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| **Esnoga Bet Emunah****12210 Luckey Summit****San Antonio, TX 78252****United States of America****© 2022**[**https://www.betemunah.org/**](https://www.betemunah.org/)**E-Mail:** **gkilli@aol.com** |  **Menorah 5** | **Esnoga Bet El****102 Broken Arrow Dr.****Paris TN 38242****United States of America****© 2022**[**https://torahfocus.com/**](https://torahfocus.com)**E-Mail:** **waltoakley@charter.net** |

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

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| **Three- and 1/2-year Lectionary Readings** | **Second Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Tammuz 28, 5784 – August 2/3, 2024** | **Second Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

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

**Roll of Honor:**

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

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

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

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His Excellency Adon Brad Gaskill and beloved wife Cynthia Gaskill

His Excellency Adon Shlomoh ben Abraham

His Excellency Adon Ya’aqob ben David

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

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

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

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

**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.

**Shabbat: “Nefésh Ki-Techetá” – “If a soul sins”**

**(2nd Sabbath of Penitence)**

**Shabbat Mevar’chim HaChodesh –**

**Sabbath of Proclamation of the New Moon of Av**

**Rosh Chodesh Av – Sunday evening August 4, 2024**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **וְנֶפֶשׁ כִּי-תֶחֱטָא** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“VeNefesh Ki-Techeta”** | Reader 1 – Vayikra 5:1-3 | Reader 1 – Vayikra 5:14-16 |
| **“If a soul sins”** | Reader 2 – Vayikra 5:4-6 | Reader 2 – Vayikra 5:17-19 |
| **“Y si alguien peca”** | Reader 3 – Vayikra 5:7-10 | Reader 3 – Vayikra 5:20-22 |
| Vayikra (Leviticus) 5:1-26‎ | Reader 4 – Vayikra 5:11-13 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Zecharia 5:3-11 + 6:14Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 2:4-28+4:1-2 | Reader 5 – Vayikra 5:14:16 | **Monday & Thursday****Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Vayikra 5:17-22 | Reader 1 – Vayikra 5:14-16 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 74:1-23 | Reader 7 – Vayikra 5:23-26 | Reader 2 – Vayikra 5:17-19 |
|  |  Maftir – Vayikra 5:23-26 | Reader 3 – Vayikra 5:20-22 |
| N.C.: 1 Pet 1:10-12; Lk 9:59-62 |  Zecharia 5:3-11+6:14  |   |

**Reading Assignment**

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| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez** By: Rabbi Yitzchok Mangriso, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh KaplanPublished by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1989)**Leviticu – I-Vol. 11 – “The Divine Service” pp. 100 - 117** | **Ramban: Leviticus Commentary on the Torah**Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc. (New York, 1974) **pp. 50 - 58** |

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* Others Who Bring a Sin Offering – Leviticus 5:1-13
* The Guilt-Offering – Leviticus 5:14-19
* Guilt-Offering for Breach of Trust – Leviticus 5:20-26

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: Vayikra (Leviticus) 5:1-26**

| **Rashi** | **Targum Pseudo Jonathan** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **If a person sins,** whereby he accepts an oath, and he is a witness [to some matter] by seeing or knowing [it], yet he does not testify, he shall bear his transgression; | 1. **When a man will have sinned,** and heard the voice of the oath of execration, or have been himself a witness, or will have seen that cue of the world has transgressed against the words of an oath, or will have known that his companion has sworn or imprecated vainly, if he shows it not, he will bear his sin. |
| 2. Or if a person touches anything unclean, whether it is the carcass of an unclean wild animal, or the carcass of an unclean domestic animal, or the carcass of an unclean creeping animal, and it was hidden from him, he incurs guilt. | 2. Or, if a man touch anything unclean, whether the carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of an unclean reptile, and it be hidden from him, and he, being unclean, will touch any consecrated thing, he is guilty. |
| 3. Or if he touches the uncleanness of a human, with any uncleanness through which he may become defiled, and it is hidden from him and [later] he knows, he has incurred guilt; | 3. Or if he touches the uncleanness of a man, even whatever uncleanness that defiles him, and it be hidden from him, and he touch anything consecrated, after that it is discovered by him, and he knows that he is defiled and not clean, he will be guilty. |
| 4. Or if a person swears, expressing with [his] lips to do harm or to do good, whatever a man may express in an oath, and it is hidden from him and [later] he knows, he is guilty in any one of these cases. | 4. Or if a man will swear to make declaration with his lips to do evil or good upon any matter upon which a man may affirm, whether of the present or the future, that he can make declaration by oath, and he falsify therein, and it be hidden from him, but afterward it be discovered to him and he knows that he has falsified, and he repent not; though he has become guilty in any one of these, |
| 5. And it shall be, when someone incurs guilt in any one of these cases, that he shall confess the sin which he had committed, | 5. if he will have (thus) sinned in any one of these four things, but afterwards repent, he will make confession of the sin by which he has sinned. |
| 6. and he shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord for his sin which he had committed, a female [animal] from the flock either a sheep or a goat, for a sin offering. **And the kohen shall make atonement from his sin.** | 6. And he will bring the oblation of his trespass offering to the Presence of the LORD for the sin that he has sinned, a female lamb of the flock, or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; **and the priest will atone for him (that he may be absolved) from his sin.** |
| 7. But if he cannot afford a sheep, he shall bring as his guilt offering for that [sin] that he had committed, two turtle doves or two young doves before the Lord, one for a sin offering, and one for a burnt offering. | 7. But if his hand find not sufficiency to bring a lamb, let him bring, as an offering for the trespass that he has committed, two large turtle doves or two young pigeons before the LORD; one for a sin offering, and one for a burnt sacrifice. |
| 8. He shall bring them to the kohen, who shall first offer up that [bird] which is [designated] for the sin offering. He shall cut its head [by piercing with his nail] opposite the back of its head, but shall not separate [it]. | 8. And he will bring them to the priest, who will offer that which he may choose for the sin offering first: and he will wring its head near to the spine, but not separate its head from the neck; |
| 9. He shall sprinkle from the blood of the sin offering on the wall of the altar, and the remainder of the blood shall be pressed out onto the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. | 9. and he will sprinkle some of the blood upon the side of the altar, and pour out the remainder of the blood at the foot of the altar: it is a sin offering. |
| 10. And he shall offer up the second one as a burnt offering, according to the law. **Thus, the kohen shall make atonement for him, from his sin which he had committed, and he shall be forgiven.** | 10. And of the second bird he will make a burnt sacrifice, according to the rite with the bird which he had chosen for the sin offering, and not according to the rite for the bullock, or the lamb, or the young goat. **And the priest will expiate him from the sin that he has sinned, and it will be forgiven him.** |
| 11. **But if he cannot afford two turtle doves or two young doves, then he shall bring as his sacrifice for his sin one tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He shall not put oil over it, nor shall he place frankincense upon it, for it is a sin offering.** | 11. **But if his hand find not sufficiency to bring two large turtle doves or two young pigeons, let him bring as an oblation for sin a tenth part of three sein of flour for a sin offering; but let him not put oil thereon nor frankincense, for it is a sin offering.** |
| 12. He shall bring it to the kohen, and the kohen shall scoop out a fistful as its reminder, and cause it to [go up in] smoke on the altar, upon the fires of the Lord. It is a sin offering. | 12. And he will bring it to the priest, and the priest will take a handful for a commendable memorial thereof, and burn it at the altar with the oblations of the LORD: it is a sin offering. |
| 13. **Thus the kohen shall make atonement for his sin that he committed in any one of these [cases], and he shall be forgiven. And it shall belong to the kohen like the meal offering.** | 13. **And the priest will atone for his sin that he has sinned, and it will be forgiven him. And the remainder will be a mincha to the priest.** |
| 14. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, | 14. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 15. If a person commits a betrayal and trespasses unintentionally against [one] of the things sacred to the Lord, he shall bring as his guilt offering to the Lord an unblemished ram from the flock with a value of silver shekels, in accordance with the shekel of the Sanctuary for a guilt offering. | 15. When a man falsifies with falsity and sins, though with inadvertence, in making misuse of the holy things of the LORD, he will bring the oblation for his trespass to the presence of the LORD, an unblemished ram from the flock, with an estimation in silver according to the value of the holy thing which has been misappropriated, in shekels, after the shekels of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering. |
| 16. And what he has trespassed against the holy thing he shall pay, and he shall add one fifth of its value to it, and he shall give it to the kohen. **The kohen shall then make atonement for him through the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.** | 16. And the misuse of the holy thing by which he sinned, (the perversion of what was) sanctified, he will make good, and will add the fifth of its value unto it, and bring it **to the priest who will atone for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it will be forgiven him.** |
| 17. If a person sins and commits one of the commandments of the Lord which may not be committed, but he does not know, he is guilty, and he shall bear his transgression. | 17. If a man sin, and do against any one of all the commandments of the LORD that which is not right to do, though he knew it not, he has sinned, and will bear his guilt; |
| 18. He sahall bring an unblemished ram from the flock, with the value for a guilt offering, to the kohen. **The kohen shall then make atonement for his unintentional sin which he committed and did not know, and he shall be forgiven.** | 18. but (when he has discovered it), let him bring a ram unblemished from the flock according to his estimation for a trespass offering unto the priest; **and the priest will atone for him for the ignorance with which he erred ignorantly and sinned, and it will be forgiven him.** |
| 19. It is a guilt offering he has incurred guilt before the Lord. | 19. It is an oblation for trespass. Whosoever has become guilty, a trespass oblation let him bring, an oblation for trespass unto the Name of the LORD, for the sin that he has sinned. |
| 20. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, | 20. And the LORD spoke with Mosheh, saying: |
| 21. If a person sins, betraying the Lord by falsely denying to his fellow concerning a deposit, or money given in hand, or an object taken by robbery, or he withheld funds from his fellow, | 21. When a man sins and falsifies with falsehoods unto the Name of the Word of the LORD, or denies to his neighbor the deposit which has been deposited with him, whether in partnership of hands, or by rapine, or reckless dealing with his neighbor; |
| 22. or he found a lost article and he denied it and swore falsely regarding any one of all these cases whereby a man may sin, | 22. or if he finds a thing that has been lost and denies it, and swears falsely about any one of all these by which a man in doing them will become guilty, |
| 23. and it shall be, when he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall return the article which he had robbed, or the funds which he had withheld, or the item which had been deposited with him, or the article which he had found; | 23. he who will thus transgress, and sin, and swear, will restore what he has robbed with robbery or injured by injury, or the deposit that was deposited with him, or the lost thing which he had found, |
| 24. or anything else, regarding which he had sworn falsely, he shall pay it with its principal, adding its fifths to it. He shall give it to its rightful owner on the day [he repents for] his guilt. | 24. or whatsoever about which he had sworn with falsehood, he will make good in the capital, and will add a fifth of its value thereto, and deliver it to its owner on the day that he makes penance for his sin. |
| 25. He shall then bring his guilt offering to the Lord: an unblemished ram from the flock with the [same] value, for a guilt offering, to the kohen. | 25. And he will bring an oblation for his trespass to the presence of the LORD; a male unblemished from the flock, according to its estimation for the trespass, (will he bring) unto the priest. |
| 26. And the kohen shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven for any one of all [cases] whereby one may commit [a sin], incurring guilt through it. | 26. And the priest will atone for him before the LORD, and it will be forgiven him concerning any one of all these which he may have done and become guilty. |

**Welcome to the World of Pshat Exegesis**

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

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

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

**1. Ḳal wa-ḥomer**: Identical with the first rule of Hillel.

**2. Gezerah shawah**: Identical with the second rule of Hillel.

**3. Binyan ab**: Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel.

**4. Kelal u-Peraṭ**: The general and the particular.

**5. u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The particular and the general.

**6. Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal**: The general, the particular, and the general.

7. The general which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general.

8. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular.

9. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application.

10. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application.

11. The particular implied in the general and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it.

12. Deduction from the context.

13. When two Biblical passages contradict each other the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage.

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

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Vayikra (Leviticus) 5:1-26**

**1 he accepts an oath** regarding some matter he had witnessed. I.e., they adjured him by oath, to the effect that if he knew anything regarding the matter, that he would testify for him.

**2** **Or if a person touches [anything unclean]** And after [consequently acquiring] this uncleanness, he eats holy things [namely sacrifices], or he enters the Sanctuary, [each of which] constitutes a sin which, if committed willfully, incurs the penalty of excision. Thus it is explained in Tractate *Shevuoth* (7a).

**is hidden from him** i.e., the uncleanness was hidden from him [meaning that he knew that he was eating holy things or entering the Sanctuary; however, he did not know that he was in a state of uncleanness at the time].-[*Shev..* 14b; *Torath Kohanim* 5:303]

**he incurs guilt** By eating the sacred food or by entering the Sanctuary.

**3** **the uncleanness of a human** This refers to the uncleanness of a [human] corpse.-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:304]

**with any uncleanness** This [phrase] comes to include [in this law,] the case of uncleanness acquired by touching a זָב or a זָבָה [a man or woman who has experienced a discharge (see Lev. chapter 15)].-[Torath Kohanim 5:305]

**[through which] he may become defiled** [This phrase comes] to include someone who touches a man who has cohabited with a נִדָָּה [a woman who is unclean because of a menstrual flow.]. -[*Torath Kohanim* 5:305]

**through which** [This phrase comes] to include one who swallows the carrion of a kosher bird.-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:306]

**and it is hidden** i.e., [he knew] that he had forgotten the uncleanness.

**He has incurred guilt** By eating the sacred food or by entering the Sanctuary.

**4** **with [his] lips** But not in his heart [i.e., if he merely thought about it, he is not liable to bring a sacrifice].-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:311]

**to do harm** to himself, or

**or to do good** to himself. [That is to say, he swore:] “I will eat,” or “I will not eat,” or “I will sleep,” or “I will not sleep”.-[see *Shev.* 27a]

**whatever [a man] may express [in an oath]** This [phrase] comes to include [an oath] regarding the past [i.e., if he swore, “I ate,” “I did not eat,” etc.].-[*Shev.* 26a]

**and it is hidden from him** And [consequently,] he transgressed his oath (Shev. 26a). In all these cases [a person must bring an] עוֹלֶה יוֹרֵד offering—sliding-scale offering, as explained here [in this passage. The person brings a lamb or a goat, or two turtle- doves or young doves, or a meal-offering, depending on what he can afford]. However, [for lying in] an oath involving the denial of a monetary claim, he is not [liable to] this type of offering, but rather, a guilt-offering.-[see below, verses 24-25]

**8 who shall first offer…the sin-offering** A sin-offering must precede a burnt- offering.-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:329] To what may this be compared? To an intercessor, who enters [the palace] to appease [the king]. Once he has appeased [him], the gift enters after him [i.e., first the sin-offering comes to appease, then the burnt-offering comes as a gift].-[*Zev.* 7b]

**but shall not separate [it]** He cuts only one organ [either the esophagus or the trachea].-[*Chul.* 21a]

**the back of its head** Heb. עֹרֶף It is the high part of the head which slopes down towards the neck [i.e., the back surface of the head, at the level of the face.-(see Siftei Chachamim on Lev. 1:15)]. Thus, the expression, עֹרֶף, “[that which is situated] opposite the עֹרֶף, has the meaning: ”that which sees the עֹרֶף ” [Now since the עֹרֶף has been defined as the back surface of the head then “that which sees the עֹרֶף ” refers to] the entire length of the back of the neck [the area which “sees the עֹרֶף,” i.e., which is directly adjacent to it].-[Torath Kohanim 5:332].

**9** **He shall sprinkle from the blood of the sin-offering** In the case of a burnt- offering, Scripture requires only מִצּוּי, pressing out the blood (see Lev. 1:15), but for a sin-offering, both הַזָאָה, sprinkling of the blood, and מִצּוּי, pressing out the blood, are required. He grasps the עֹרֶף [or, as in some early editions and manuscripts: He grasps the bird. See Yosef Hallel] and sprinkles [the blood], and so, the blood spurts out onto the altar.-[Zev. 64b]

**This is a sin-offering** [If the bird was sacrificed] for the specific purpose [of a sin-offering], the offering is valid; however, if it was not [sacrificed] for the specific purpose [of a sin- offering], it is not valid.-[Torath Kohanim 5:335].

