion. | 21. Their blood *which I avenged on the nations I will avenge again, says the LORD. who caused His Shekinah to dwell* in Zion. |

## Rashi’s Commentary for: Yoel (Joel) 4:13-21

**13 Stretch out a sickle etc.** -Draw the swords, you who go on My mission to destroy the nations. for the harvest is ripe -I.e., for their time has arrived, and he compared the matter to harvest, which is harvested with sickles when it becomes completely ripe.

**come press for the winepress is full** -of grapes. Come and tread them; i.e., the measure of their iniquity is full.

**press.**Heb. רְדוּ, an expression of pressing [or ruling]. Cf. (Gen. 1:28) “And rule (וּרְדוּ) over the fish of the sea.”

**and the vats shall roar** -The sound of the stream of the wine going down in the vats before the winepresses is heard.

**14 in the valley of decision** -For there it is decided that the judgment is true. And so did Jonathan render: the valley of judgment.

**15 have withdrawn their shining** -Have taken in their shining.

**16 shall roar from Zion** -Because of what they did to Zion.

**and the heavens and earth shall quake** -He will deal retribution upon the heavenly princes and then upon the nations.

**a shelter.**Heb. מַחֲסֶה, an expression of a cover, abrier in O.F., abri in modern French, a shelter.

**18 springs** **springs.**Heb. אֲפִיקֵי, a place of the source of water.

**and water the valley of Shittim -**According to its apparent meaning, and it will water the valley of Shittim (Targum), and, according to its Midrashic meaning, He will atone for the iniquity of Peor.

**19 Egypt etc.** **and Edom** -He juxtaposed them as regards their retribution. You find that, were it not for Egypt, Edom would not exist, as it is stated: (I Kings 11:16 21) “For Joab and all Israel remained [stationed] there for six months etc. every male in Edom.” And it is stated there: (verse 17) “Adad fled, he and some Edomite men etc. And Hadad pleased Pharaoh very much etc. And Hadad etc. that David slept with his fathers etc.” And, at the end, (verse 25) “And he was an adversary to Solomon (sic).” Said the Holy One, blessed be He: I will destroy both of them.

**because of the violence done to the children of Judah** -Because of the violence they did to the children of Judah, viz., that they shed their blood.

**21 Now should I cleanse, their blood I will not cleanse** -Even if I cleanse them of other sins in their hands, and of the evils they have done to Me, I will not cleanse them of the blood of the children of Judah. When will this come to pass? At the time the Holy One, blessed be He, dwells in Zion.

## Commentary on the Ashlamatah of Yoel (Joel) 4:13-21

By: H.Ex. Adon Shlomoh Ben Abraham

\*\*\* Joel 4:13-21 in most English Bible editions is Joel 3:13 – 21.

The following comments are taken from the introduction to the book of Joel by the Soncino Books of the Bible.[[22]](#footnote-22) The opening two chapters deal with the invasion of locusts sent by God as a punishment on the nation of Israel and the last two, the Prophet sees a future time when the nations will be gathered to the valley of decision and judgement. The first message is of plague and warning and the second of an even greater ordeal that is coming to those nations which have sold Israel into slavery and shed innocent blood. Scholars generally agree that Joel divides into two parts, Chapter 1 & 2 warnings of a coming plague and a call to repentance and chapter 3 & 4 which speaks of the end of days, the ingathering of the exiles, the attack of the nations on Israel, their defeat in the valley of Jehoshaphat,[[23]](#footnote-23) then the complete restoration of Zion and the time of Mashiach.

The dating of the book of Joel has several difficulties because there's not any data in the prophecy which makes it easy to place it and it’s difficult to associate with a specific period of time. Not much is known of the prophet Joel, He does seem to be familiar with the temple ritual as if he witnesses it first-hand. Some have suggested Joel was a native of Jerusalem around 800 BCE. time, others date it to after 500 BCE. Various reasons are given why, but we will not engage in those opinions. Joel does not mention the Syrians or Assyrians who were at that time and did not emerge as a power before 760 BCE, nor does he make any reference to the Babylonian Empire which had fallen by 537 BCE. Most modern scholars want to place the time about 444 BCE. which is down near the time of Ezra. Rashi and Kimchi admit that the Prophet has not given sufficient clues to justify a good authoritative statement regarding to the precise dating.[[24]](#footnote-24) Tradition favors the early date, and Joel was placed there between Hoshea and Amos, which were both prophets of the 8th century.

It is interesting that those who support the early date usually favor a literal interpretation of the book, while those who favor the post exilic date seem to favor a figurative interpretation. Some have interpreted the locust in the first half of the book as a symbol of the four exiles and invasions that Judah and the land of Israel would endure. It seems that the language used in the Prophecies would favor an actual literal physical enemy. One of the arguments against literal locusts is that the locust historically seems to not invade the land of Israel from the north. However, this could refer to the Syrians and Assyrians who came from that direction, and the armies of Nebuchadnezzar years later did attack from the north. Some commentators have looked at this as a reference to Gog and Magog, which will come at the end of the exile and will usher in the messianic age of Moshiach. So, you have those who favor literal interpretation and those who favor figurative interpretation and so both opinions disagree as to whether the Prophet is describing a past occurrence, or a prediction of a future event. So, for the sake of this discussion, if we look at the prophecies of the four Locusts as literal and representing the four invasions and Exiles of Israel and if we look at the last two chapters as figurative then the last two chapters are pointing toward the time at the end before the great day of the Lord, when the nations have been called into the valley of decision where they are to receive their judgement for the sins against Israel. As we near the end (some 2500 years after Joel) and await the appearance of Moshiach and the full restoration of Zion, should we read Joel 3-4 with literal or figurative eyes or with the reverse of the above? With that being said, I believe the literal & figurative work together to bring prophecy to fulfillment. Anyone who reads the bible or good poetry comes to understand the diamonds and gems of the written piece are often hidden in the Hebrew poetry; figurative language such as tropes, metonym, personification, synedoche, apostrophe, hyperbole, irony, simile, metaphor, riddles, and enigmas; parables; allegories, proverbs, and gnomic poetry; types; symbols (actions, numbers, names, colors); dreams; prophecy. We see, we have our work cut out for us, hopefully in our mining of the Torah and the Prophets Hashem will allow us to locate a gem or two and not just fool’s Gold.