**10** **according to the law** i.e., according to the ritual prescribed at the beginning of this *parashah* (Lev. 1:14-17), regarding the burnt-offering of a bird which is brought voluntarily.

**11 for it is a sin-offering -** **[and since a sinner is bringing it, albeit an unintentional sinner,] it is not proper that his offering should be embellished [by oil and frankincense].-[Men. 6a].**

**12** **It is a sin-offering** [This teaches us that] if the offering underwent קְמִיצָה, the scooping out procedure, and הַקְטָרָה the burning procedure, both for the specific purpose of a sin-offering, it is valid; if [these procedures were performed] not for the specific purpose of a sin-offering, however, the offering is invalid.-[Torath Kohanim 5:342]

**13 for his sin that he committed** Heb. עַל חַטָּאתוֹ. Here, Scripture changes the expression [previously used], for in the case of a rich man or a moderately poor man [who must bring a sin-offering] (see verses 6 and 10 above), it says, מֵחַטָּאתוֹ, “from his sin,” while here, in the case of a very poor man [who can afford only a meal-offering], it says, עַל חַטָּאתוֹ [literally, “upon his sin”]. Our Rabbis (Ker. 27b) derived from here that, if a person sinned while he was rich and set aside money for a sheep or goat [as his sin-offering], and subsequently, became poor [before he purchased his sacrifice], he is to bring from part of it, two turtle-doves [or young doves, for the verse alluded to this by “from his sin-offering,” from the money designated for it. Similarly,] if a person set aside money for two turtle- doves [or two young doves, as his sin-offering and before the purchase,] he became poorer, he is to bring from part of it a tenth of an ephah [of flour as his sin-offering]. [And in the same vein,] if a [very poor] person designated money for a tenth of an ephah [of flour as his sin-offering] and became rich [before purchasing the flour], he must add to it and bring the offering of a rich man. For this reason it says here, עַל חַטָּאתוֹ [as if to say, “in addition to his sin-offering”].

**in any one of these [cases]** [literally, “from one from these,” thus meaning:] From one of these three [forms of] atonement described in the passage, namely, that of the rich, that of the poor, or that of the very poor. Now what is Scripture teaching us? [Since the Torah gives the three options for offerings, animals, birds, and flour, without specifying who may bring which option,] one might think that severe transgressions [namely contaminating the sanctuary and its holy things, for which the punishment is excision,] must [be atoned for by bringing the “largest” category of sacrifices, namely] sheep or goats, moderate transgressions [namely the oath of the witnesses, not punishable by excision, but which the Torah likens unintentional sins to intentional sins] must be atoned by a “moderate” offering, namely] birds, and the lightest of transgressions [namely the oath of pronouncement, which has neither stringency, must be atoned for by the lightest offerings, namely,] one- tenth of an ephah [of flour]. Thus, Scripture comes to teach us [otherwise, by saying], מֵאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה literally, “from one from these,” to liken light sins to grave sins regarding a sheep or a goat if he can afford it, and [likewise, to liken] grave sins to light sins regarding the one-tenth of an ephah [of flour], if [the sinner is] very poor.-[Torath Kohanim 5:343] [Although the Torah states in verse 7, “But if he cannot afford a sheep …,” and in verse 11, “But if he cannot afford two turtle-doves or two young doves …,” the text וְאִם לֹא תַגִּיעַ יָדוֹ דֵּי שֶׂה could be interpreted: “If his hand did not reach the treachery to necessitate the bringing of a sheep,” and תֹרִים וְאִם לֹא תַשִּׂיג יָדוֹ לִשְׁתֵּי “If his hand did not reach the treachery to necessitate the bringing of two turtle-doves or two young doves”(Mizrachi, Siftei Chachamim).]

**and it shall belong to the** *kohen* like the meal-offering Heb. וְהָיְתָה לַכֹּהֵן כַּמִּנְחָה. [This comes] to teach [us] that the remaining portion of the meal-offering of a sinner is to be eaten [by the *kohen*]: this is according to its plain meaning. Our Rabbis, (*Torath Kohanim* 5:344; *Men*. 73b), however, explained [the passage to mean]: “And if it is for a kohen, it shall be like the meal-offering.” [That is to say: If this sinner is an ordinary Israelite, the remaining portion of the meal- offering is eaten by the *kohen*, as explained. However,] if this sinner is a *kohen*, the offering must be for him like any other meal-offering brought voluntarily by a *kohen*, which is included in “[Every meal-offering of a kohen shall be] completely [burnt]: it shall not be eaten” (Lev. 6:16).

**15 If [a person] commits a betrayal** Heb. כִּי תִמְעַל מַעַל. [The term] מְעִילָהeverywhere [in Scripture], denotes nothing but a change [of status or position. Hence, here, the person changed the particular article’s status from sacred to mundane, through his misappropriation]. So it says: “And they betrayed (וַיִּמְעַלוּ)the God of their fathers, and they strayed after the gods of the peoples of the land” (I Chron. 5:25). Similarly, Scripture states regarding the סוֹטָה [a woman suspected of adultery] “and she commits a betrayal against him (וּמָעֲלָה בוֹ מָעַל).” (Num. 5:12). -[Torath Kohanim] [In both instances, betrayal represents a change of allegiance.]

**and trespasses unintentionally against [one] of the things sacred to the Lord** meaning that he used sacred articles for his own benefit. Now, where [in Scripture] was one warned [against misappropriating sacred articles]? The word חטא is stated here in our verse, and later on (Lev. 22:9), regarding terumah [the kohen 's due from produce], [the word] חטא is stated: “that they do not bear a sin (חֵטְא) because of it”; thus, just as there [in the case of terumah], Scripture warns, so too, here, Scripture warns. But [if we are using the word חטא to link these two passages, the following could be suggested]: Just as there [in the case of terumah], He warned only one who eats [it], so too, here, Scripture is warning only one who eats [sacred food, but not for merely having benefit from a sacred article]. Therefore, Scripture says: תִמְעֹל מַעַל, the additional [word coming to include the general case of one deriving benefit from sacred articles].-[See Torath Kohanim 11:347, Me’ilah 18b, Rashi on San. 84a, Makkoth 13a]

**of the things sacred to the Lord** Things specifically designated for the Name [of God]. Thus, קֳדָשִׁים קַלִּים [sacrifices with a lesser degree of holiness] are excluded. [Also, portions of sacrifices which may be eaten by the kohen, and are therefore not considered exclusively “designated to God,” are excluded].-[Torath Kohanim 5:349]

**ram** Heb. אַיִל, a term denoting strength, like “and the mighty (אֵילֵי) of the land, he took away” (Ezek. 17:13). Here, too, it means “strong,” [namely a ram] in its second year.-[Torath Kohanim 5:350]

**with a value of silver shekels** namely, it must be worth two selaim.-[see Ker. 10b] [Sela in the Mishnah is the shekel of the Torah, and the minimum of שְׁקָלִים is two.]

**16 And what he has trespassed against the holy thing he shall pay** the principal and an [additional] fifth to the Holy Temple [treasury].

**17 but he does not know, he is guilty and…He shall bring** This section deals with one who has a doubt regarding a prohibition punishable by excision, whereby he does not know whether he has transgressed it [the prohibition] or not. For instance, [a piece of] prohibited animal fat (חֵלֶב) and [a piece of] permissible animal fat (שׁוּמָן) are placed before someone, and, thinking that both were permissible [fats], he ate one. Then, people told him, “One of those pieces was חֵלֶב, prohibited fat!” Now, the person did not know whether he had eaten the one piece that was חֵלֶב In this case, he must bring a sacrifice called an אָשָׁם תָלוּי [literally, a “pending guilt-offering” (Ker. 17b), which protects him [against punishment] so long as he does not know that he had indeed sinned. However, if afterwards, he did find out [that he had indeed sinned], then he must bring a sin- offering.-[Ker. 26b, Torath Kohanim 5:367]

**but he does not know, he is guilty, and he shall bear his transgression** Rabbi Yose the Galilean says: “Here, Scripture punishes someone who did not [even] know [whether he had sinned or not]; how much more so will Scripture punish someone who does indeed know [that he has sinned]!” Rabbi Yose says: “If you wish to know the reward of the righteous, go forth and learn it from Adam, the first man. He was given only [one] negative commandment, and he transgressed it. Look how many deaths were decreed upon him and his descendants! [Before his sin, Adam was to have lived forever. Since he sinned, however, he and all mankind were punished with death.] Now, which measure is greater-the [bestowing of] goodness, or [the meting out of] punishment? One must say that the measure of goodness [is greater. See Rashi on Makk. 5b, Rivan on Makk. 23a]. So [if, through] the measure of punishment, which is less [than that of goodness] look how many deaths were decreed upon himself and his descendants, [through] the measure of goodness, which is greater, if someone [who does the opposite of Adam, i.e.,] refrains from eating [forbidden foods, like, for instance] פִּגּוּל [a sacrifice rendered invalid by improper intentions at the time of the performance of the ritual] or נוֹתָר [a portion of a sacrifice left over after its prescribed time], or if he fasts on Yom Kippur, then how much more so will he earn merit for himself, for his descendants, and for his descendants’ descendants, until the very end of all generations?!” Rabbi Akiva says: “Scripture states (Deut. 17:6 and 19:15), ‘By the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses…’ Now, if the testimony can be established through two witnesses, why does Scripture specify: ‘Or three witnesses’? But to include the third one, to be stringent with him, [as if he had accomplished something with his testimony] and to make his sentence just like these [two witnesses] with regard to punishment for plotting [if the witnesses are discovered to have plotted against the defendant] (Deut. 19:16-21). [This translation follows the Reggio edition of Rashi, which reads עֹנֶשׁ זְמָמָה All other editions read עֹנֶשׁ וַהֲזָמָה, punishment and refutation, which contemporary scholars have difficulty in clarifying. See Chavel, Leket Bahir, Yosef Hallel.] Now, if Scripture punishes someone who is an accessory to those who commit a sin, just like those who commit the sin, how much more so does Scripture bestow ample reward upon someone who is an accessory to those who fulfill a commandment, like those who fulfill a commandment!” Rabbi Eleazar Ben Azariah says: “‘When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field…,” Scripture continues, ‘so that [the Lord your God] will bless you…’ (Deut. 24:19). Here, Scripture has affixed a blessing for someone to whom a meritorious deed came without his knowing it. We must conclude from this, that if one had a sela [a coin] bound in the borders of his garment, and it falls out, and a poor man finds this coin and buys provisions with it, the Holy One, Blessed is He, affixes a blessing to him.”-[Torath Kohanim 5:363].

**18 with the value for a guilt-offering** Heb. בְּעֶרְכְּךָ, i.e., with the value stated above (see Rashi, verse 15) [namely, two selaim of silver].-[Torath Kohanim 5: 364]

**for his unintentional sin which he committed and did not know** But if, afterwards, he did come to know [of his sin], he no longer has atonement with this guilt-offering, [and his sin remains unatoned] until he brings a sin- offering. To what can this be compared? To the עֶגְלָה עֲרוּפָה [a calf whose neck is broken as an atonement for a city, outside whose precincts a human corpse is found, and the murderer is unknown]; if the neck [of this עֶגְלָה עֲרוּפָה has already been broken, and subsequently, the murderer is found, the latter must be put to death [even though, like in the case of our verse, a sacrifice has already been offered].-[Torath Kohanim 5:367].

**19** **It is a guilt-offering he has incurred guilt** Heb. אָשָׁם הוּא אָשֹׁם אָשַׁם. [In this verse, the root אשׁם, “guilt,” appears three times.] The first is vocalized completely with kematzim [i.e., a kamatz under the first syllable and a kamatz under the second,] because it is a noun [meaning, “a guilt-offering”]. The last אָשַׁם is vocalized half with a kamatz and half with a patach [i.e., a kamatz under the first syllable and a patach under the second] because it is a verb form [meaning, “he has incurred guilt”]. If you ask that this whole verse is superfluous, [I will tell you that] it has already been expounded on in Torath Kohanim (5:368), [as follows]: The double expression אָשֹׁם אָשַׁם comes to include the case of שִׁפְחָה חֲרוּפָה אֲשַׁם [the guilt-offering to atone for one who violates a betrothed handmaid (see Lev. 19:20)], that it also consist of a ram (in the second year) [worth two selaim of silver] [This is the correct version because a ram is always a sheep in the second year (Sefer HaZikaron). One might think that I am to include [in this law of two selaim] the guilt-offering of a Nazarite and of a person stricken with tzaraat. Scripture, therefore, says הוּא [meaning: It is a guilt- offering worth two selaim, but not others which are not rams but lambs].-[Torath Kohanim 5:369]

**21 If a person sins, [betraying the Lord]** [In verse 15 above, the verse is referring to misappropriating sacred articles. Thus, the sin is against God. However, here in our verse, Scripture says “betraying the Lord,” and then continues to discuss an item left by one’s fellow as a deposit. So what is the relevance of the verse saying, “betraying the Lord”?] Rabbi Akiva said: What is Scripture teaching us, when it says, “betraying the Lord”? Since every lender and borrower, buyer and seller, perform their transactions with witnesses and by documentation, therefore, if one denies a monetary claim, he would find himself contradicting witnesses and a document. However, when someone deposits an article with his fellow, he does not want anyone to know about it, except the Third Party between them [namely, God]. Therefore, when he denies, he is denying against the Third Party between them.-[Torath Kohanim 5:372]

**money given in hand** that he placed money into his hand, to do business with it or [as] a loan.-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:373]

**or an article taken by robbery** that he robbed him of something.

**he withheld funds** [this refers to withholding the wages of] a hired worker. -[*Torath Kohanim* :373].

**22** **and he denied it** [meaning] that He denies [a claim] regarding any one of all these cases whereby a man may sin and swear falsely in denial of a monetary claim.

**23 when he has sinned and is guilty** When he himself recognizes that he must repent, knowing and acknowledging that he has sinned, and is guilty. [Some editions: and he intends to confess that he has sinned.]