As our writer opens his book of Joel He is speaking to the elders and all the inhabitants of the earth Ha-aretz and in this verse particularly it refers to the land of Israel.1:2-3 But it can also apply to the whole earth. [[25]](#footnote-25) Joel’s call is one that must be told to all future generations. The situation on the ground as described in 1:10 is the very opposite of the blessings promised in the second paragraph of the Shema and you shall gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil. Deut.11:14. The back story is of a people who are living the opposite of the blessings.1:13. The whole people must be mobilized for a national campaign of repentance which will bring people of all ages, elders, children, the low of society and the high, even the sucking babes, brides and their grooms to a position of Repentance.[[26]](#footnote-26)

As we start the second part of Joel's prophecy 3:1(ESV/KJV 2:28ff) it starts off with, *and it shall come to pass after this I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*. Metzudas David [[27]](#footnote-27) interprets flesh as referring to the nations of the world. For even the heathen will then recognize and know that Hashem is God, he also said this will happen in the time of the Moshiach. Rashi said this refers to all flesh who have a heart of flesh and are receptive to the presence of the Almighty.[[28]](#footnote-28) The Radak interprets all flesh to refer to those Israelites who will be worthy to receive the Holy Spirit of knowledge and spirit of understanding that God will then pour forth. Compare Likutey Moharan I:22 where this is connected with “*all flesh”* of Jeremiah, 31:33.[[29]](#footnote-29) These verses should be interesting to us from our position today some 2500 years after Joel’s prophecy and the fact, this verses position is right in the middle of Joel's prophecy.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The verses that set up our reading speaks of the *restore fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, (4:1)* I *will gather all nations to the valley, and for my people Israel contend*, v.2 though, only the tribe of Moshiach and the city of the King are mentioned, we see that the other tribes are not left out. The valley is a place of decision and the place where the decision is made, will be the place of Judgement (where the battle will be fought). The text does suggest a physical war, but could it also be a war of a different kind than just army against army? *The children of Judah and Jerusalem that you have stolen I will stir them up in the place you have sold them and sell them into the hand of the people of Judah who will sell them to a nation far away.v.7-8* Does this not sound like the time we are living in, the Jews who were stolen have been returning home, others are in the process of being *“stirred up” or “aroused”* andthose who have returned to Judah and Jerusalem have been sold out to the nations.

The prophet is told by Hashem *to proclaim among the nations[[31]](#footnote-31) – consecrate* **קָדַשׁ*****qāḏaš [[32]](#footnote-32)*** *for war.* Why would this word be used with those among the nations (Goyim), are they being told to make yourself Kadosh or are they being made Kadosh because they will soon be judged in the valley of decision? Maybe like a sacrifice? (1 Sam.16:5). In Jer.51:25-29 the same Language is used for Babylon’s destruction. Abarbanel thinks this speaks of a revivification of the dead, to come witness the great judgement against the nations.[[33]](#footnote-33) In one sense, for the last 30-40 years or even 100 years, could we be witnessing a revival of the dead in all those who are returning to Judah and Jerusalem. They most definitely must have gone through the valley of decision to get there.

Our reading starts v.13 *put in the sickle; the harvest is ripe. Come and descend, for the wine press has been filled. The vats are overflowing for their evil is great.* The time is depicted as harvest time. This word used for “harvest” is the same word as the word used for “branches”[[34]](#footnote-34) It is used figuratively of the wicked whose branch is dead, cut off (Job 18:16); and to the prosperity of Job in his earlier years (Job 29:19). It is used of Israel’s prospering (Ps. 80:11[12), but also to her state of ruin as dry limbs (Isa. 27:11).[[35]](#footnote-35) This could be symbolic of the harvest time of the year when the nations are going to be drawn into the valley of decision. It could also literally refer to the harvest time on the Jewish Biblical calendar,[[36]](#footnote-36) or it could symbolize that the nations will be ripe for punishment at that time, due to the magnitude of their crimes according to Abarbanel.[[37]](#footnote-37) Regardless of exactly how or when, the ideal is the same: the harvest time of the nations will have arrived. The nations are being brought down to a literal valley of judgment. Due to the extent of the evil which the nations have perpetrated in their disobedience to God and against Israel. As we would say in the south, the Nations(goyim) are having their “come to Yeshua meeting”. Rashi comments that at this time the wine vats will roar. They shall be overflowing, sounds like a time of a plentiful harvest or it could be that evil will be overflowing. Malbim says that this is the time when the forces of Edom, the Christian nations, and those of Ishmael, the Arab world will come together. All the nations are going together to the valley and there Hashem will break their mighty ones. (10-12) Malbim goes on to interpret these verses as a series of battles. After the first battle between Edom and Israel there will be no warriors left to wage war, but then farmers will come together, and they will beat their tools into weapons and engage in combat. Once this group is annihilated, then the untrained masses of both sides will gather and fight. Malbim says to Call this valley, the Valley of Judgment (cp. V. 2,12) and then after the decision has been made and their fate has been sealed, it is referred to as the Valley of Decision.[[38]](#footnote-38) *Groups upon groups, multitudes in the valley of decision for the day of Hashem is near in the valley of the decision*. (v.14)[[39]](#footnote-39) Why would God put these Nations(goyim) in a place to judge them and then call it a valley of decision?[[40]](#footnote-40) Could we be seeing a repeat of the distinction God made between the children of Israel and the children of Egypt? Could the very judgement handed to the Egyptian be also redemption for the Israelites, for God clearly said he *would put a division between my people and your people.* (Exo.8:23)