**24 the principal** Heb. בְּרֹאשׁוֹ This is the principal, which is the “main” (רֹאשׁ) money [from which profit is generated].-[B.K. 110a]

**and its fifths** Heb. וַחֲמִשִׁתָיו, [in the plural form.] The Torah includes many fifths of one principal sum. [What case is referred to here?] If a person [had paid back a principal to its rightful owner, but] denies that he owes the extra fifth [claiming, for example, that he had already paid this fifth] and swears later confesses [that he still owes this extra fifth-part], then [in addition to having to pay this fifth of the original principal sum,] he must also pay a fifth of this fifth- [since the fifth of the original principal reverts to becoming a small “principal” in its own right]. And so he continues to add [if he continues to deny, swear falsely and then admit], until the most recent fifth-part is worth less than one *perutah*.-[*Torath Kohanim* 5:387]

**to its rightful owner** [lit., to whom it belongs, meaning:] The person to whom the money [rightfully] belongs.

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 74:1-23**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A maskil of Asaph. Why, O God, have You forsaken forever? [Why] is Your wrath kindled against the flock of Your pasture? | 1. A good lesson, composed by Asaph. Why, O God, have you moved far off forever? Why will Your anger be fierce against the flock of Your pasture? |
| 2. Remember Your congregation, which You acquired from time immemorial; You redeemed the tribe of Your heritage, Mount Zion on which You dwelt. | 2. Remember Your congregation that You acquired of old; You redeemed from Egypt the tribes of Your inheritance, this same Mount Zion on which You made your presence to abide. |
| 3. Raise Your blows to inflict eternal ruin, for all the evil that the enemy did in the Sanctuary. | 3. Lift up Your footsteps to dissolve the nations forever, for the enemy with all his strength has done harm in the holy place. |
| 4. Your adversaries roared in the midst of Your meeting place; they made their signs for signs. | 4. Your oppressors cry out in the midst of Your assemblies; they have set up their standards as signs. |
| 5. May he be known as though bringing [their blows] on high; the hatchets were in the thicket of the trees. | 5. He will strike with a hammer like a man who lifts up his hand against a wood thicket to cut it with axes. |
| 6. And now, its entrances together, with hatchets and hammers they strike. | 6. But now they pull down its carvings together; they pound with the hatchet and the two-edged chisel as if with mallets. |
| 7. They set Your Sanctuary afire; to the ground they profaned the dwelling place of Your name. | 7. They have burned the sanctuary to the ground with fire; they have defiled the tabernacle in which Your name is uttered. |
| 8. They said in their heart, their rulers together; they burned all the meeting places of God in the land. | 8. Their children spoke in their hearts together; their fathers burned all the assemblies of God in the land. |
| 9. We have not seen our signs; there is no longer a prophet, and no one with us knows how long. | 9. We have not seen our signs that the prophets gave us; there are no longer any prophets and we have none with us who knows how long. |
| 10. How long, O God, will the adversary blaspheme? Will the enemy disgrace Your name forever? | 10. How long, O God, will the oppressor show disdain? Will the enemy reject your name forever? |
| 11. Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? Draw it out from within Your bosom. | 11. Why will You withdraw your hand, even Your right hand, from redeeming? Take it out of Your bosom and do away with oppression. |
| 12. But God is my King from time immemorial, Who works salvations in the midst of the earth. | 12. But God is the king, whose holy presence is from of old, one who carries out redemption in the midst of the land. |
| 13. You crumbled the sea with Your might; You shattered the heads of the sea monsters on the water. | 13. You cut off the waters of the sea by Your power; you broke the heads of the sea serpents, and drowned the Egyptians at the sea. |
| 14. You crushed the heads of Leviathan; You give it as food to the people in companies. | 14. You shattered the heads of Pharaoh's warriors; You handed them over for destruction to the people of the house of Israel, and their corpses to jackals. |
| 15. You split fountain and stream; You dried up mighty rivers. | 15. You split the spring from the rock and it became a stream; You dried up the ford of the streams of the Arnon and the ford of the Jabbok and the Jordan, which were so powerful. |
| 16. **Day is Yours, even night is Yours; You established the luminary and the sun.** | 16. **Yours is the day-time, Yours, too, is the night; You have made firm the moon and sun.** |
| 17. You set all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter-You formed them. | 17. You set up all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter, You created them. |
| 18. Remember how the enemy reviled the Lord and a villainous people blasphemed Your name. | 18. Remember this, the enemy, slanderer of the LORD, and the foolish people who have rejected Your name. |
| 19. **Do not deliver to the company the soul of Your turtledove; the soul of Your poor ones do not ever forget.** | 19. **Do not deliver the souls of those who [who do not] teach Your Torah to the Gentiles, who are likened to beasts of the field; do not forget the lives of Your poor forever.** |
| 20. Look to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are filled with dwellings of violence. | 20. Look at the covenant that You made with our fathers, for their children are finished off; darkness is spread over the land, and fraud, and violence. |
| 21. Let not the poor turn back in disgrace; the poor and needy will praise Your name. | 21. The pauper will not return ashamed; the poor and lowly will praise Your name. |
| 22. Arise, O God, plead Your own cause; **remember Your disgrace from a villainous man all the days.** | 22. Arise, O God; argue Your case; **call to mind the disgrace of Your people because of foolish counsel all the day.** |
| 23. Do not forget the voice of Your adversaries, the tumult of those who rise up against You, which constantly ascends. | 23. Do not forget the voice of Your oppressors, the turmoil, always mounting, of those who stand against You. |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Tehillim (Psalms) 74:1-23**

**1 is Your wrath kindled** lit. do Your nostrils smoke. Whenever one is angry, the nostrils emit smoke.

**2 which You acquired from time immemorial** Before the creation of the world, as it is said (below 90:1,2): “You were a dwelling place for us, etc., before mountains were formed.”

**on which You dwelt** Heb. זה שכנתבו, this upon which You dwelt. This is an improvement of the language, as (Isa. 42: 24): “against whom (זו) we sinned.” It is like אשר שכנתבו, on which You dwelt.

**3 Raise Your blows to inflict eternal ruin** Raise Your blows and Your terrors that Your enemies will experience as eternal ruin for every evil thing that the enemy did in the Temple. In this manner, Menachem (p. 144) associates it with (Gen. 41:8): “that his spirit was troubled (ותפעם).”

**to...ruin** Heb. למשאות, an expression of destruction, as (Isa. 24:12): “through desolation (שאיה) ”; (Isa. 6:

11), “and the ground lies waste (למשאות) and desolate.”

**4 Your meeting place** That is the Temple about which it is said (Exod. 25:22): וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְ שָׁם, “There I

will meet with you at appointed times.”

**they made their signs for signs** When they became powerful enough to destroy it, then they themselves accepted that the signs of their divination were true signs. Now what were their divinations? “He shook the arrows, he consulted the trafim.”

**5 May he be known as though bringing on high; the hatchets were in the thicket of the trees** The enemy knows that when he strikes the gates of the entrances of the Sanctuary, it was as though he was bringing his blows on high, even into the sky. Now how did he know it? For he would see that the trees would entangle, grasp, and swallow up the hatchets, as our Rabbis said (Sanh. 96b): One gate of Jerusalem swallowed them all up.

**the hatchets were in the thicket of the trees** An expression of (Gen. 22:13): “caught in the thicket.” The tree entangles them, and they become entangled in it.

**6 And now** although he saw that this troubled the Holy One, blessed be He, he did not refrain from striking all its entrances and all its gates together.

**with hatchets and hammers** They are tools of destruction used by carpenters (Jer. 46:22): “and will come against her with axes (ובקרדמות).” Jonathan renders: בּכשיליא. כֵּילַפּוֹת is Arabic. This is how Dunash (p. 34) explained it, and it is one of the carpenters’ tools.

**they strike** The enemies [strike].

**8** **They said in their heart, their rulers together** Heb. נינם, their rulers, and similarly (above 72:17): “his name will be magnified (ינון) ; (Prov. 29:21), “he will ultimately be a ruler (מנון).” All their rulers devise one plot, the first as the last: namely, to get at the protector of Israel first and afterwards they would get at them [Israel], You should know this by the fact that they burned all the meeting places of God in the land, all His meeting houses. The Philistines destroyed Shiloh; Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the First Temple; Titus destroyed the Second Temple.

**9 our signs** which You promised us through Your prophets we have not seen them in the many days that we have been in exile. Asaph prophesied concerning the days of the (last) exile.

**how long** How long we will be in this trouble.

**11 Draw it out from within Your bosom** Cast it and draw it out from within Your bosom and wage battle with Your enemies. An expression of driving out, as (Exod. 11:1): “he will drive you out completely.”

**12 But God is my King from time immemorial** Behold, You were our salvation from time immemorial.

**13 the beads of the sea monsters** They are the Egyptians, who are called sea monsters, as it is said (Ezek. 29:3): “the great sea monster, etc.”

**14 the heads of Leviathan** Pharaoh is called [by] this [name], as it is said (Isa. 27:1): “the Lord will visit with His hard...sword on leviathan, etc.”

**You give it as food to the people in companies** You gave his money to the people of Israel to consume.

**in companies** Heb. לציים. To the companies and hosts that You took out. ציים  are companies, as (Num.24:24): “And companies from the Kittites,” which is translated as וסיען and companies.

**15** **You split** for Israel fountains from the rock.

**You dried up** the Jordan, which is a mighty river.

**16 Day is Yours** The redemption of Israel.

**even night is Yours** And they were with You in the darkness of the night.

**You established the luminary and the sun** You established the light of the Torah for them.

**17 You set** for them all the boundaries of their land with all good.

**summer and winter You formed them** This is similar to (Jer. 5:24): “the weeks of the laws of harvest He keeps for us.” You did not alter for us the order of the years.

**18 Remember how the enemy, etc.** And since all our salvation is through You, remember how the enemy reviled You by destroying us.

**19** **Do not deliver to the company** To the companies of the nations, as (II Sam. 23:11): “Now the Philistines were gathered together into a troop.”

**the soul of Your turtledove** Heb. Your turtledove. And Jonathan rendered this as (sic) an expression of turtledoves and young pigeons. This turtledove as soon as the male recognizes its mate, it does not mate with another. So have Israel not exchanged You for another god, although You have distanced Yourself from them and they were like a widow.

**the soul of Your poor ones** the soul of Your poor ones.

**20** **Look to the covenant** which You formed with our forefathers.

**with dwellings of violence**, a dwelling of violence, an expression of a dwelling place.

**21 Let not the poor turn back in disgrace** Let the poor not turn back from before You disgraced in his prayer.

**22** **Your disgrace** Your blasphemies, as (verse 18): “Remember how the enemy reviled.”

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Tehillim (Psalms) ‎‎74:1-23**

By: H.Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

The superscription of psalms chapter 74 ascribes authorship to Assaf and calls psalm 74 a *maskil*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The preceding psalm addressed the question of why the righteous suffer. Here, in Psalms chapter 74, the psalmist studies the most painful example of this apparent injustice, the pitiful plight of the Jew in exile.

**Pesiqta Rabbati[[2]](#footnote-2) 32:2** *states that four prophets protested against the strictness of God’s judgment and questioned its equity. One of the protestors was Assaf,[[3]](#footnote-3) who demanded, Why O God, have You abandoned us for eternity?*

The Holy One, Blessed be He, was quick to respond, ‘O, Assaf, am I truly guilty of abandoning the Jews? Actually, it is they who have forsaken Me, as Scripture states, Israel has abandoned that which is good.[[4]](#footnote-4) The prophet refers to Cod, for there is no good greater than He!

Israel counters that it is not only the Jews who are endangered by the exile, but even God’s own stature in the world is imperiled by the fact that He has not redeemed His Chosen People. Since the continuation of the exile encourages Israel’s enemies to blaspheme against God, He must combat this heresy vigorously. The psalm therefore concludes, Arise, O God, champion Your cause! Remember Your insults from the degenerate all day long. Forget not the voice of Your tormentors, the tumult of Your opponent's arising always.

Psalms chapter 74 concludes with the ominous words, *the tumult of Your opponent's rising always*.

Assaf speaks of signs (ot - את - sign[[5]](#footnote-5))

**Tehillim (Psalms) 74:**4 Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of Thy meeting-place; they have set up their own signs (אוֹתֹתָם) for signs (אֹתוֹת).

This interesting terminology suggests that the adversary’s signs are important, to the wicked, as replacements for HaShem’s signs, and the adversaries roar within the appointed place, the Temple. The adversaries use of signs to replace HaShem’s signs is striking! Consider the following:

(The following was a collaborative effort between Hakham Haggai and myself.)

**Tefillin[[6]](#footnote-6) are called the sign, or mark, of HaShem in:**

**Debarim (Deuteronomy) 6:8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign (*לְאוֹת*) upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Each box contains four passages of the Torah which mention the mitzvah of Tefillin (Deuteronomy 6:4-8, Deuteronomy 11:13-21, Exodus 13:1-10, Exodus 13:11-16). | han3_copy |

The above pasuk[[7]](#footnote-7) is part of the Shema[[8]](#footnote-8) which we say twice a day. We are reminding ourselves of HaShem and His mitzvot which are our intimate connection with Him. Tefillin being a mark of HaShem is also mentioned in the Talmud:

***Shabbat 12a*** *The School of R. Ishmael taught: A man may go out with his tefillin on the eve of Sabbath near nightfall. What’s the reason? Because Rabbah son of R. Huna said: One must feel his tefillin every now and then, [inferring] a minori from [the High Priest’s] headplate. If in the case of the headplate, which contained the Divine Name only once, yet the Torah said, and it shall always be on his forehead, [i.e.,] his mind must not be diverted from it; then with the tefillin, which contain the Divine Name many times, how much more so! therefore he is fully cognizant thereof.*

The Midrash also speaks of this sign:

***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XIX:8*** *… Make thereof a sign upon thy hand and upon thy head, as it says: And it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, etc. (ib. 16). It can be compared to a king who made a great banquet for his daughter [on her release] after she had been imprisoned by enemies. Her father then said to her: ‘Make this day one of rejoicing, for I have provided a crown for thy head so that thou dost not forget it.’ G-d, likewise, performed miracles for Israel, slaying the firstborn of the Egyptians on their account: for this reason, did He exhort them concerning the sanctity of the firstborn, for He with His own hands had slain them, as it says: That the Lord slew all the firstborn (ib. 15), so that they might be a crown upon the heads of Israel, so that the miracle may never be forgotten by them.*



In our time, the practice is to wear tefillin during the entire weekday Shacharit[[9]](#footnote-9) service. Since the commandment of tefillin has its source in the verse “Bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes”,[[10]](#footnote-10) on Shabbats and festivals, tefillin are not put on. The reason for this is that the word “sign” (ot) is also mentioned in the commandment of the Shabbat, as it is written: “The Children of Israel shall keep the Shabbat, observing the Shabbat throughout the ages as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel”,[[11]](#footnote-11) and one sign (that of the tefillin) is not placed on another (that of the Shabbat); the festivals are comparable to the Shabbat. Tefillin are a time dependent command and are not incumbent on women.

Tefillin are a sign of the special bond of love between HaShem and man. We show how intimate this love is, when, as we bind them, we say:

*I will betroth You to me with right and justice, with love and mercy.*

*I will betroth You to me with faith … and you shall know HaShem.*

In Hoshea (Hosea) 2:21-22 it is said: ‘And I will betroth thee unto Me forever … and thou shalt know the Lord …’ The use of the word ‘know’ refers to knowledge[[12]](#footnote-12) in the deepest sense of the word. It is also used to describe sexual intercourse. Therefore, this verse further impresses upon the reader the bind between man and HaShem.

Faith and love are very tenuous things. We can speak of them and think about them. But unless we do something about them, we tend to forget; tefillin serve to help us remember. Of the six hundred-thirteen mitzvot, only three are referred to as an ‘ot’, a sign representing the eternal bond between HaShem and His people. Those mitzvot are:

1. Milah (circumcision),
2. Shabbat,[[13]](#footnote-13) and
3. Tefillin.

The Talmud brings some more light on the relationship between these three signs:

***Menachoth 36b*** *and could Rabbah b. R. Huna have said so? Did not Rabbah b. R. Huna say that if it was doubtful whether darkness had already fallen or not, one should not take them off nor put them on? Now it follows from this that if it were certain that darkness had fallen one would have to take them off! — This was stated with regard to the eve of Sabbath. But what can be his view? If he holds that the night is a time for tefillin, then the Sabbath is also a time for tefillin, and if, on the other hand, he holds that the night is not a time for tefillin, then the Sabbath, too, is not a time for tefillin, since the same passage which excludes the Sabbath [from the wearing of tefillin] also excludes the night. For it was taught: It is written, and thou shalt observe this ordinance in its season from day to day. ‘Day’, but not night; ‘from day’, but not all days; hence the Sabbaths and the Festivals are excluded. So, R. Jose the Galilean; but R. Akiba says, this ordinance refers only to the Passover-offering! — He derives it from the text from which R. Akiba derives it. For it was taught: One might have thought that a man should put on the tefillin on Sabbaths and on Festivals, Scripture therefore says, and it shall be for a sign upon thy hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes, that is, [only on those days] which stand in need of a sign [are tefillin to be worn], but Sabbaths and Festivals are excluded, since they themselves are a sign.*

The first use of the Hebrew word, ot - את - sign, is found in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:14*** *And G-d said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs לְאֹתֹת and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*

In the above passage, we can see that signs are related to time and for light. This is important information, as we shall see later!

The Nazarean Codicil also speaks of a mystical seal (mark):

***Revelation 9:4*** *And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of G-d in their foreheads.*

This points us to Revelation. 7:4ff where the 144,000s are sealed with “the seal of the living God”. In Revelation 14:1 we read that these 144,000s have “his [the Lamb’s] Father’s name written on their foreheads.” They are also described as “being first fruits unto God and to the Lamb”:

***Revelation 14:4*** *These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto G-d and to the Lamb.*

In Hebrew “first fruits” and “firstborn” are the spelled with the same characters but pronounced differently. Remember that Passover is to be a sign upon one’s hand and forehead[[14]](#footnote-14) and that at Passover, the blood of the Lamb redeems the firstborn and protects them from the plague of the firstborn. The seal of the living G-d in Revelation is clearly connected to the mitzvot of Passover, tefillin, and the whole Torah. This seems, in Revelation, to be contrasted with the “mark of the Beast”.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Hag Shavuot[[16]](#footnote-16) is also the day of our betrothal to HaShem. It is interesting that Hag Shavuot is also called Atzeret, completion. It is called Atzeret because it is the completion of Passover. Passover is connected to Hag Shavuot by the counting of the omer.[[17]](#footnote-17) Thus, the goal of Passover is the betrothal of HaShem to His people.

**Tefillin is a mitzva, which signifies betrothing the Word (Torah = Yeshua) unto one’s self!**

**This is how we connect and become a part of the body.**

The Talmud teaches us that HaShem also wears tefillin too:

***Berachoth 6a*** *R. Nahman b. Isaac said to R. Hiyya b. Abin: What is written in the tefillin of the Lord of the Universe? — He replied to him: And who is like Thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth. Does, then, the Holy One, blessed be He, sing the praises of Israel? — Yes, for it is written: Thou hast avouched the Lord this day . . . and the Lord hath avouched thee this day. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: You have made me a unique entity in the world, and I shall make you a unique entity in the world. ‘You have made me a unique entity in the world’, as it is said: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our G-d, the Lord is one. ‘And I shall make you a unique entity in the world’, as it is said: And who is like Thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth. R. Aha b. Raba said to R. Ashi: This accounts for one case, what about the other cases? — He replied to him: [They contain the following verses]: For what great nation is there, etc.; And what great nation is there, etc.; Happy art thou, O Israel, etc.; Or hath G-d assayed, etc.; and to make thee high above all nations. If so, there would be too many cases? — Hence [you must say]: For what great nation is there, and what great nation is there, which are similar, are in one case; Happy art thou, O Israel, and Who is like Thy people, in one case; Or hath G-d assayed, in one case; and to make thee high, in one case. And all these verses are written on [the tefillin of] His arm.*

And in the same manner in which our Tefillin must be perfectly black in color, so too HaShem’s Tefillin must be perfectly white.

***Succah 25a*** *Tefillin are called the glory of Israel.*

**The Mark of the Beast**

What do tefillin have to do with the mark of the beast? Perhaps nothing. However, it should be noted that the mark of the beast is a sign on the hand and forehead, and the Torah passages about the tefillin are the only other places in Scripture where anything else is ever spoken of as a sign or mark on both the hand and forehead. The only two things in the Torah that are described as a sign or mark on both the hand and forehead are the tefillin and the mark of the beast. At the very least, this should tell us that there is a very strong likelihood of some kind of connection between the tefillin and the mark of the beast. If we can understand the deeper meaning of the tefillin as the mark of HaShem, then we should be able to understand the mark of the beast as a counterfeit of whatever the tefillin represent. It is axiomatic that all truth can be falsified. The mark of HaShem is no exception. The antithesis of the mark of HaShem is the mark of the beast. Where do we find the term: “Mark of the beast”? (Keep in mind that the Book of Revelation is sod level literature where everything is a symbol and there is no literal meaning.)

***Revelation 16:1-2*** *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of G-d upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

And:

***Revelation 19:20*** *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

In the above passages the mark of the beast is viewed as something which was given earlier. This mark is first mentioned in:

***Revelation13:16*** *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

There is another connection that is worth noting:

***Daniel 7:23-25*** *Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

From this passage we learn that the beast desires to change the times of HaShem and His laws. This suggests that **the mark of the beast is intimately related to time and to the Torah**.

The mark of the beast is on their right hand or forehead. The placement of this mark suggests tefillin which are placed similarly (between the eyes and on the weaker hand):

***Shemot (Exodus) 13:15-16*** *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that HaShem slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore, I sacrifice to HaShem all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. 16 And it shall be for a sign upon thine hand, and for tefillin between thine eyes: for by strength of hand HaShem brought us forth out of Egypt.*

From the above passage we can see that Passover shall be for a sign upon thine hand, and for a tefillin between thine eyes....

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4-8*** *Hear, O Israel: HaShem our G-d, HaShem is one: 5 And thou shalt love HaShem thy G-d with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as tefillin between thine eyes.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 11:18*** *¶Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as tefillin between your eyes.*

Therefore, shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them [mitzvot] for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as tefillin between your eyes.

There are many varying opinions as to what constitutes the mark of the beast. Most limit the definition to the last days and promote it as being some sort of literal or visible mark, logo, stamp, implant, identity chip, or sign. Most also try to understand the meaning behind the number 666, which is mentioned in a single passage within the context of the discussion regarding the mark. Whatever this mark is, the righteous need to avoid it because of the terrible consequences allotted to those who have the mark:

**Revelation 14:9-11** *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of G-d, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

***Revelation 16:2*** *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

***Revelation 19:20*** *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

To properly identify the mark of the beast we need to clearly understand the mark of HaShem.

**Another Connection**

Throughout Yehezchel (Ezekiel) chapter eight we are told of various “abominations.” The first of these involves an “image of jealousy”:

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 8:5-6*** *Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So, I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. 6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? The great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, thou shalt see greater abominations.*

Scholars generally identify this as the idol of Astarte.[[18]](#footnote-18) Astarte is also known as Ishtar and Easter. The next “abomination” involves men worshiping in the dark.[[19]](#footnote-19) The next involved women “weeping for Tammuz”:[[20]](#footnote-20)

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 8:13-14*** *He said also unto me, turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. 14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of HaShem’s house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.*

Finally, we are shown men facing the east and worshiping the Sun in the east

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 8:15-17*** *Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. 16 And he brought me into the inner court of HaShem’s house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of HaShem, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of HaShem, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. 17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.*

These images all point to the observance of the Babylonian festival of Easter.[[21]](#footnote-21) This day is similarly observed in Christendom today. Roman Catholics commonly worship with images of Mary whom they call “The Mother of G-d” (a title of the g-ddess Easter). There is a period of mourning for the dead deity (lent[[22]](#footnote-22)), A time in which the altar candles are removed and the altar is dark, followed by rejoicing at his resurrection with a sunrise service. So, the “abominations” that those marked on their foreheads are mourning, must be the observance of Easter.

It is interesting to note the authority of the Catholic church is so great that when the Pope changed the day for the Sabbath, all of the Protestant churches followed this authority, as we can see from this except of the Catholic catechism:

Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her--she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.

Thus, we see that the church has changed the Sabbath and Passover. Additionally, the catholic Sabbath goes from midnight to midnight whereas HaShem’s Shabbat goes from sundown to sundown.

Easter, as the most important festival (no matter what they call it) to Catholics and Christians, suggests that Easter is a pars-pro-toto[[23]](#footnote-23) for all of the Christian festivals and indeed, even their whole calendar. All Biblical events are connected by the Biblical calendar. There is no such relationship with the Gregorian calendar. If this logic be correct, we could say that: The mark of the beast is the following of pagan festivals, a non-Torah calendar, and abandoning the Torah (laws) of HaShem. After all, these folks claim that they do not have to keep the law.

Finally, the physical mark that comes closest to tefillin in terms of a relationship to Easter is described by the Catholic Encyclopedia:

“The Wednesday after Quinquagesima[[24]](#footnote-24) Sunday, which is the first day of the Lenten fast. The name dies cinerum (day of ashes) which it bears in the Roman Missal is found in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary and probably dates from at least the eighth century. On this day all the faithful according to ancient custom are exhorted to approach the altar before the beginning of Mass, and there the priest, dipping his thumb into ashes previously blessed, marks the forehead, or in case of clerics upon the place of the tonsure,[[25]](#footnote-25) of each the sign of the cross, saying the words: “Remember man that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return.” The ashes used in this ceremony are made by burning the remains of the palms blessed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year. In the blessing of the ashes four prayers are used, all of them ancient. The ashes are sprinkled with holy water and fumigated with incense. The celebrant himself, be he bishop or cardinal, receives, either standing or seated, the ashes from some other priest, usually the highest in dignity of those present.”

So those with the mark of HaShem are observing Passover and those with the mark of the beast are observing Easter. There is a clear relationship revealed in this section as follows:

Mark of HaShem vs. Mark of the Beast

Tefillin vs. Lenten ash cross

Passover vs. Easter

HaShem’s Festivals vs. Man’s Festivals

HaShem’s Calendar vs. Man’s Calendar

Torah and mitzvot vs. Anti-Torah

**Another Perspective**

According to our Sages, at the battle of Gog and Magog every human in and around the Holy City will be given the mark of the Hebrew letter, tav - ת, upon their forehead. According to the Tanach, in Ezekiel 9, and the Talmud, in Shabbath 55a, the Mark of HaShem’s sign – the tav ת - will be placed upon everyone in and around Jerusalem. Those that receive the mark *in ink* will be the righteous and those that receive the mark *in blood* will be condemned.

You shall live vs. You shall die

18 = ו 6 (right) ו 6 (top) ו 6 (left)

The Gematria[[26]](#footnote-26) construction of the tav is a ו Vav = 6 on the right plus a ו Vav = 6 on the top plus a ו Vav = 6 on the left. The constructed Gematria is 18. The Gematria of 18 equals life! - 18 = י 10, ח 8 = Life

When we examine the Hebrew text of Ezekiel 9:4 we find that the English word “mark” is used to translate the two Hebrew characters תו, which spell out tav, which is how we pronounce the letter ת. This is the passage describing the mark of the wicked:

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 9:4*** *And HaShem said unto him, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a תו, (a mark – of blood) upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

The mark for the righteous is spelled out in:

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 9:6*** *Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the* תו*, (a mark- in ink); and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*

The Hebrew word is the same for the mark which is used for both the righteous and the wicked!

Then when we examine this subject in the Talmud we find clarification:

***Shabbat 55a*** *R. Zera said to R. Simeon, Let the Master rebuke the members of the Resh Galutha’s suite. They will not accept it from me, was his reply. Though they will not accept it returned he, yet you should rebuke them. For R. Aha b. R. Hanina said: Never did a favourable word go forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, of which He retracted for evil, save the following, where it is written, And the Lord said unto him, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark [ת tav] upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof, etc. (Ezek. IX, 4) The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Gabriel,*

Go and set a *ת* tav of ink upon the foreheads of the righteous, that the destroying angels may have no power over them; and a *ת* tav of blood upon the foreheads of the wicked, that the destroying angels may have power over them.

*Said the Attribute of Justice before the Holy One, blessed be He, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Wherein are these different from those?’ ‘Those are completely righteous men, while these are completely wicked,’ replied He. ‘Sovereign of the Universe!’ it continued, ‘they had the power to protest but did not.’ ‘It was fully known to them that had they protested they would not have heeded them.’ ‘Sovereign of the Universe!’ said he, ‘If it was revealed to Thee, was it revealed to them?’ Hence it is written, [Slay utterly] the old man, the young and the maiden, and little children and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my Sanctuary [mikdashi]. Then they began at the elders which were before the house. (Ezek. IX, 6) R. Joseph recited: Read not mikdashi but mekuddashay [my sanctified ones]: this refers to the people who fulfilled the Torah from alef to taw. And straightway, and behold, six men came from the way of the upper gate, which lieth toward the north, every man with his slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man in the midst of them clothed in linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side. And they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. Was then the brazen altar [still] in existence? — The Holy One, blessed be He, spake thus to them; Commence [destruction] from the place where song is uttered before Me. And who were the six men? — Said R. Hisda: Indignation [Kezef], Anger [Af], Wrath [Hemah], Destroyer [Mashhith] Breaker [Meshabber] and Annihilator [Mekaleh]. And why a ת tav? — Said Rab: , Tav [stands for] tihyeh [thou shalt live], ת tav [stands for] tamuth [thou shalt die]. Samuel said: The ת tav denotes, the merit of the Patriarchs is exhausted [tamah]. R. Johanan said: The merit of the Patriarchs will confer grace [tahon]. While Resh Lakish said: ת Tav is the end of the seal of the Holy One, blessed be He. For R. Hanina said: The seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is emeth [truth]. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: It denotes the people who fulfilled the Torah from א alef to ת tav.*

Jerome and many others have thought that the letter ת tav was that which was ordered to be placed on the foreheads of those mourners; and Jerome says, that this Hebrew letter ת tav was formerly written like a † cross. So, then the people were to be signed with the sign of the cross! This ancient Hebrew character also had a meaning: Mark, Sign, Signal, or Monument.

By now I suspect that our enigmatic verse in our psalm has taken an entirely new meaning:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 74:4*** *Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of Thy meeting-place; they have set up their own signs for signs.*

**Ashlamatah: Zechariah 5:3-11 + 6:14**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 8. ¶ And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: | 8. ¶ And there was a word of prophecy from the LORD with me, saying, |
| 9. Zerubbabel's hands founded this house, and his hands shall complete [it], and you shall know that the Lord of Hosts sent me to you. | 9. “The hands of Zerubbabel have begun to build this house and his hands will complete it, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to prophesy concerning you. |
| 10. For, whoever despised the day of small things shall rejoice and see the plummet in Zerubbabel's hand; these, **sevenfold**; the eyes of the Lord are roving to and fro throughout all the earth. | 10. For who is this who has despised this day on account of the building, because it is small? Will he not rejoice again when he sees the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel - **seven layers like these?** The works of people throughout the whole earth are revealed before the LORD.” |
| 11. And I raised my voice and said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right of the candelabrum and on its left?" | 11. And I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive-trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?” |
| 12. And I raised my voice a second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches beside the two golden vats that empty out the gold [en oil] from themselves?" | 12. And I answered a second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden bowls, which pour oil from them to the golden lamps?” |
| 13. And he spoke to me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." | 13. And he spoke to me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." |
| 14. And he said, "These are the two anointed ones who stand before the Lord of all the earth." | 14. And he said, "These are the two sons of the great ones, who stand before the lord of all the earth." |
|  |  |
| 1. And I returned, and I lifted my eyes and saw-and behold! -there was a flying scroll. | 1. And again I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll. |
| 2. And he said to me, "What do you see?" and I said, "I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide." | 2. And he said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its breadth ten cubits.” |
| 3. And he said to me; This is the curse that comes forth upon the face of the entire land; for, **whoever stole was cleared from such as this, and whoever swore was cleared from such as this.** | 3. And he said to me, "This is the curse which will go out upon the face of the whole land, **for everyone who steals and utters lies is punished by this, and everyone who swears falsely by My name is punished by this.** |
| 4. I have brought it forth, says the Lord of Hosts, **and it shall come into the house of the thief and into the house of him that swears in My Name falsely.** And it shall lodge in the midst of his house and destroy him, and his wood, and his stones. | 4. I have brought it forth,” says the LORD of hosts, **"and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by My name,** and it will remain in the midst of his house and will destroy it with its timber and its stones.” |
| 5. And the angel who was speaking to me came forth, and he said to me, "Now lift up your eyes and see what this is that is coming forth." | 5. And the angel who was speaking with me came out and said to me, “Lift up now your eyes, and see who these are that go into exile.” |
| 6. And I said, "What is it?" And he said, **"This is the ephah that is going forth." And he said, "This is [the punishment of those] whose eye [gazes] over the entire land."** | 6. And I said, “Who are they?” And he said, **“These are the people who were trading with false measure,** **and behold, they are going into exile before all the inhabitants of the earth.”** |
| 7. And behold! **A talent of lead was being lifted, and this one woman was sitting in the midst of the ephah.** | 7. And behold, swift-footed peoples took them into exile in haste, and other peoples came and settled in their place **because they were trading with false measure.** |
| 8. And he said, "This is Wickedness." **And he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the lead weight into her mouth.** **{S}** | 8. And he said, “Because of this they were found guilty, and went into exile **because they were trading with false measure,** and other peoples came and settled in their place.” **{S}** |
| 9. And I lifted my eyes, and I saw-and behold! -two women were coming forth with wind in their wings, and they had wings like the wings of the stork. **And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.** | 9. And I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold two states going into exile, and swift-footed people were taking them into exile in haste, just as a vulture flies, **and they took into exile the people who were trading with false measure,** among the kingdoms of the nations of the earth which were under all the heavens. |
| 10. And I said to the angel who spoke to me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" | 10. And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, **“Where are they taking into exile the people who were trading with false measure?”** |
| 11. And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar, and it will be prepared, and they shall place it there on its base." **{S}** | 11. And he said to me, “To prepare a place for them in the province of Babylon.” and they will be detained and kept there until their time arrives. **{S}** |
|   |   |
| 1. And I returned and lifted my eyes and saw-and behold! - four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of copper. | 1. And again I lifted up my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots coming out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of bronze. |
| 2. In the first chariot were red horses, and in the second chariot were black horses. | 2. With the first chariot were red horses, and with the second chariot black horses; |
| 3. And in the third chariot were white horses, and in the fourth chariot were spotted, ash-colored horses. | 3. and with the third chariot were white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled, ash-colored horses. |
| 4. And I raised my voice and said to the angel who spoke to me, "What are these, my lord?" | 4. And I answered and said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these, my lord?” |
| 5. And the angel replied and said to me, "These are the four corners of the heavens coming forth from standing beside the Lord of the entire earth." | 5. And the angel answered and said to me, “These are the four kingdoms which are like the four winds of heaven, going forth after presenting themselves before the lord of all the earth. |
| 6. The one [chariot] the black horses were in was going forth to the northland, and the white ones went forth after them. And the spotted ones went forth to the southland. | 6. The one with the black horses goes out to the north country, and the white ones have gone out after them, and the dappled ones have gone out to the south country. |
| 7. And the ash-colored ones went forth and begged to go to walk to and fro on the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro on the earth." And they walked to and fro on the earth. | 7. And the ash-colored went out and sought to go to patrol the earth, and he said, “Go, patrol the earth; so, they patrolled the earth.” |
| 8. And he cried out to me, saying, "Look, those going forth to the northland have eased My spirit in the northland." **{S}** | 8. And he called aloud to me and spoke with me, saying, "Look at those which go out to the north country; say to them ***'Do my pleasure in the north country.’*”** **{S}** |
| 9. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying: | 9. And there was a word of prophecy from the LORD with me, saying, |
| 10. Take from the exiles-from Heldai and from Tobijah and from Jedaiah-and you, yourself, shall come on that day, and you shall come to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who have come from Babylon. | 10. “Take from the children of the captivity, from Heldai and from Tobiah and from Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon, and you will come on that day, and will enter the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. |
| 11. And you shall take silver and gold, and you shall make crowns, and place [them] upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the High Priest. | 11. And you will take silver and gold and make a large crown and set it upon the head of Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. |
| 12. And you shall speak to him, saying, "So said the Lord of Hosts, saying: Behold a man whose name is the Shoot, who will spring up out of his place and build the Temple of the Lord. | 12. And you will speak to him, saying, ‘Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is Anointed will be revealed, and he will be raised up, and will build the temple of the LORD. |
| 13. And he shall build the Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear glory. And he shall sit and rule on his throne, and the priest shall be on his throne. And a counsel of peace shall be between them [both]. | 13. He will build the temple of the LORD and he will assume majesty and will sit and rule upon his throne; and there will be a High Priest beside his throne, and there will be peaceful understanding between the two of them.' |
| 14. And the crowns shall be for Helem, and for Tobijah, and for Jedaiah, and for Hen the son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the Temple of the Lord. | 14. And there will be praise' for Helem, and for Tobiah, and for Jedaiah, and for Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. |
| 15. And distant ones shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord, and you shall know that the Lord of Hosts sent me to you. And it shall come to pass if you hearken to the voice of the Lord your God. **{S}** | 15. And they will come from a far country and will build in the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to prophesy to you. And it will come to pass, if you will certainly listen to the Memra of the LORD your God.” **{S}** |