*The sun and the moon have darkened, and the stars have withdrawn their shine, their light.* (v.15) The misfortune which befalls those nations will be so overwhelming it will seem as if the stellar bodies have ceased to shed light upon the earth, Malbim goes on to say. The astrological influence of those celestial bodies upon worldly events will be broken or negated in order to allow for the colossal scale of God's punishment. *Hashem shall roar from Zion and shall emit his voice from Jerusalem. And the heavens and the earth shall tremble*. (v.16) This will produce cosmic disorder as the celestial influence is broken. Iben Ezra, understands that this great trembling will seize the heavenly princes of all the nations as well as their leaders here on Earth and Hashem shall be a shelter and a refuge for His people. So, if one from the nations are being so overwhelmed, that they feel the stars have aligned against them, could we suggest that this *“Roar from Zion”* which is causing *“the Heavens and earth to tremble”* is giving those of the nations an opportunity while *“under judgement”*, in *“the Valley of Decision*” to seek *“refuge and a stronghold”* with the people of Israel? Interesting proposition: Then could they become a living sacrifice for *“the Mighty One, God the LORD” (*Psa 50:1)[[41]](#footnote-41) Even Pharaoh suggested to Moses and Aaron, *“Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” (*Exo.8:25) while suffering under the cumulative weight of the judgement of the four plagues.

*And then you shall know (children of Iarael) that I am Hashem your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.* Those who witnessed the divine retribution, their faith will become perfect, and the divine presence will return to Jerusalem. The people would be fully aware of God's presence. Radak goes on to say, the sanctity of Jerusalem will reach such a high level that it will be off limits to all but the Jewish people, just as the sanctuary of the Temple is prohibited to all but the Kohanim. When Hashem came to the mountain with Moshe, the children of Israel could not approach the mount. When Hashem returns to Mt. Zion, no foreigners nor strangers will be allowed in Jerusalem. We have seen the nations as a ripe harvest brought into the valley of Judgement and decision and it could be understood the ripe harvest was a time of great prosperity for the nations but also it could be a time of great evil and after the Lord roars from Zion there is a change, and the prophets turns his attention to the glorious future of Judah and Jerusalem.

*On that day the mountains shall drip wine, and the hills shall flow with milk. The streambeds of Judah shall flow with water and a fountain from the house of Hashem, shall flow to the valley of Shittim.* Shittim was the last camping place of the Israelite tribes before they crossed the Jordan. (Nu. 25:1) At Shittim “Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor” (25:3), thus giving Balak the results that he had sought by trying to have Balaam curse Israel. (chs. 22–24) At Shittim Moses ordered a Census of the people (26:1–4). Subsequently Moses was told to “go up into the mountain of Abarim, and see the land” (27:12–14) and to invest Joshua with some of his authority (vv 18–23) The context suggests a valley in which water would flow away from Jerusalem.[[42]](#footnote-42) This spring is described in detail in Ezekiel 47:1-12, the Midrash tell us the waters are to atone for the sin of Pe’or per Rashi on Joel 4:18. The valley of Shittim where this water flows from the temple, is understood to be outside of the land of Israel by Mahari Kara,[[43]](#footnote-43) and as a metaphor the word of Torah flows from Jerusalem as water to the entire world.

The future destruction of Egypt and Edom, they will become desolate and a desert waste because of the robbery of the children of Israel. In the end of days, the Almighty will bring the final destruction upon the Arab world represented by Egypt which was the homeland of the wife of Ishmael who was the mother of the Arab peoples and the Roman nation who descended from Edom. These two nations were the most prominent in the mistreatment of the Jewish people and will therefore be singled out for punishment. Some commentators single out Egypt specifically because they were the first people to enslave the Jewish nation and the Romans Edom where the last ones who brought the final destruction on the Holy Land and for this both the Egyptians and Edom will be destroyed.[[44]](#footnote-44) It could also correlate to the four kingdoms mentioned in Dan.2:36ff. emphasis being placed on the first and last kingdom.

As we reach a conclusion, *Judah will exist and be inhabited forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation*. As we have seen above the destruction of Egypt and Edom is contrasted with the eternal existence of Judah and Jerusalem.The shed blood of Gods people will be avenged or acquitted. The nations are summoned to the valley of Judgement and decision and the cosmos will be disturbed and shaken. God then demonstrates that he is Israels refuge.When asked when this will take place, Rashi and Radak says, When the Almighty will dwell in Zion, just as Judah shall exist forever, so shall the Divine Presence dwell in Zion(Jerusalem) forever once it returns there with the coming of the Messiah.[[45]](#footnote-45)

# Verbal Tallies

By: Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David & HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah

**Vayikra (Leviticus) 22:17– 23:8**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 86:1-7**

**Yoel (Joel) 4:13-21**

**1 Pet 5:5-11, Lk 13:31-35**

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

LORD – יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

Son - בן, Strong’s number 01121.

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

LORD – יהוה, Strong’s number 03068.

Son - בן, Strong’s number 01121.

Israel - ישראל, Strong’s number 03478.

House - בית, Strong’s number 01004.

**Vayikra (Leviticus) 22:17** And the **LORD <03068>** spake <01696> (8762) unto Moses <04872>, saying <0559> (8800), 18 Speak <01696> (8761) unto Aaron <0175>, and to his **sons <01121>**, and unto all the **children <01121>** of **Israel <03478>**, and say <0559> (8804) unto them, Whatsoever <0376> he be of the **house <01004>** of **Israel <03478>**, or of the strangers <01616> in **Israel <03478>**, that will offer <07126> (8686) his oblation <07133> for all his vows <05088>, and for all his freewill offerings <05071>, which they will offer <07126> (8686) unto the **LORD <03068>** for a burnt offering <05930>;

**Tehillim (Psalms) 86:1** « A Prayer <08605> of David <01732>. » Bow down <05186> (8685) thine ear <0241>, O **LORD <03068>**, hear <06030> (8798) me: for I am poor <06041> and needy <034>.

**Tehillim (Psalms) 86:16** O turn <06437> (8798) unto me and have mercy <02603> (8798) upon me; give <05414> (8798) thy strength <05797> unto thy servant <05650>, and save <03467> (8685) the **son <01121>** of thine handmaid <0519>.

**Joe 4:14** Multitudes <01995>, multitudes <01995> in the valley <06010> of decision <02742>: for the day <03117> of the **LORD <03068>** is near <07138> in the valley <06010> of decision <02742>.

**Joe 4:16** The LORD <03068> also shall roar <07580> (8799) out of Zion <06726>, and utter <05414> (8799) his voice <06963> from Jerusalem <03389>; and the heavens <08064> and the earth <0776> shall shake <07493> (8804): but the **LORD <03068>** will be the hope <04268> of his people <05971>, and the strength <04581> of the **children <01121>** of **Israel <03478>**.

**Joe 4:18** And it shall come to pass in that day <03117>, that the mountains <02022> shall drop down <05197> (8799) new wine <06071>, and the hills <01389> shall flow <03212> (8799) with milk <02461>, and all the rivers <0650> of Judah <03063> shall flow <03212> (8799) with waters <04325>, and a fountain <04599> shall come forth <03318> (8799) of the **house <01004>** of the **LORD <03068>**, and shall water <08248> (8689) the valley <05158> of Shittim <07851>.

## Hebrew:

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Reading**  **Lev. 22:17– 23:8** | **Psalms**  **86:1-7** | **Ashlamatah**  **Joel 4:13-21 (Joe 4:13-21)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ~yhil{a/ | God | Lev. 22:25 Lev. 22:33 | Ps. 86:2 | Joel 4:17 |
| #r,a, | land, earth, ground, country | Lev. 22:24 Lev. 22:33 |  | Joel 4:16 Joel 4:19 |
| tyIB; | house | Lev. 22:18 |  | Joel 4:18 |
| !Be | sons, children | Lev. 22:18 Lev. 22:25 Lev. 22:28 Lev. 22:32 Lev. 23:2 |  | Joel 4:16 Joel 4:19 |
| hw"hoy> | LORD | Lev. 22:17 Lev. 22:18 Lev. 22:21 Lev. 22:22 Lev. 22:24 Lev. 22:26 Lev. 22:27 Lev. 22:29 Lev. 22:30 Lev. 22:31 Lev. 22:32 Lev. 22:33 Lev. 23:1 Lev. 23:2 Lev. 23:3 Lev. 23:4 Lev. 23:5 Lev. 23:6 Lev. 23:8 | Ps. 86:1 Ps. 86:6 | Joel 4:14 Joel 4:16 Joel 4:17 Joel 4:18 Joel 4:21 |
| ~Ay | days | Lev. 22:27 Lev. 22:28 Lev. 22:30 Lev. 23:3 Lev. 23:6 Lev. 23:7 Lev. 23:8 | Ps. 86:3 Ps. 86:7 | Joel 4:14 Joel 4:18 |
| ac'y" | brought you out | Lev. 22:33 |  | Joel 4:18 |
| laer'f.yI | Israel | Lev. 22:18 Lev. 22:32 Lev. 23:2 |  | Joel 4:16 |
| ~yIr;c.mi | Egypt | Lev. 22:33 |  | Joel 4:19 |
| !t;n" | make, give, given, gave, made | Lev. 22:22 |  | Joel 4:16 |
| rl'P' | fulfill | Lev. 22:21 | Ps. 86:10 |  |
| vd,qo | holy | Lev. 22:32 Lev. 23:2 Lev. 23:3 Lev. 23:4 Lev. 23:7 Lev. 23:8 |  | Joel 4:17 |
| lAq | voice |  | Ps. 86:6 | Joel 4:16 |
| ryciq' | harvest | Lev. 23:10 Lev. 23:22 |  | Joel 4:13 |
| ar'q' | proclaim, call | Lev. 23:2 Lev. 23:4 | Ps. 86:3 Ps. 86:5 Ps. 86:7 |  |
| br; | abundant, great |  | Ps. 86:5 | Joel 4:13 |
| rm;v' | keep, guard | Lev. 22:31 | Ps. 86:2 |  |