**Rashi’s Commentary to: Zechariah (Zechariah) 5:3-11 + 6:14**

**3 This is the curse** This is [the scroll] in which is written the retribution, the revenge for a false oath. [The scroll] is now coming forth from the Holy of Holies, from before the Shechinah, to walk to and fro upon the face of the entire land; this is the meaning of “its length is twenty, and its width is ten” - as the measure of the entrance to the Temple court and the Temple, through which it shall emerge.

**for whoever stole** until now.

**was cleared from such as this** He was cleared from this retribution, as it delineated on it [i.e., the scroll]. The retribution of individuals who transgressed the Torah was not meted out, but He waited until the measure of all of them was filled, and they all suffered at once with the destruction and the exile. Similarly, everyone who heretofore swore falsely, was cleared of the retribution as delineated in this scroll and was not requited, but from now on ...

**4 I have brought it forth** to walk to and fro in the land and to wreak vengeance upon the thieves and the swearers of falsehoods from now on; and it will come into the house of the thief, etc.

**5 Now lift up your eyes and see** Yet another is coming forth, that will come out from the Holy of Holies.

**6 And I said, “What is it?”** that is coming forth, that you tell me to see?

**And he said, “This is the ephah”** For you will see a sort of ephah with which they measure coming forth.

**And he said, “This is [the punishment of those] whose eye [gazes] over the entire land”** And, after I saw it, he said, " This is the measure by which punishment was meted out to those whose eyes were over the entire land, to rob and to oppress, to make the ephah smaller and to make the shekel larger; and punishment was meted out to them, a measure for measure.”

**7 And behold! A talent of lead was being lifted** I saw that a weight [made] of a talent of lead was being lifted off the earth into the air, and I saw further that this one woman was sitting in the midst of the ephah.

**8 And he said, “This is Wickedness.”** This woman that you see in the midst of the ephah is the character of the way of wickedness, [the way] in which the wicked deport themselves. And behold, now they are placed in its midst to be punished in the midst of that very measure that they meted out, a measure for a measure.

**And he cast her** Heretofore she had been sitting, but he cast her and knocked her into its midst, symbolizing torments and punishments.

**and he cast the lead weight into her mouth** to weigh her down so that they achieve no more greatness and their voice is no longer heard robbing the poor and needy.

**9 two women were coming forth** from the house.

**the stork** the white dayyah (Hullin 63a), voltur in Old French.

**11** **and it will be prepared, and they shall place it there** And the house shall be prepared, and the ephah shall be placed there with the wicked that are within it.

**there** In that house.

**on its base** On its permanence and on its base. Here He hinted [to Zechariah] that, because of the iniquity of Israel, who measured out [so to speak] with the measure of sins and wickedness, they were punished with the same measure. And there came two nations that ruled together; they were Babylon and the Chaldeans - the army of Nebuchadnezzar - and exiled [Israel] to Babylon where [Israel] stayed fixed on a base, a base that was established for them. That is according to the completion of the seventy years until now, when they returned. This interpretation leans partially toward that of Jonathan. This [phrase] is interpreted in many [other] ways, but they are not satisfactory to me. Our Sages, however, explained and learned from here that the evil inclination was given into the hands of the men of the Great Assembly, and they cast it into a leaden cauldron and covered it with lead, because lead absorbs the sound, as is stated in tractate Sanhedrin (24a) and in tractate Yoma (69b). My interpretation of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar as doubled - composed of two nations - I saw in Midrash Psalms (6:2, 18:10), that the following four kingdoms that subjugated Israel were double: Babylon and the Chaldeans, Media and Persia, Greece and Macedon, Edom and Ishmael, and for this reason the Kalir composed (in Piyutim for Shemini Azereth), “It is the fourth; it is the eighth,” concerning Edom.

**Chapter 6**

**14 And the crowns shall be for Helem, etc.** This is a transposed verse. It should be understood as: And the crowns shall be in the Temple of the Lord as a good memorial for Helem and for Tobijah, who donated the silver and the gold. Those crowns were hanging in the windows in the height of the Temple, as we learned in tractate Middoth (36a, 3:8).

**for Helem** That is Heldai.

**Commentary on the Ashlamatah of Zechariah 5:3-11 & 6:14**

By: H.Ex. Adon Shlomoh Ben Abraham

The Book of Zachariah was written in the same period as the Book of Haggai. Which is in the early years of King Darius 522 to 486. BCE. The Rabbis associate these two prophets with Malachi, and this creates what's called the Trio of prophets. Zachariah being placed right in the middle between Haggai and Malachi. Haggai 1 & 2 has three references to the reign of King Darius and in Zechariah we find in the first 8 chapters three specific dates, all tied to the reign of Darius, and they range from 520 to 518 BCE. It's interesting to note that Zachariah’s name means “Hashem remembers” which sets up the theme of the book of Zachariah.

In 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon and absorbed its territory into his Persian Empire. This area included the territory of the former Judah, which Persia called Judea. Cyrus and his son Cambyses (530–522 BCE) eventually extended the Persian Empire’s borders from Egypt and Lydia to India. During his first year in power, Cyrus permitted the people of Judah to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple. The rebuilding stopped when Cyrus died (Ezra 4:4–5). When Cambyses died, the next king, Darius, had to fight for more than two years to solidify his rule.

Thus, in 520 BC, political and spiritual morale was low, and taxes were high, Jerusalem was only partially rebuilt. The earlier prophets had anticipated a spiritual renewal among God’s people. There was no descendant of David and no moral reformation had occurred. Many concluded that God had abandoned his people and that faithful obedience to his law was useless.

Even though Israel was back in the land, the restoration promises spoken by the prophets and was to be marked by the Davidic king had not yet occurred. Although, the promised restoration and salvation had at last begun, the new community is back in the land, but they found themselves living between the beginning of the restoration and the ultimate consummation which still lay in the future, all the way to our present time.

Scholars have noted that the major prophets’ message focused more on their day than on a future day. Zachariah seems to be focused more on the future than on the present day, more eschatological in his outlook. In Zechariahs time the actual construction began on the Second temple, but he continually points to something bigger and greater that's connected to the temple as he looked into the future. This theme relating to the temple is also the promise of Hashems presence, which shall dwell in that temple. As Zachariah looks to the future, he sees the Gentile inclusion into the people of God. But he also sees in the future, judgment on the nations and looking beyond that judgment he described the nations who would stream to Jerusalem to worship Hashem and receive the ensuring blessings.

Zech 2: 5 For I will be a wall of fire all around it, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within it.” 6 Up, up! Flee from the land of the north, says the Lord; for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven, says the Lord. 7 Up! Escape to Zion, you that live with daughter Babylon. 8 For thus said the Lord of hosts regarding the nations that plundered you: Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye. 9 See now, I am going to raise my hand against them, and they shall become plunder for their own slaves. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me. 10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord. 11 Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. 12 The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 Be silent, all people, before the Lord; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

It is interesting to me. The eight-night visions seem to occur within five months of Zerubbabel beginning to rebuild the temple. In our passage this week we're reading the sixth and seventh vision. We see a huge flying scroll measuring 20 by 10 cubits, 30 feet by 15 feet. That seems to be big enough to easily read the scroll from the ground. This scroll announces the Covenant curses to come upon the covenant breaker, the one who steals and the one who swears falsely. We interrupt this to mean those who steal, rob, sweep away and it has the sense of deceiving when used with the word for heart, as when Jacob literally stole Laban’s heart (Gen. 31:20, 26). And to swear falsely is to take an oath, to make, to swear an oath In other words, we would call these covenant breakers; thieves and liars those who by their words and deeds destroy the very foundations of society.

The text tells us a curse has gone forth over the whole earth to cleanse it of those that steal and swear falsely. The angel tells the prophet to “look / see that which goes forth” v.5

 Verses 5 to 11 in the seventh vision symbolizes a cleansing and removal of sin. Zachariah represents this as a basket with the woman inside. Should we understand the women as a literal woman or that she represents the iniquity and wickedness of the nation? Many times, in the prophets we see where iniquity is represented by a woman. The same symbolism is seen in the Nazarene codicil. In the Book of Revelation with Babylon represented as a woman, a woman that represents iniquity or the wicked. Some N.T.(N.C.) references to Babylon may be cryptic allusions to Rome (1 Pet 5:13; Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2). Like Babylon, Rome was an oppressive, imperial power that had besieged Jerusalem and desecrated the temple. The book of Revelation portrays “Babylon the great city” as “the mother of prostitutes and the abominations of the earth” (Rev 17:5), which will be cast down in end-time judgment. Revelation is replete with O.T.(Tanach) imagery: “The historic city and empire of Babylon were always depicted by the prophets as the ungodly power par excellence” (TDNT, “Βαβυλών, Babylōn,” 1:515).

Rabbinic Judaism interpreted many of these texts in relation to a messianic time still to come (Zech. 3:8; 6:12 in the Targum; in relation to Zech. 6:12, see Num. Rab. 18.21; for Zech. 9:9, see Gen. Rab. 56.2, 98.9; and for Zech. 12:10 as pointing to the Messiah from the House of Joseph, see b. Sukkah 52a).

In v. 5-6 the prophet is told to watch what which goes forth and is instructed that this the efah measure that goes forth and that “this is their eye in all the land or earth.” That which comes out, in all the land, iniquity or wickedness. The Me’am Lo’ez also connects the eye with “baseless hatred”. The “eye in all the land is reference to Saul and David ,1Sam. 18. We see that David and Saul had been out killing the Philistines and they were on their way home and the women came out singing and dancing to meet King Saul. They begin to say and begin to sing one to another. Saul had killed his thousands and David his 10 thousand. The King became very angry, and this saying displeased him greatly. Saul from that day forward turned his eye toward David. Then in verse 10 we're told the next day. An evil spirit from God rushed upon the king. The anointed one was playing his harp. The king had his spear in his hand. And he thought, I will “pin” strike him, (to wound or kill) David to the wall. But the anointed one eluded him twice and the scripture goes on to tell us that the Anointed one was successful in all his undertakings (דֶּרֶךְ Derek ) and “All Israel and Judea loved him.” All the people of the land loved the Anointed one as he came in and out to do battle. The King, just as Laban would have hurt or killed Jacob without God’s prevention. Gen. 31:7

The woman representing wickedness was pushed into the basket by the Angel. Who places a heavy lid of lead on its mouth. When the cover was lifted, a woman was observed inside and was identified as wickedness. The woman (probably because the Heb. word for wickedness is in the feminine gender) was wickedness personified, a term denoting civil, ethical, and religious evil. Then we are told of two other women that went forth, the wind in their wings. Their wings were like wings of Storks, and they lifted the efah measure up between the earth and the sky. We are informed the wings of a Stork (an unclean bird) are used to fly off the basket to take it down to Shinar. Why take it to Shinar? Babylon seems to be where the seat of iniquity is located. To build a house for it in the land. The Midrash Tehillim says the four kingdoms that would subjugate the Jewish people were all comprised of twin nations. Babylon and Chaldea, Medes and Persia, Greece and Macedonia, and Rome -Edom and Ishmael. Could these two women who carry the basket to Shinar represent the two kingdoms of Rome-Edom and Ishamel, who as Zechariah understood would receive punishment and retribution would come upon them “measure for measure” for their sin of breaking the covenant and for how they treated the people of Israel. Shinar was the name of the plain where the city and the nation of Babylon were begun by Nimrod. Gen. 10:8-10.

According to the sages, the two women represent flattery and the spirit of arrogance. Flattery is insincere and undeserved praise or words used with the intention of gaining favour with others or with the intention to deceive. While arrogance is proud and unpleasant behavior towards other people, based on a belief in one’s own superiority or greater importance. Excessive pride, leading to boastfulness and insolence (1 S 2:3; Prov 8:13; Isa 13:11; Jer 48:29).

The crowns of 6:14 shall be…… as a memorial in the temple of the Lord In Haggai 1:1 in the second year of King Darius the first day of the six-month God tells the prophet “The time has not yet come for the rebuilding of the House of the Lord”. Zachariah 1:1 Which everything in the book points back to says: In the eighth month of the second year of Darius. The word of the Lord came into the prophet Zachariah saying “the Lord has been very angry with your Father's. Turn back to me, says the Lord of Host. I will turn back to you…. Do not be like your father's… come back from your evil ways and your evil deeds. Repent and return are the warnings of the book. In our vision the sins are gathered up and soon to be measured out to those covenant breakers, liars, deceivers and those who swear falsely. As they have sinned, so shall they be punished, measured for measure.

Some writers have suggested the main theme is 2:10-11. I am coming and I will live among you, declares HaShem. Many nations will be joined with HaShem in that day, and they will be my people. May he come speedily and in our days.