## Greek:

| **GREEK** | **ENGLISH** | **Torah Reading**  **Lev. 22:17– 23:8** | **Psalms**  **86:1-7** | **Ashlamatah**  **Joel 4:13-21** | **Peshat**  **Mishnah of Mark,**  **1-2 Peter, & Jude**  **1 Pet 5:5-11** | **Tosefta of**  **Luke**  **Lk 13:31-35** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| αἰών | eon, age |  |  | Joe 4:20 | 1 Pet. 5:11 |  |
| εἴδω | see |  |  |  | 1 Pet. 5:9 | Lk. 13:35 |
| ἐξέρχομαι | come forth |  |  | Joe 4:18 |  | Lk. 13:31 |
| ἐπιτελέω | perform, experienced |  |  |  | 1 Pet. 5:9 | Lk. 13:32 |
| ἡμέρα | days | Lev. 22:27 Lev. 22:28 Lev. 22:30 Lev. 23:3 Lev. 23:6 Lev. 23:7 Lev. 23:8 | Ps. 86:3 Ps. 86:7 | Joel 4:14 Joel 4:18 |  | Lk. 13:31 |
| θεός | God | Lev. 22:25 Lev. 22:33 | Ps. 86:2 | Joel 4:17 | 1 Pet. 5:5 1 Pet. 5:6 1 Pet. 5:10 |  |
| καιρός | times, seasons | Lev 23:4 |  |  | 1 Pet. 5:6 |  |
| καλέω | called | Lev 23:2  Lev 23:4 |  |  | 1 Pet. 5:10 |  |
| κύριος | LORD | Lev. 22:17 Lev. 22:18 Lev. 22:21 Lev. 22:22 Lev. 22:24 Lev. 22:26 Lev. 22:27 Lev. 22:29 Lev. 22:30 Lev. 22:31 Lev. 22:32 Lev. 22:33 Lev. 23:1 Lev. 23:2 Lev. 23:3 Lev. 23:4 Lev. 23:5 Lev. 23:6 Lev. 23:8 Lev. 23:9 | Ps. 86:1 Ps. 86:6 | Joel 4:14 Joel 4:16 Joel 4:17 Joel 4:18 Joel 4:21 |  | Lk. 13:35 |
| λέγω | saying | Lev 22:17  Lev 22:26  Lev 23:1 |  |  |  | Lk. 13:31 Lk. 13:35 |
| οἶκος | house |  |  | Joe 4:18 |  | Lk. 13:35 |
| προφήτης | prophet |  |  |  |  | Lk. 13:33 Lk. 13:34 |
| χείρ | hand | Lev 22:25 |  |  | 1 Pet. 5:6 |  |

# Nazarean Talmud

**Sidrot of Vayikra (Leviticus) 22:17– 23:44**

**“Asher Yaq’riv” “Who presents”**

By: Hakham Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School of Hakham Shaul**  **Tosefta**  **Luqas (Lk) 13:31-35**  Mishnah **א:א** | **School of Hakham Tsefet**  **Peshat**  **1 Tsefet (1 Pet) 5:5-11**  Mishnah **א:א** |
| **¶ On that very daysome P’rushim** (Pharisees) **came, saying to him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” And he said to them, “Go, tell that fox, Behold, I cast out shedim** (demons) **and perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third** day **I will be perfected.” “Nevertheless, I must journey today, tomorrow, and the** day**following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Yerushalayim. "O Yerushalayim, Yerushalayim, the city who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen** gathers**her brood under** her**wings, but you were not willing!’ See! “Your house is left to you desolate”** (Jer. 22:5)**; and assuredly, I say to you, you will not see me until** the time**comes when you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"** (Psalm 118:26). | **¶ Therefore humble yourselves under the Yad Hazahah** (mighty hand) **of God, that He may exalt you at the appropriate time, casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, and vigilant; becauseyour adversary** (the Yetser HaRa) **is lurking about like a shadé and a roaring lion, seeking whom he can devour. He** (the Yetser HaRa) **is resisted through faithful obedience and the knowledge that your brethren in the diaspora are suffering the same thing. But after having suffered for a short season, the God of unlimited loving-kindness, who has called you to His eternal honor through Yeshua HaMashiach, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him** (God) **be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen** |

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lev. 22:17– 23:44 | Psa 86:1-17 | Joel 4:13-21 | 1 Pet 5:1-14 | Lk 13:22-14:6 |  |

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

**Yad Hazakah (mighty hand) of God**



The phrase **Yad Hazahah** (mighty hand) **of God,** can also be rendered “Take hold of G-d’s mighty hand.” The Mishneh Torah (Repetition of the Torah) is the *magnum opus* of the Rambam.[[46]](#footnote-46) The title “Yad Hazahah” is the secondary title to the Mishnah Torah. It is given this title because the Mishneh Torah is subdivided into 14 (Yad) divisions. Interestingly, the 14th (Yad) book (sub-division) of the Mishneh Torah is devoted to Messiah and the Y’mot HaMashiach (Days of Messiah) and relative principles.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Hakham Tsefet’s use of this phrase sends the mind in a thousand directions. How was it that the phrase “Yad Hazahah” was picked up by the Rambam? How is it that the Rambam chose 14 divisions? The Hebrew number 14 is the equivalent to the word “hand.” For those who are not familiar with this vital work, it is a monumental elucidation of the Torah’s 613 mitzvoth. What we also find overwhelming is the thought that this very week we have initiated Yeshivat Bet El. The first class taught after our regular Triennial Torah class was Yad Hazahah imparted by His Eminence Rabbi Dr Hillel ben David. Of course, everyone knows that we had this planned so that the initial course would fall out so that it included this phrase by Hakham Tsefet. (Obviously, everyone will know this was said in jest) The overwhelming odds for these events to coalesce at the same time are beyond the human mind’s ability to reach.

**Taking Hold and casting away**

Humility “takes hold” of the Hand of G-d. While we dare not travel too far into the mystical world, we understand that “humility” is associated with the Malchut Shamayim (Kingdom/Governance of G-d through the Hakhamim as opposed to human Kings). Furthermore, the Moreh (teacher) is associated with the characteristic of humility. Only, by “taking hold” of G-d’s mighty hand can we truly cast off our burdens. While the world at large wants freedom from the “Law” (Torah), the Jewish people see the Torah as the gift of G-d’s bountiful grace. Only by acceptance of the Kingdom/Governance of G-d can we find practical application of the Torah. We repeatedly use the phrase, “Kingdom/Governance of G-d through the Hakhamim as opposed to human Kings” for the sake of understanding the *halakhah l’maaseh* (practical application) comes through the Sages. While we take great care not to put too much of this in Hakham Tsefet’s mouth we certainly can use hermeneutic logic to see these connections from our present post. These logical thoughts capture the essence of what Hakham Tsefet was trying to say. Only by acceptance of the mitzvoth can we find rest from the cares that would burden the soul. Faithful obedience is readily rewarded. Though the wages are not necessarily in terms of monies, we find great pleasure and consolation in the study of the Torah, its mitzvoth and the words of the Hakhamim. Herein we see that we labor not to find a career in the secular world. We labor for the sake of Torah Study.

**Whose hand are you holding?**

As noted above the phrase **Yad Hazaqah** (mighty hand) **of God,** can also be rendered “Take hold of G-d’s mighty hand.” This phrase is synonymous with the notion of “walking with G-d” or being with G-d. The congregations of Gentiles will “take hold” of the *kanaf* (corner – tzitzith) of the Jewish Man’s tallit as we have discussed. Interestingly, the Hebrew text actually reads, “take hold, take hold.” The “grasping” – taking hold is doubled in the idea of grasping and taking hold, which in Hebrew is from the same root קזַח. Therefore, we can determine that the Gentile congregations “grasping” and “taking hold” of the Jewish man’s *kanaf* is tantamount to “taking hold” of G-d’s hand. Or, as it is stated in the present text of 1 Tsefet, submitting to the mighty hand of G-d. What is it that makes a soul Jewish? “Taking hold of the mighty hand of G-d and submitting to the Kingdom/Governance of G-d through the Hakhamim as opposed to human kings.

Another possible translation of the Hebrew phrase: “Yad Hazaqah” is “the hand that strengthens.” In other words, by grasping the hand of G-d through the observance of the commandments we become **strengthened!**

**New Letter, New Scribe?**

Scholars have noted that in this letter the vocabulary and writing style of Hakham Tsefet changes. This is because the second chapter seems, to them, out of place. If this is actually true, we would suggest here that Hakham Tsefet is using a new scribe, Yehudah (Jude). There are scholars that suggest that this is not the work of Hakham Tsefet based on the differences between the first and second Epistle. This whimsical scholarship does not take into account the varied purpose of the Letters or the possibility of a different scribe. Scrutiny has proven this Letter to be a faithful representation of the ideals and theology of Hakham Tsefet. Some scholars suggest that the vocabulary and grammar are not as stylistic as the first Epistle. It is for this reason that we suggest that Silvanus (Luke/Hillel) is now working for Hakham Shaul and Jude (Yehudah) is now the Scribe of Hakham Tsefet. We have suggested that the new scribe is Yehudah for various reasons. Firstly, the writing style is indubitably different from the first letter. Secondly, scholars suggest that either Hakham Tsefet borrows from Yehudah (Jude) or he (Yehudah) borrows from this second letter of Hakham Tsefet. Therefore, we opine that it makes sense that the scribe for this letter is actually Yehudah (Jude).

# Questions for Understanding and Reflection

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat which verse, or verses impressed your heart and fired your imagination?
2. From all the Tanakh: which particular verse or passage taught you about the role of Messiah as described in the Nazarean Codicil readings 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: “וּקְצַרְתֶּם”– “Harvest”

## & Shabbat Chanukah & Shabbat Mevarchim

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **“וּקְצַרְתֶּם”** | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 23:9-12 | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“****Harvest”** | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 23:13-15 | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 23:15-17 |
| **“****Cosecha”** | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 23:16-18 | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 23:18-21 |
| Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:9 – 32 | Reader 4 – Vayiqra 23:19-21 | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 23:22-25 |
| Ashlamatah:  Yehoshua (Joshua) 5:11-15 + 6:23-27  Special:  Zechariah 2:14 – 4:7 | Reader 5 – Vayiqra 23:22-25 | **Monday & Thursday Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Vayiqra 23:26-28 | Reader 1 – Vayiqra 23:1517 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 86:8-13 & 30:1-13 | Reader 7 – Vayiqra 23:29-32 | Reader 2 – Vayiqra 23:18-21 |
| N.C.: 1 Pet 5:12-14, Lk 14:1-6 | Maftir – Vayiqra 23:29-32  Zechariah 2:14 – 4:7 | Reader 3 – Vayiqra 23:22-25 |