**Special Ashlamatah: Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 2:4-28 + 4:1-2**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 4. ¶ Hearken to the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. | 4. ¶ Listen to the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and every descendant of the house of Israel. |
| 5. So says the Lord: What wrong did your forefathers find in Me, that they distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile? | 5. Thus says the LORD: “What did your fathers ‎find in My Memra (that was) false that they removed themselves from the fear of Me, and went astray after the idols and became worthless? |
| 6. And they did not say, “Where is the Lord, Who brought us up from the land of Egypt, Who led us in the desert, in a land of plains and pits, in a land of waste and darkness, in a land where no man had passed and where no man had dwelt. | 6. And they did not say: ‘Let us fear from before the LORD, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a ‎land level and waste, in a land desolate, and of the shadow of death; in the land in which no man passes by, and no man dwells there.' |
| 7. And I brought you to a forest land to eat of its produce and its goodness, and you came and contaminated My land, and made My heritage an abomination. | 7. And I brought you into the land of Israel which was planted like Carmel, to eat its fruit and its goodness; but you went up and defiled the ‎land of the house of My Shekhina and you made my inheritance into the worship of idols. |
| 8. The priests did not say, “Where is the Lord?” And those who hold onto the Torah did not know Me and the rulers rebelled against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal and followed what does not avail. | 8. The priests did not say: 'Let us fear before the ‎LORD'; nor did the teachers of the Law study to know the fear of Me. But the king/ rebelled against My Memra, and the prophets of falsehood ‎prophesied in the name of the idols, and went after what would not profit them. |
|  9. Therefore, I will still contend with you, says the Lord, and with your children's children will I contend. |  9. Therefore I am going to exact punishment from you,‎says the LORD, ‎and from the children of your sons whom I am going to punish, if they act according to your deeds. |
| 10. For pass over [to] the isles of the Kittites and see, and send to Kedar and consider diligently, and see whether there was any such thing, | 10. For cross over to the coast lands of the ‎Kittim, and see; and send to the province of the Arabs and observe carefully; and see the nations who go into exile from district to district ‎and from province to province transporting their idols and carrying them with them: And in the place where they settle, they spread their ‎tents, and set up their idols and worship them. Where now is a nation and language which has acted like you, O house of 'Israel? |
| 11. Whether a nation exchanged a god although they are not gods. Yet My nation exchanged their glory for what does not avail. | 11. Behold, the nations have not forsaken the service of the idols, and they are idols in which there is no profit, But My people have forsaken ‎My service, for the sake of which I bring glory upon them, and they have gone after what will not profit them. |
| 12. Oh heavens, be astonished about this, and storm, become very desolate, says the Lord. | 12. Mourn, O heavens, because ‎of this, because of the land of Israel which is to be wasted, and because of the Sanctuary which is to be made desolate, and because My‎people have done evil deeds to excess, says the LORD. |
| 13. **For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water.** | **13. For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken My service, for the ‎sake of which I bring goodness upon them like a fountain of water which does not cease; and they have strayed after the idols which are ‎like broken pits for them, which cannot guarantee water.** |
| 14. Is Israel a slave? Is he a home-born slave? Why has he become a prey? | 14. Was Israel like a slave? Is he the son of a slave? Why is he handed over to ‎plunderers? |
| 15. Young lions roar over him: they have raised their voice, and they have made his land a desolation; his cities were burnt without an inhabitant. | 15. Kings will shout against him; they will lift up their voice and make his land a desolation; his cities will be desolate ‎without inhabitant. |
| 16. Also the children of Noph and Tahpanhes will break your crown. | 16. Moreover the children of Memphis and Tahpanhes will kill your mighty men and plunder your herds. |
| 17. Is not this caused to you by your forsaking the Lord your God at the time He leads you by the way? | 17. Will not ‎this punishment be exacted from you because you have forsaken the worship of the LORD your God, who showed you the way which was ‎right but you did not walk in it? |
| 18. And now, what have you to do in the way of Egypt to drink the water of the Shihor and what have you to do in the way of Assyria to drink the water of the river? | 18. And now what profit was it for you to associate with Pharaoh the king of Egypt to cast your males ‎into the river? And what profit was it for you to make a covenant with the Assyrians (that they should) banish you yonder beyond the ‎Euphrates? |
| 19. Your evil will chastise you, and your backslidings will reprove you, and you shall know and see that your forsaking the Lord your God is evil and bitter, and fear of Me was not upon you, says the Lord God of Hosts. | 19. I have brought sufferings upon you. but you have not refrained from your wickedness; and **because you have not ‎returned to the Law** punishment will be exacted from you. And know and see that I will bring evil and bitterness upon you, O Jerusalem, **because you have forsaken the worship of the LORD your God,** **and have not set my fear before your eyes,** says the ‎LORD God of Hosts. |
| 20. For of old I broke your yoke, I tore open your yoke-bands, and you said, “I will not transgress,” but on every lofty hill and under every leafy tree, you recline as a harlot. | 20. For from of old I have broken the yoke of the nations from your neck. I have severed your chains; and you said;‎‎'We will not again transgress against Your Memra. But on every exalted height and under every leafy tree you worship the idols. |
| 21. Yet I planted you a noble vine stock, throughout of right seed; now how have you turned yourself into a degenerate wild vine to Me? | 21. And ‎ I Myself established you before Me like the plant of the choice vine. **All of you were doers of the truth**; and how then are you changed ‎before Me in your corrupted works? You have turned aside from My worship: you have been like a vine in which there is no profit. |
| 22. For if you wash with natron and use much soap, your iniquity is stained before Me, says the Lord God. | 22. Even ‎if you think to be cleansed of your sins, just as they cleanse (things) with natron and make white with soap, behold, like the mark of a ‎blood-stain which is unclean, so are your sins many before Me, says the LORD God. |
| 23. How do you say, “I have not been defiled; I have not gone after the Baalim”? See your way in the valley, know what you have done, [like] a swift young she-camel, clinging to her ways. | 23. How do you say: 'I am not defiled, I have not walked‎after the idols of the nations'? Lift up your eves upon your ways and see when you were dwelling in the ‎valley in front of Beth Peor, know what you did; you were like a swift young camel who corrupts her ways. |
| 24. A wild donkey accustomed to the desert, that snuffs up the wind in her desire, her tendency like the sea creatures, who can hinder her? All who seek her will not weary; in her month they will find her. | 24. Like a wild ass who dwells in the wilderness, walking in the pleasure of her soul, drinking the wind like a wild ass, ‎thus the assembly of Israel has rebelled and strayed from the Law, and does not wish to return. Say to her, O prophet, **All those who seek ‎My Law will not be forgotten: in its time they will find it.‎** |
| 25. **Withhold your foot from going barefoot** and your throat from thirst; but you said, “I despair. No, for I love strangers, and I will follow them.” | 25. **Restrain your foot from associating with the Gentiles.** and your mouth from worshipping the idols. But you said: 'I have turned away from ‎your worship. No; because I have loved to associate with the Gentiles, so will I follow the worship of their idols.' |
| 26. As the shame of a thief when he is found out, so have the house of Israel been ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets. | 26. Like the shame of ‎a man who is considered trustworthy and is found to be a thief, **so is the house of Israel ashamed, they, their kings, their princes, and their‎priests, and their prophets of falsehood.** |
| 27. They say to the wood, “You are my father,” and to the stone, “You bore us,” for they turned to Me their nape and not their face, and at the time of their misfortune they say, “Arise and save us.” | 27. saying to an image of wood; 'You are our father’; and saying to something which is made of ‎stone: ‘You created us.' For they have turned their back on My worship, and have not set the fear of Me before their faces. But when‎misfortune comes upon them, they renounce their idols, confessing before Me and saying: 'Have mercy on us and redeem us'. |
| 28. Now where are your gods that you have made for yourself; let them get up if they will save you at the time of your misfortune, for as many as your cities were your gods, O Judea. **{S}** | 28. But where ‎are your deities which you made for yourselves? Let them ‎ arise, if they can, to redeem you in the time of your misfortune: for the number of your towns is (the same) as (the number of) your deities, ‎‎O men of the house of Judah.‎ **{S}** |
|   |   |
| 1. **If you return, O Israel, says the Lord, to Me,** you shall return, and **if you remove your detestable things from My Presence, you shall not wander.** | 1.‎” If **you return, O Israel, to My worship**, says the LORD, your repentance will be received before your decree is sealed; and **if you remove your abominations from before Me, then you will not be exiled.** |
| 2. **And you will swear, “As the Lord lives,” in truth and in justice and in righteousness, nations will bless themselves with him and boast about him.**  **{S}** | 2. **And if you swear in My ‎Name, The LORD is He who Exists; in truth, in justice, and in righteousness/ generosity, then will the nations be blessed through‎Israel, and will glorify themselves through him.‎ {S}** |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) 2:4-28 + 4:1-2**

**6 And they did not say,** Where is the Lord that we should follow other gods?

**plains** Heb. ערבה (planure in O.F.), related to pianoro in Old Italian, meaning ‘a plateau.’

**and pits** Heb. ושוחה (enfosses in O.F.), pitted.

**waste** Heb. ציה (degat in French).

**and darkness** Heb. וצלמות . An expression of darkness.

**7 to a forest land** To the land of Israel which is planted like כרמל , meaning: planted like a forest.

**8 and those who hold onto the Torah** The Sanhedrin.

**and the rulers** the kings.

**prophesied by Baal** In the name of Baal.

**9 Therefore, I will still contend** Before I bring misfortune upon you, I will still contend with you through My prophets, although I have already contended with you many days.

**10 the isles of the Kittites** To the isles of the Kittites. איי is (isles in French).

**and send to Kedar** And send to Kedar to see their custom.

**and consider diligently** And put your heart to it to consider the matter diligently.

**whether** Heb. הן , like אם , if. Whether either of those nations exchanged its god although they are no gods, yet My nation exchanged their glory, with which they were honored. The Kittites and the Kedarites were tent dwellers and cattle herders, who would travel, go, and wander from pasture to pasture and from desert to desert, and they carry their gods with them to the place where they encamp. But I carried you until I established you, yet you forsook Me. This is how Jonathan paraphrased it. Our Sages said however: The Kittites worshipped water and the Kedarites worshipped fire. And although they know that water quenches fire, they did not forsake their god.

**11 for what does not avail** For an idol that does not avail.

**12 O heavens, be astonished** Heb. שמו , an expression of astonishment, like השתוממוּ . It is the imperative form, with the same vowel points as (I Sam. 14:9): “If they say thus to us, “Wait (דּמּוּ) .” and storm Heb.ושערו , an expression of סער , a storm.

**become very desolate** As though you are becoming desolate because of the Temple that is destined to be destroyed.

**13 two evils** **Had they exchanged their Deity [lit. their fear] for one His equal, it would be one evil, and now that they have forsaken Me, that I am a spring of living waters, to follow idols, which are like cisterns of stored up water, and they are broken and cracked, and their water is absorbed in their cracks, these are two evils.**

**to dig** Heb. לחצב , lit. to hew.

**that do not hold** (Tendront in O.F.) their water, for the water will make their edge and their walls muddy, and they cave in.

**14 Is he a home born slave?** The son of a maidservant.

**15 roar** roar, a present tense.

**young lions** Symbolic of kings.

**were burnt** were burnt with fire.

**16 Also the children of Noph and Tahpanhes** They are the Egyptians upon whom you trust for aid.

**will break your crown** They will break your skull. ירעוּך is an expression of breaking (רציצה) , as we translate ורצוץ , “and crushed” (Deut. 28:33), וּרעיע .

**17 Is not this caused to you** Is not this misfortune and this retribution caused to you by the guilt and the iniquity that you have forsaken the Lord your God?

at the time He leads you by the way For He would teach you the good and the straight way.

**18 what have you to do in the way of Egypt** Why do you leave Me and trust in Egypt?

**to drink the water of the Shihor** For they drowned your male children in the Nile. Shihor is the Nile, as it is said: “From the Shihor which is before Egypt,” in the Book of Joshua (13:3).

**and what have you to do to rebel against Me** so that you should be exiled to the way of Assyria, to the other side of the Euphrates River?

**19 Your evil will chastise you** Eventually, your evil will bring suffering upon you.

**and your backslidings,** Heb. ומשבותיך , an expression related to “backsliding children (שובבים) “ (infra 3:22).

**will reprove you** Heb. תוכחך , an expression of reproof.

**and the fear of Me was not** **My fear was not in your heart that you should fear Me.**

**20 I broke your yoke** To the wooden yoke an expression of breaking applies, and to the yoke-bands which are of leather an expression of tearing open applies.

**yoke-bands** [מוסרותיך are the] ropes used to shackle the yoke [to the animal].

**and you said, “I will not transgress.”** your words.

**but on every lofty hill** But you did not keep your promise, for on every lofty hill you recline (צעה) . This is an expression of a bed and a sheet (מצע) . [The word] כי serves as an expression of ‘but.’

**21 I planted you a noble vine stock** Heb. שורק the branches of a good vine, that is to say the children of pious and righteous fathers. Its midrashic interpretation is: I planted you שורק . I added for you to the seven commandments of the children of Noah, six hundred and six, as is the numerical value of שורק .

**degenerate** Heb. סוּרי (Destoultours in O.F).

**wild vine** that grows in the forests.

**22 with natron** A type of earth with which garments are cleansed and rubbed.

**soap** Heb. בּֽרִית , cleanliness. Comp. “And pure (וּבַר) of heart” (Ps. 24:4). Some explain בּֽרִית as savon in French, soap.

**your iniquity is stained** Jonathan renders: Like the mark of a stain that is unclean, so have your sins increased before Me. כתם is tka in O.F.

**your iniquity** This is said concerning the iniquity of the ‘Golden Calf,’ which remains in existence forever, as it is stated: “And on the day of My visitation, I will visit upon them their sin” (Exodus 32:34). **All visitations that come upon Israel have part of the iniquity of the Golden Calf in them.**

**23 See your way in the valley** See what you have done opposite Beth-Peor, and until now you adhere to that way like a swift she camel clinging to her ways.

**young she-camel** Heb. בכרה , a young female camel, that loves to wander. “The young camels (בכרי) of Midian” (Isa. 60:6) is translated “and they are young camels,” as we find in Sanhedrin 52a: There are many old camels laden with the skins of young camels (הוגני) .

**clinging** Adhering to the ways of her youth, an expression similar to: “it would have clung (מסריך סריך) “ (Chullin 51a). This may be associated with “a shoe thong (שרוך נעל) “ (Gen. 14:23). She binds the ways of her youth in her heart.

**24 A wild donkey** (salvatico in O.F.) wild, and some interpret it as poulain in O.F., a foal.

**accustomed to the desert** Accustomed to be in the deserts, s**o she loves to wander.**

**that snuffs up the wind** She opens her mouth and snuffs up the wind, and he always returns to his place.

**her tendency like the sea creatures, who can hinder her?** That trait of the sea creatures that she has, for also the sea creature snuffs up the wind, as it is said: “They snuff up the wind like sea creatures” (infra 14:6). Who can hinder her from that trait? So it is with you who can return you from your evil way?

**her tendency like a sea creature** Son dagronemant in O.F.,

**dragon nature**. Jonathan rendered it in this manner, כערודה . Another explanation: It is an expression of wailing, comp. “moaning and wailing”

**all who seek her will not weary** For they will weary needlessly, for they will be unable to overtake her. What will her end be? In her month, they will find her. There is one month in the year that she sleeps for the whole month, and then she is captured. You, too, - **one month (viz. Ab) was already prepared for you from the days of the spies, when your forefathers established** it as a time of vain weeping, therein, you will be captured. (תּאניה ואניה) (Lam. 2:5). Another explanation: (sa contree in French,) her country, comp. Taanath Shiloh (Josh. 16:6).

**25 Withhold your foot from going barefoot** This your habit, like the wild donkey that loves to wander. My prophets say to you, “Withhold your foot from idolatry lest you go barefoot into exile and withhold your throat from dying of thirst.”

**but you said** concerning the words of the prophets.

**I despair It is of no concern.** I despair of your words. נואש is (nonkalajjr in O. F.) nonchalair in modern French.

**26 when he is found out** At the beginning, when he is found to be a thief, and he was presumed to be faithful. In this manner, Jonathan rendered it.

**27 and at the time of their misfortune they say** i. e., they say to Me, “Arise and save us.” Jonathan, too, translates in this manner: And at the time that misfortune befalls them, they deny their idols and confess before Me, and say. “Have mercy upon us and save us.”

**28 as many as your cities were your gods** In every city was another god.

**Chapter 4**

**1 If you return,** O Israel with this repentance, to Me, you will return to your original glory and greatness.

**and if you remove your detestable things from My Presence** Then you shall not wander to go out in exile.

**2 And you will swear, “As the Lord lives,” in truth** When you swear by My name, you will swear in truth, not as now, that it is written concerning you, “And if they say, ‘As the Lord lives,’ surely they swear falsely” (5:2).

**nations will bless themselves with him** **If you do so, then nations will bless themselves with Israel. Every non-Jew will say to his son, “You shall be like So-and-so the Jew.”**

**boast** Heb. יתהללו , they will recite your praise. Another explanation of is יתהללו : Whoever is able to cleave to Israel will boast about the matter (porvanter in French).

**Commentary on the Ashlamatah of Yirmeyahu (Jereimah) 2:4-28 & 4:1-2**

By: H.Ex. Adon Shlomoh Ben Abraham

Last week’s Ashlamatah was the first of a series of three (3) that relate to Israels national experiences at this time of the year. The three weeks from the 17th of Tammuz until the 9th of Av mark a time of mourning by the Jewish nation as we relive and lament the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans in 70BCE. It began with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz, when historically the walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Romans and reaches its climax with another fast on the 9th of Av when the temple was set aflame. [[27]](#footnote-27)

On the fast of Tammuz 17th, we commemorate five (5) tragic events that occurred on this date. [[28]](#footnote-28)

1). Moses broke the tablets when he saw the Israelites worshiping the Golden Calf.

2). During the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. The Jews were forced to cease offering the daily sacrifices due to the lack of sheep.

3). APOST0M0S burn the holy Torah.

4). An Idol was placed in the Holy Temple.

5). The walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Romans in 69/70CE and then three weeks later, on the 9th of Av, the temple was destroyed. The Jerusalem Talmud maintains this is also the date when the Babylonians breached the walls of Jerusalem on their way to destroy the First Temple.

The readings for the first three Sabbaths of Penitence, are drawn from Jeremiah and Isaiah, they tell us of God's disappointments with Israel's faithlessness and the impending doom and exile which would soon begin if they did not mend their ways. We have now come to the second week of the Sabbath of Penitence reading.

The use of the marriage metaphor was common among the prophets to portray the relationship between God and Israel (see Hos. Chp.1–3.[[29]](#footnote-29) In this reading we see the formal indictments that Jeremiah the prophet lays out against Judah. It lists their central sins, stresses their idolatry, their social injustice and it speaks of a personal intimate injury Hashem has suffered. Three places in this chapter. 2:13,17,19 God declares that His children have forsaken him. As we journey through this chapter, we hear Gods harsh criticism of Israel's unfaithfulness. He compares them to a Noble vine that has become wild, strange, or poisonous and by v.24 they are likened to a wild female donkey in heat with unrestrained lust.

The Israelites are remembered for good and the kindness of their youth v. 2. It is an open question whether the kindness is, That of God towards his people or of the people towards their God. The usage of the Hebrew could be interpreted either way. But in the context, it would seem to lean more strongly in favor of the first view, which is God's Kindness toward Israel. As in Psa5:7; 27:5-7. The dominant verb in v.2 is went after. (**Halak**)

 The entire leadership structure of the community is included in the indictment: priests, judges, rulers, prophets, civic and religious leadership.v.8. To know HaShem. This is to practice, justice and where HaShem is not known, Justice is not embraced.[[30]](#footnote-30) I will yet “*plead* with you and with their children's children.” Some have translated this as “I will once more *accus*e you and your children.” v.9 The language is described as legal language as used in a lawsuit. Some have interpreted this as God *pleading* with his children to repent and turn back to him. As a husband would *accuse or plead* his case.

The Prophet goes on in v.12. and says, “be appalled, oh heavens at this and be shocked.” The heavens are called as a witness. Deut.32:1; Isa.1:2. The oracle concludes with a summary of the people’s sin that calls for punishment. Indeed, it is **two sins**, that is, a two-fold sin. They have **forsaken** the true God, **the spring of living water** and have also **dug their own cisterns**. This is a metaphor for the other gods that their own (and other nations’) imaginations have produced (i.e., Baal). In the first place, there is a contrast between the true God who is a spring of fresh water, and a cistern that holds dank, stale water. And in addition, these are broken cisterns. They think they will find life-giving water in these cisterns (gods), but they will be empty because they are broken, and all the water will drain out.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Jeremiah goes on to ask, Is Israel a slave? Are they a servant? Why have they been plundered? If Israel had remained a faithful servant, they would not have been plundered by the nations. “Why do the lion cubs roar after him?” v.15 These are the gentile nations and their Pagan kings. [[32]](#footnote-32) They have laid waste your land and your cities. “Have you not brought this upon yourself?” “By forsaking the Lord your God.” v.17.

“Your wickedness and iniquity will punish you… You're backsliding and turning away will convict you…. Can you see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God.” v.19 The language of the Prophet here is that of a pleading husband to an unfaithful bride. Pleading to return, to return to your husband. Although you have worshipped on every high hill, and I broke your yoke and burst your bonds… Yet, you have played the harlot. V.20 Still with a pleading voice, God says, “I planted you as a noble and a choice vine” …. V.21 Hashem is still pleading with His people when He tells them. “You have washed yourself with lye… and used much soap. Although you've repented…. The stain of your guilt is still before me, Says the LORD.” v.22 How can you say that you are not defiled when you run after the Baals? And like a wild Ass that is at home in the wilderness, in heat sniffing the wind. You have not restrained your lust.v.24.

The overriding issue is the refusal of Israel to have HaShem as its God. And not only is there an abandonment of God. But also, their covenantal responsibilities have so collapsed that Israel and Judah are unable to recognize the quality and the shape of their actions. It is as though Israel lives in a land of pretense. A land in which their actions are not connected with anything. A land in which their actions have no outcome. [[33]](#footnote-33) At the end of our reading Chapter 4:1-2, as a last attempt to woo back the estranged bride, “God says if you repent, O Israel declares the LORD. If you return to me… If you remove your abominations from my presence and do not waver and swear in sincerity. As the LORD lives, In Truth, Justice and Righteousness. Nations shall bless themselves in Him and in him shall they glory.” The primary theme of this Ashlamatah Is that God is calling for Judah and Jerusalem and all Israel to repent and return **( שׁוּב** ***šûḇu)*** to him in Faithful obedience.

“This last verse reflects the three oaths. That God swore, one for each of the three redemptions of Israel. The first oath “in truth” was uttered over the Exodus from Egypt. At that time, God promised the patriarch that he would eventually release their offspring from exile and give them the land of Israel as their heritage. The second oath “in judgment.” was pronounced concerning the Exodus from Babylon. Heavenly justice had decreed that the land would remain desolate for 70 years and no more, to compensate for the 70 Shmittah years that had not been observed during the period that Israel dwelled in the land. At the termination of the 70 years when justice was done, they were at once redeemed. And lastly, “in righteousness” is the oath reserved for the future exodus from the current and present exile. For which it is said, “Zion will be redeemed in justice, and her captives in righteousness.” Isaiah 127.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Abarbanel On Pirqe Abot**

**Mishna 1:8**

**Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shatah received (the tradition) from them. Yehudah ben Tabbai said: Do not behave like the lawyers; when the litigants are standing before you consider them to be wicked, but when they leave, consider them to be blameless when they accept the verdict.**

**Shimon ben Shatah said: Cross-examine the witnesses at length, but be careful what you say, lest they learn from it to lie.**

What is the flaw in the teachings of the previous two sages of the *Mishnah*that made it necessary for Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shatah to correct them? In an earlier *Mishnah*Yehoshua ben Perachiah counselled that we judge everyone meritoriously. If we are to look with beneficence upon the sins of even the hardened criminal then what we are actually doing is preparing the transgressor with a ready­made defense. It is tantamount to, *ab initio,*whitewashing the criminal act because we must judge the perpetrator meritoriously. This, of course, is unacceptable. In the judicial system we cannot allow a situation where transgression is legitimized.

The expression in the Mishnah,(counsellors or lawyers) attracts the attention of both Rambam and Abarbanel. According to the former, the literal meaning of this expression is "planners of the law." In other words, do not advise the litigant how to answer the judges' questions so as to win his case. Ramham even goes so far as to say that this is forbidden even if you know that the litigant is the oppressed party and that the other litigant is lying.

In relation to the teaching of the sage that one should not act as a counsellor, Abarbanel gives a very novel interpretation as an alternative. He separates the two words and interprets them to mean, "Do not act as one who is appointed to select the judges." This means that a man should not choose a judge on the basis of kinship or friendship or for any other ulterior motive.

Abarbanel interprets the exhortation of Yehudah ben Tabbai that a judge should look upon both litigants as wicked and after the verdict they should be considered as innocent as follows: If the judge looks upon the litigants meritoriously, he will not question them thoroughly to find out the truth; he will assume that they are telling the truth. Therefore, he should assume that they are both liars and question them in great detail. Only when the judge has reached a decision and the parties have accepted it, should the judge look upon them meritori­ously, and give them the benefit of the doubt that they had perhaps made an honest mistake. The judge may not say to himself that the one who lost the case is unrighteous, for who can know what the actual motive for his actions were. He could have been under strain, duress,or other compelling circumstances that brought him to the point where he did not tell the truth to the court. Thus, Yehoshua ben Perachiah's dictum is not applicable universally.

Then, Abarbanel comes up with a most ingenious presentation to reinforce his line of reasoning. There is a Biblical law that a man who has violated a negative commandment must be given 39 lashes. The Torah is very sensitive to the precision with which the lashes must be administered. It looks with great disfavor and alarm when even one or two additional lashes are administered. An excessive lash is an undue shame and humiliation for the penalized one. Abarbanel asks a very pertinent question: Why does the Torah equate an extra stripe with humiliation? What about the original 39 lashes - are they not to be considered as disgracing and debasing?

Abarbanel answers: After the 39 lashes, the transgressor has paid his debt to God and to society. He is now clean and pure of all way­wardness. Therefore, when he is penalized with an additional stripe, he feels degraded and abused without any reason.

It is in that light that we are to understand the *Mishnah:*When the litigants face the judge they are sinners; after the verdict they should be looked upon as virtuous.

Abarbanel then connects Shimon ben Shatah's dictum, "Cross--examine the witnesses at length, but be careful...", to Yehudab hen Tabbai's. It is possible that the litigants are sly and cunning and by merely considering them to be wicked, the judge will not be able to arrive at the truth. Therefore, advises Shimon ben Shatab, the judge should question the litigants very closely - but with care! The questions must be so formulated that the litigants cannot deduce from them what answers are expected.

Abarbanel then offers an alternative interpretation, according to which Shimon ben Shatah's dictum is not connected to Yehudah ben Tabbai's, but rather to Nitai of Arbel's. Nitai, Shimon's teacher, had said, "Do not associate with the wicked", and Shimon ben Shatah came to limit that dictum. Nitai's rule does not apply to a judge, because if he does not question even wicked litigants thoroughly, how will he get to the truth?

Thus, concludes Abarbanel, both of these sages, Yehudah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shatah, came to elaborate on dicta taught by their teachers. Abarbanel also points out that their dicta apply to matters between man and his fellow and thus they fall under the third category taught by Shimon ha-Zaddik - kindness.

**Miscellaneous Interpretations**

**Rashi:** Yehudah ben Tabbai begins his dicta in our *Mishnah*by stating, "Do not behave like a lawyer." On this subject Rashi quotes Rav Yehuda'i Gaon who interprets the *Mishnah*in the following fashion: If, as a judge, a litigant approa­ches you and requests you to tell him, not in your judicial capacity, but as a legal scholar, what the law is concerning the subject of litigation in which he is involved, you must avoid giving him the benefit of your knowledge.

As an alternative interpretation: If in your capacity as a judge one should approach you and ask that you instruct him how to effectively plead his case, you may not do so. Rashi himself offers the explanation that after listening to both sides of the case a judge may not reveal to any one of the litigants the direction of his decision.

**Rabbenu Yonah:** The second of Yehudah ben Tabbai's maxims, which counsels the judge to consider both litigants culpable when they enter the courtroom, infers that even if the judge personally knows one of the parties to be impeccably righteous, he must not permit that recognition to color his views. The fact that they eventually were compelled to appear before a judge indicates that both parties have acted indiscreetly.

Moreover, when the litigants have left the courtroom after the decision was handed down and the judge is fully aware that one of them was disreputable, he may not retain the opinion that the culpable person will always be incorrigible. They must both be assumed to be righteous, even the iniquitous, because the probability is that he has repented.

**An anonymous interpretation:** In a situation where the litigants choose to arbit­rate and each side picks a judge and, the two judges, in turn, select the third judge, it might be expected that each of the jurists should defend the claims of his patron. This attitude cannot be tolerated because the jurists will not be sitting in judgment of given facts objectively, but will actually be the *alter ego*of their clients. A judge of integrity will examine the pleas of *both*contestants and arrive at a decision.

He bolsters this theme by quoting the Scripture, where Jacob blesses his twelve sons and says, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel" (Genesis 49:16), meaning that Dan judged members of *all*tribes as if they were members of his own tribe. Moreover, the Talmud (Sanhedrin 16b), commenting on the verse "Judges and officers you shall appoint to yourself ... throughout your tribes*:*and they shall judge the people with a just judgement" (Deuteronomy 16:18), makes the observation that the judge must not look after the interests of the people of his own tribe, but seek the interests of all the tribes.

Finally, regarding the teaching of Yehudah ben Tabbai that when the litigants depart from your presence, regard them as innocent, the anonymous commenta­tor faces reality: It is a common occurrence that when a person loses his case he becomes defiant, abusive and contemptuous of the court. He will leave the courtroom in a despicable mood. Ben Tabbai did not keep in mind this type when he advocated that after the decision both the plaintiff and the respondent should be regarded as innocent. What he did intend to impress upon us is that the judge must look benignly upon the litigants when they *both*are satisfied that justice was done. Under those circumstances, neither of the litigants emerged victorious but justice did.

**Rabbi Yosef lbn Nahmias** offers a most interesting and unique interpretation. He contends that there is an error in the spelling of the ,,,,, (to arrange, establish). It should be spelled (arch) which will bring its meaning to be that no judge should make of himself an arch-jurist, the highest juridical personality, when there may be others superior to him.

**Midrash Shemuel:** Concerning himself with his presentation of "The life and duties of a judge" that are dealt with in this section of the chapter, he is bold enough to instruct the judge on how to interrogate a witness. Regarding Shimon ben Shatah's rule: “Cross-examine the witnesses at length," Midrash Shemuel reasons that often when a judge questions a witness he speaks slowly, chooses his words carefully and patiently waits for a reply. This gives the witness a chance to search for a loophole in the judge's questions and, thus, evade giving a direct answer to the question. Therefore, says Shimon ben Shatah to the judge: Be sure to interrogate intensely and do it rapidly.