## Calendrical Note: Tekufah Tevet is on Kislev 21 (Winter Solstice)

* In the Babylonian Talmud,[[48]](#footnote-48) Adam and Chava become frightened as the winter solstice approaches, thinking the shortening of the days is a punishment. "When Adam saw the day gradually diminishing, he said, “Woe is me! Perhaps because I sinned, the world around me is growing darker and darker, and is about to return to chaos and confusion, and this is the death heaven has decreed for me. He then sat eight days in fast and prayer. But when the winter solstice arrived, and he saw the days getting gradually longer, he said, "Such is the way of the world,” and proceeded to observe eight days of festivity. The following years he observed both the eight days preceding and the eight days following the solstice as days of festivity."[[49]](#footnote-49)
* The winter solstice is the day Yiftach,[[50]](#footnote-50) a chieftain of Yisrael, sacrifices his daughter in fulfillment of a foolish battle vow. She has been bewailing her fate on the hills for two months.[[51]](#footnote-51)
* Otzah Midrashim,[[52]](#footnote-52) tells that on the winter solstice, Leviathan protects the creatures of the sea from their predators: “On every winter solstice he lifts his head and makes himself great, and blows in the water, and roils the sea, and makes all the fish in the ocean afraid.” Leviathan is a creature known for being God’s playmate[[53]](#footnote-53) and a wise teacher of human beings.[[54]](#footnote-54) His eyes, according to the Talmud, flash in the deep.[[55]](#footnote-55)

The winter solstice seems to have to do with sight or the lack thereof. Mountains become visible to Noach, and the patterns of nature become visible to Adam and Chava. Leviathan is associated with inner sight. Yiftach, on the other hand, is blind to his own wrongdoings. On the winter solstice, the sun’s light begins to become stronger, and we too consider how to strengthen our vision.

Kavanot la-Tekufot: “We are grateful before You, Eternal One, for You have brought us from darkness to light”.[[56]](#footnote-56)

There is a story about a poor Jewish carpenter who is walking through the woods on a snowy Chanukah night after Shabbat (it's also the solstice), and meets a strange woman driving a wagon full of many children. The axle on her wagon breaks and she asks him for help. He is cold and eager to get home, but he carves an axle for her out of a log. She pays him by giving him the woodchips and broken axle. The carpenter is furious about this and storms home, but when he reaches his family, he discovers the woodchips have turned to gold and the axle has turned into a menorah. While the family celebrates, the carpenter realizes the woman must have been the Shekhinah, taking the extra souls of the Jews back with her to the garden of Eden.

## Upcoming Festival: Feast of Dedication” “Chanukah”

**Kislev 25 - Tevet 2 – Wednesday Evening the 25th of December – Thursday Evening the 2nd of January 2025**

Given the proximity of Chanukah to Christmas, the following studies may be of interest:

<https://www.betemunah.org/lights.html>

<https://www.betemunah.org/connection.html>

<https://www.betemunah.org/lapin.html>

<https://www.betemunah.org/chanukah.html>

## Reading assignment for next week

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| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez**  By: Rabbi Yitzchok Magriso, Translated by:  Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan  Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp.  (New York, 1989)  **Leviticus II - Vol. 12– “Holiness” pp. 158-202** | **Ramban: Leviticus Commentary on the Torah**  Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc.  (New York, 1974)  **pp. 368-392** |



**Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

**Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David**

**Hakham Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham**

1. *The Book of Tehillim*, *Me’am Lo’ez,* Psalms III, Chapters 62-89, by Rabbi Shmuel Yerushalmi,

   Translated and adapted by Dr. Zvi Faier. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rabbi Shimshon Hirsch [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Malbim [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Radak [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. v. 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Rabbi Naftali Zvi Horowitz of Ropshitz (May 22, 1760 – May 8, 1827) [1] was born on the day that the Baal Shem Tov died, to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Rubin of Linsk. His mother Beila was the daughter of Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi Horowitz of Hamburg. Naftali Tzvi adopted the surname of his maternal grandfather. Initially, Rabbi Naftali refused to give permission for the publication of his writings, but with the concurrence of his famous disciple, Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, author of Divrei Chaim, his two works, Zera Kodesh and Ayala Shelucha were finally published. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. These opening remarks are excerpted, and edited, from: *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. TaNaK is an acronym for Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim, which are translated as the Law, the prophets, and the Writings. This is how Yeshua referred to the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Jewish year is lunar, and the actual fixing of the months and the years depends on the moon, though a month is intercalated in leap years in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar years. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The townlet of Temarta in Judea; Hul. 62a. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Justa is an abbreviation of Justus or Justinus; Habra may either be part of the name or mean a haber, an associate, one of a body who were particularly scrupulous in their observance of the laws of tithes and purity [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is based on the tradition that the Nisan (the first month of the Jewish year) in which the Exodus took place fell on a Thursday, while the actual New Moon occurred after midday on the preceding Wednesday; it is further assumed that when this happens the moon is not visible until the second evening following, i.e. the evening of Friday. Hence if we counted time solely from when the New Moon is visible, then by the Thursday on which they left, a fortnight after, there would only have been thirteen sunsets. Since, however, it is called the fifteenth of the month, we see that the month was calculated from the first sunset after the New Moon [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The reference is possibly to the eclipse of the sun and the moon (commentaries). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. cf. Shemot (Exodus) 31:17, where the Sabbath is called a sign. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. I.e. the proclamation of the New Year by the proper authorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. World refers to Gentiles. Whenever the use of world is used to refer to people, the people are Gentiles. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The Artscroll Tanach series, ‘Bereishis’, by Mesorah publications. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Book of Jasher. Referred to in Joshua and second Samuel, Published by J.H. Parry & Company 1887 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Rashi,* based on *Shabbat* 30a [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Divrei HaYamim bet (II Chronicles) 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This word forms our verbal tally: Son - בן, Strong’s number 01121. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Soncino books of the Bible Joel Pg.57-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. **Jehoshaphat, Valley Of** (עֵמֶק יְהוֹשָׁפָט, *emeq yehoshaphat*). A valley mentioned in the book of Joel where God will judge the nations (Joel 3:2, 12; compare Joel 3:14). The name Jehoshaphat means “Yahweh will judge” and so fits well the context and larger theme of judgment in the book of Joel. The valley is also called the “valley of decision” (עֵמֶק הֶחָרוּ, *emeq hecharu*) in Joel 3:14, alluding to the valley as the place of God’s final judgment (Joel 3:2–14). This valley has never been located and many believe it to be symbolic, which still allows Joel to make his point. Scholars debate over five different possible locations. Stanley N. Helton, “Valley of Jehoshaphat “in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Commentary of Avraham ben Yaakov, Know your Bible @ Azamra Institute Joel 1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid, Joel [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Rabbi David Altschuler of Prague (1687-1769) was a biblical commentator and the author of a classic commentary, known as the Metzudot, to the Hebrew Bible's Nevi'im and Ketuvim. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Artscroll Tanach series, The twelve prophets, Pg.172. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid, Joel 1:10-13 and Know your Bible commentary of Abraham ben Yaakov @ Azamra Joel 3:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ramban (Nachmanides). Translated by Charles B. Chavel. N. York Shilo Pub. House, 1971-1976 -Pg.340-342. compare with 1 Peter 2:9-10, Heb 8:8-13, 9:15-22, 10:12-18. Joel 2:28-32 cp. Acts 2:5,17-21, Rom 10:12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Nations - Goyim - a noun in its plural form. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. 6942. קָדַשׁ ***qāḏaš*:** **Kadosh** - A verb meaning to be set apart, to be holy, to show oneself holy, to consecrate, to treat as holy, to dedicate, to be made holy, to behave, to act holy, to dedicate oneself.  *be holy, removed from common use; subject to special treatment, forfeit to the sanctuary. The same Hebrew word used for Sanctification and Holiness.* [*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/wsotdict?ref=Page.p+980&off=2411&ctx=sthood+(Ex.+29%3a21).+~The+altar+was+made+h) *(Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), 980.* [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Milstein Edition of the Twelve or later Prophets, Pg. 141 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 7105. קָצִיר ***qāṣiyr*: Harvest -** I. A masculine noun indicating a harvest, a reaping. It refers to the time of the year set by God when crops have ripened and are harvested. It also means = II. A masculine noun meaning a bough, a branch. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, [*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/wsotdict?ref=Page.p+1007&off=741&ctx=of+life+(Job+14%3a9).+~It+is+used+figurativ) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), 1007. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. April/Nissian through November/Hashvan based on the crop being harvested. Celebrated at the feast of Sukkot. The Ancient harvest time seems to be longer in the land of Israel, then currently 2024 = (July/Tammaz through October/Trishrei) - Harvest seasons of Ancient Israel. Archive.gci.org. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Trei asar, The twelve Prophets, Vol.1. Artscroll Tanach Series, Pg.180-181 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Valley of Jehoshaphat means Judgement or “Hashem has Judged”. 3:2,12. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Artscroll Tanck series, The Twelve Prophets, vol.1 Pg.176-182 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. 2742. חָרוּץ ***ḥārûṣ*:** a diligent industrious person, A masculine noun indicating a decision. See footnote #2. used in the phrase *ʿēmeq heḥārûṣ* to refer to “the valley of decision” by the prophet Joel (3:14[4:14]), where the nations will gather for war and judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Rom.12:1, I Pet. 2:5, Prov.21:3, lev.7:17, Psa. 50:1-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. W. S. LaSor, [“Shittim,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/isbe?ref=VolumePage.V+4%2c+p+490&off=3839&ctx=cal+identification.+~The+context+suggests) in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 490. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The Milstein Edition of the Prophets, Pg.145 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Art Scroll to Knock series. Page 184-185. Rashi also comments When King David almost destroyed Edom, Haddad escaped to Egypt where he found favor and refuge with Pharaoh and was able to enable another attack against Solomon. 1 Kings 11:16ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The Milstein Edition, The Prophets. Joel. Page 185. Through Page 186 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Roth, Cecil. *Encyclopedia Judaica [or Encyclopedia Judaica] (16 Volumes)*. Keter Publishing House, n.d. Vol. 11 pp. 744 - 780 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Shofetim* (Judges): the laws relating legislators, the Sanhedrin, the king, and the judges. It also addresses the Noahide Laws and those pertaining to messianic times. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Avodah Zarah 8a [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 8a [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Sefer Shoftim (Judges) chapter 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Machzor Vitry [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Hashem Behohmah, Yasad Aretz 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3b [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Otzar Midrashim Alphabet of Ben Sira 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Bava Batra 74b [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Midrash Bereshit 68:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)