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra Of Vayikra 5:1 – 26**

**“VeNefésh Ki-Techetá” “And if a Soul Sins”**

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

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hakham Shaul’s School Of** **Tosefta****Luqas 9:59-62 + 10:1****Mishnah** א | **Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat****1 Tsefet (Pe) 1:10-12 + 1:13-16****Mishnah** א |
| **And Yochanan answered** and **said, “Master, we saw someone expelling shedim on your authority, and we tried to prevent him,[[35]](#footnote-35) because he does not accompany us** as a Paqid or Hakham**.” But Yeshua said to him, “ You as Paqidim do not have the authority to prohibit this Tsaddiq, Hakham** (from doing works of righteousness/generosity**).” [[36]](#footnote-36)****And after these** things**, the Master also appointed seventy-two others and sent them out in pairs** (Heb. Zugot) to prepare the way **before him[[37]](#footnote-37) into every town and place where he was about to go.** | **About which delivernce the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the chesed (God’s Loving Kindness) for you; searching for what, or what manner of time, the Ruach of Mashiach made clear within them, testifying**[[38]](#footnote-38) **beforehand of the sufferings of Mashiach, and the glories that should follow. To them it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they ministered the things which are now reported to you by those who have heralded the Mesorah to you in the Ruach HaKodesh sent from Heaven; which things the messengers desire to consider.****Therefore, girdle the loins of your mind** (set yourself in a position of mental readiness) **be soberminded,[[39]](#footnote-39) set your trust fully in the loving-kindness** (chesed) **which is coming in the revelation** (*apokalupsis*) **of Yeshua HaMashiach. As obedient children** (talmidim**) not conformed according to the former passions in your ignorance: But according to the Holy One who called[[40]](#footnote-40)** (**קָרָא**) **you.** (Therefore) **you should also become holy[[41]](#footnote-41) in all your conduct because it is written:[[42]](#footnote-42) holy will you be because I Am holy.** |

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

**Firstborn Priests of the Diaspora**

In the second pericope Hakham Tsefet begins his addressing the mental preparedness required of (Firstborn) Priests of the Diaspora. Interestingly, we will see that the mental preparedness Hakham Tsefet is speaking of is wisdom, and the doctrines (**δόγμα**) of wisdom.[[43]](#footnote-43) However, wisdom apart from piety is not wisdom. True wisdom is found only in Torah Observance. Likewise, the purification of “your souls” is the result of meeting wisdom. This encounter is the reception of the “Divine Nature,” i.e. Hokhmah.[[44]](#footnote-44) Hakham Tsefet opened the previous pericope with a discourse to the “exiles of the diaspora.” The present pericope associates itself with the present Torah Seder by addressing the Priestly actions of the Firstborn as they work out tikun (rectification) in the diaspora.

**Holiness as a Hakha**

Ἱερός ἄνθρωπος – *ieros anthrapos,* man as a sanctuary[[45]](#footnote-45)

Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenised Jew also called Judaeus Philo, is a figure whose life bridges the gap of two ἤθη *–ethe*, (religious customs) that of the Greek and the Hebrew Jews. His life beginning in 20 B.C.E. and ending in 40/50 C.E. he was a contemporary of Hakham Tsefet. As we haves discussed in the past, it is not impossible for Apollos to have known Philo. Philo was a master of allegory. Some scholars describe him as a Greek Philosopher; however, this is only true in part. Being an Alexandrian Jew, he was not given to Greek Philosophy as much as interpreting the Torah allegorically. Thus, Philo produced a synthesis of both allegory and the development of concepts for future Hellenistic interpretation of messianic Hebrew thought.

By reviewing Philo’s writings, we can determine two basic thoughts concerning First Century hermeneutics. Firstly, we gain an understanding of first century messianic thought through Hebrew/Greek interpretations of the Torah. Secondly, Philo’s vocabulary is an important tool for understanding how the translators of the LXX and Nazarean Hakhamim interpreted the Torah. As a result, we have two powerful tools for developing Hebraic thought from Greek texts.

Philo demonstrates for us that the Greek word **ἅγιος** – *hagios* (usually translated as “holy”) is a synonym for **σοφία** – *sophia* (wisdom). The obvious Hebrew parallel is Hokhmah.[[46]](#footnote-46) The vocabulary Philo uses in his “Allegorical Interpretation” is very like that of 1st Tsefet (Pet). We are not interested in his allegorical interpretation so much when commenting on Peshat texts as his use of Greek vocabulary. Not only is the vocabulary similar, the thoughts on **ἅγιος** – *hagios* and **σοφία** – *sophia* seem to match the thoughts of the present pericope. Furthermore, Philo sees Aaron, the “Anointed High Priest” as a special analogy of the Hakham, by telling us that Aaron represents a “sacrificial intellect.” By this, Philo means that the Hakham/Aaron has made the Torah and wisdom the principal course of his intellect. These men become ἱερὸς ἄνθρωπος – *ieros anthrapos,* “man as a sanctuary” (**מקדש** Temple/Mishkan). The ἱερὸς ἄνθρωπος – *ieros anthrapos* uses his passions (Yetser HaRa) to fuel his love for the Torah. Just as the Mishkan housed the “neighboring presence” (Shekinah) of G-d, the Hakham houses the Divine Presence by being filled with the Torah, Oral and Written. The Ruach HaKodesh becomes the Divine Breath of the Oral Torah as it is breathed in and out of the Hakhamim. These thoughts are not stated to laud any Hakham in particular. Hakham Tsefet, his talmidim, Hillel (Luke) and Hakham Shaul, point towards men of spiritual maturity being Hakhamim. Therefore, every man is obligated to become a Hakham.

Ἱερὸς ἄνθρωπος – *ieros anthrapos,* “man as a sanctuary” (**מקדש**) now takes on a clearer Peshat meaning. In the next pericope Hakham Tsefet further develops this idea by saying, “**as living stones** (לֻחֹת – *luchot*) **built into a Mishkan[[47]](#footnote-47)** (spiritual house), **a holy** (separated) **priesthood,[[48]](#footnote-48)** of Hokhmah **to offer up sacrifices[[49]](#footnote-49) of the breathed[[50]](#footnote-50)** Torah **received from G-d through Yeshua HaMashiach.”[[51]](#footnote-51)** The Sages bring the Divine Presence into their personal sanctuary (ἱερὸς *–* **מקדש**) by breathing in and out the “unwritten Torah.”

Why do the Sages insist that the Mishkan and subsequent Temples are pictures of a man? Furthermore, what man are they referring to? “Thus ἱερεύς – *iereus* is a “*sacred*” person/Hakham, serving at God’s altar. The altar of the Diaspora is not a place where animals and burnt sacrifices are offered. The new altar is the desk/table of the Hakham as he offers up the sacrifice of intellectual endeavor for the reception (kibal) of the Oral Torah. Ἃγιον ἱεράτευμα – *agion irateuma* (holy Priesthood) contains the idea of being a Priesthood of holiness. By use of Philo’s vocabulary and typical Greek synonyms, we understand that the “holy Priesthood” is a Priesthood of Hakhamim. Again, Hakham Tsefet offers this as the definition of the **τελείως** – *teleios* “fully developed” man. The Priesthood of Hakhamim represents a Priesthood that has experienced an encounter with G-d and the Torah. In his letter to the Bereans, Hakham Shaul speaks of the Torah as a living entity. “**For the Torah of God** is**living and powerful…”**[[52]](#footnote-52)Likewise, Hakham Tsefet has stated, “**Not** (being) **renewed out of perishable seed but through the living word[[53]](#footnote-53)** (Oral Torah/Mesorah) **of G-d, which abides forever.**” In a similar manner Hillel is reported saying, “the more Torah the more life”[[54]](#footnote-54) lauding Talmud Torah. These “Priests” do not say, **where is the Lord?”**[[55]](#footnote-55) This is because the Sages have brought the Divine into their midst with collegiate study (*abodah*).[[56]](#footnote-56) Urbach points out that “Torah,” even for the Alexandrian Jews was not a “word” but rather an “institution,” and “an institution of customs and traditions.” The Torah is not the “Law of Nature” but the Law that master’s nature and its impulses.[[57]](#footnote-57) Nature is the result of the Laws found in the Orally Breathed Torah, the Breath of Holiness.

Hakham Tsefet uses these exact terms to describe the Priesthood of the Firstborn. The Priesthood of the Firstborn is a collegiate institution of Hakhamim who are ἱερός ἀνθρώπους – *ieros anthrapous,* men as a sanctuary (**מקדש**),” i.e. the Mishkan. These men are the personification of an “unwritten Law/Torah.” Being a talmid in the school of a Master/Hakham, was not just the “study” of the “unwritten Torah,” the talmid had to imitate the “living” Torah Scroll that his master represented. This living Torah was imitated in every gesture, which was believed to have been a part of the ancient tradition.[[58]](#footnote-58) These Hakhamim were more than just a living expression of the Torah, they became the new father to their talmidim.[[59]](#footnote-59) As fathers, they were responsible for the welfare of their sons (talmidim). In the school of his Hakham the talmid’s, character was fashioned and readied for the Y’mot HaMashiach (days of Messiah) and the Olam HaBa (the ever-coming world). In this way, the Hakhamim were the forge of the talmid’s soul. The acceptance of a talmid into the school of a Hakham meant the end of an “old life” (old man) and the beginning of a new being (creature).[[60]](#footnote-60) “He was a convert from one way of living to another”[[61]](#footnote-61) and said to have been “born again.” This is perfectly illustrated in the present Mishnaic portion of our Nazarean Talmud. Do “**not** be **conformed according to the former passions in your ignorance.”** In a previous pericope of 2 Luqas demonstrated this when the “talmidim” after hearing the Mesorah of the Master were “immersed into Messiah.” Becoming talmidim of the Master gave them the new life they were looking for.

Becoming a Sage is in and of its self a guarantee of admittance into the Olam HaBa (ever coming world). While the congregation that does not “know” and “keep” (guard) the Toroth is cursed,[[62]](#footnote-62) the Sage full of Torah enter the Olam HaBa with the gift of Torah and have no regrets. ("**Non, je ne regrette rien**"**!)**[[63]](#footnote-63) The talmid Hakham pursues the eternal reward of Torah, specifically the Torah that G-d used to create the world with, i.e. the Oral Torah. In a matter of speaking, Moshe Rabbenu forged a path to the top of Har Sinai. As his talmidim, we follow our master into the supernal realms of the Torah/in the Olam HaBa (ever coming world). Through the Torah’s special guidance, we are set on the “Way” to the Gan Eden. The very purpose of creation for the Sage and his talmidim is talmud Torah. However, this is not only for the sake of knowing. Talmud Torah is for the sake of doing as Hakham Tsefet says in the present pericope “**become holy in all conduct**”.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Yochanan ben Zakkai taught that focus on Torah study was of premier importance. The interpretation of the Mesorah and the application of the words of the Sages is the secret (So’od) of the inner Temple (ἱερός ἀνθρώπους – *ieros anthrapous,* men as a sanctuary – **מקדש** ).[[65]](#footnote-65) The sanctuary (ἱερός – **מקדש**) of a Hakham is his study hall. Here the Sage and his talmidim enter the presence of the Shekinah and feast on the words of the Divine Breath. Beneath the wings of his tallit, his talmidim are brought under the wings of the Shekinah.[[66]](#footnote-66) We have repeatedly posited the idea that we want to make talmidim stand. What does it mean to make talmidim to stand?

**“Mosheh received the Torah from Sinai and gospelled it down to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua gospelled it down to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gospelled it down to the Men of the Great Assembly. They** (the Men of the Great Assembly) **emphasized three things; Be deliberate in judgment, make stand many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah”** (P. Abot 1:1)

What does it really mean to **“make stand many disciples”**? In Hebrew, the word **“V’HaAmidú”** in the phrase: **וְהַעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הַרְבֵּה – V’HaAmidú Talmidím Harbé – make stand disciples many,** means: “to cause to stand,” or, “**to present, or, to nominate for office**” [past; masc-pl-imperative]. Therefore, to make a disciple is not just a matter of having a follower who accepts our beliefs and mimics our actions. – No, G-d forbid! To “make stand a disciple” means in a Hebraic/Biblical mindset “to support and instruct that disciple up to the point where he/she is ready “to be presented or nominated for office” in a Jewish community. This now is a matter of serious thought, long-term obligations, considerable amount of studies and dedicated mentorship.

Amen v’amen

**Some Questions to Ponder:**

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

**Blessing After Torah Study**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Shabbat Mevar’chim HaChodesh –**

**Sabbath of Proclamation of the New Moon of Av**

**Rosh Chodesh Av – Sunday evening August 4, 2024**

**Next Shabbat:**

**Shabbat: “Nefésh Ki-Techetá” – “If a soul trespasses”**

**(3nd Sabbath of Penitence)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Torah Reading:** |
| **נֶפֶשׁ, כִּי-תִמְעֹל** |  | **Saturday Afternoon** |
| **“Nefesh Ki-Timol”** | Reader 1 – Vayikra 5:14-16 | Reader 1 – Vayikra 6:12-14 |
| **“If a soul trespasses”** | Reader 2 – Vayikra 5:17-19 | Reader 2 – Vayikra 6:15-17 |
|  | Reader 3 – Vayikra 5:20-23 | Reader 3 – Vayikra 6:18-20 |
| Vayikra (Leviticus) 5:14-6:11‎ | Reader 4 – Vayikra 5:24-26 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 14:12-20+16:62Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:1-27 | Reader 5 – Vayikra 6::1-4 | **Monday & Thursday****Mornings** |
|  | Reader 6 – Vayikra 6:5-8 | Reader 1 – Vayikra 6:12-14 |
| Tehillim (Psalms) 75:1-11 | Reader 7 – Vayikra 6:9-11 | Reader 2 -- Vayikra 6:15-17 |
|  |  Maftir – Vayikra 6:9-11 | Reader 3 – Vayikra 6:18-20 |
| N.C.: 1 Pet 1:13-16; Lk 10:1 |  Ezekiel 14:12-20+16:62  Isaiah 1-27 |   |

**Reading Assignment for next Shabbat**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez** By: Rabbi Yitzchok Mangriso, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh KaplanPublished by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1989)**Leviticus – I-Vol. 11– “The Divine Service” pp. 110 -132** | **-Ramban: Leviticus Commentary on the Torah**Translated and Annotated by Rabbi Dr. Charles Chavel Published by Shilo Publishing House, Inc. (New York, 1974) **pp. 55 - 69** |



Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Hakham Dr. Hillel ben David

Hakham Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

Edited by His Honor Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham.

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

1. *Maskil* is derived from *wisdom, enlightenment.* As­saf was a brilliant thinker who utilized his wisdom to instruct people. *Rashi* quotes Pesachim 117a: Any psalm introduced with the word Mas­kil was said through a Turgeman, an orator who translated and in­terpreted the psalm for the benefit of the assemblage. *Meiri,* in accord with his interpretation on other superscriptions, holds that a *maskil* is a musical instrument. It derives its name from its capacity to enlighten the human intellect. The chords of the *maskil* focused the mind upon what was being said. Furthermore, it inspired the heart to repentance. Thus, the medium truly complemented the message. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pesiqta Rabbati or Pesiqta Rabbati (Hebrew: פסיקתא רבתי) is a collection of Aggadic Midrash (homilies) on the Pentateuchal and prophetic lessons, the special Sabbaths, etc. It was composed around 845 CE and probably called "Rabbati" (the larger) to distinguish it from the earlier Pesiqta. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Rabbi Moshe Isserles (Rama)* in *Torat HaOlah (1,11)* writes that the great Greek scholar and philosopher Socrates acquired the basic principles of his wisdom from the teachings of Assaf and Achitophel. As a result, Socrates recognized the falsehood of the Greek myths and idols, and vigorously challenged them. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hoshea (Hosea) 8:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ot is spelled defectively without a vav. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Tefillin, also called phylacteries (from Ancient Greek φυλακτήριον phylacterion, form of phylássein, φυλάσσειν meaning "to guard, protect"), are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah. They are worn by male observant Jews during weekday morning prayers. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Pasuk = a verse, usually from the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The term "Shema" is used by extension to refer to the whole part of the daily prayers that commences with Shema Yisrael and comprises Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Shacharit = morning [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 6:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shemot (Exodus) 31:16-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Carnal knowledge is an archaic or legal euphemism for sexual intercourse. The term derives from the Biblical usage of the verb know/knew, as in the King James Bible and other versions, a euphemism for sexual conduct. An example of this usage is in the first part of the Torah, the Book of Genesis, which describes how Adam and Eve created their first child: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with [the help of] HaShem." – Genesis 4:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Shabbat = Sabbath [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Shemot (Exodus) 13:9, 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Revelation 13:16-17; 14:9, 11; 20:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The Feast of Weeks, AKA Pentecost. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Counting of the Omer (Hebrew: ספירת העומר‎‎, Sefirat HaOmer, sometimes abbreviated as Sefira or the Omer) is an important verbal counting of each of the forty-nine days between the Jewish holidays of Passover and Shavuot as stated in the Hebrew Bible: Leviticus 23:15–16. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Astarte or Ashtoreth (Greek: Ἀστάρτη, Astártē) is the Hellenized form of the Middle Eastern goddess Ishtar, worshipped from the Bronze Age through classical antiquity. The name is particularly associated with her worship in the ancient Levant among the Canaanites and Phoenicians. She was also celebrated in Egypt following the importation of Levantine cults there. The name Astarte is sometimes also applied to her cults in Mesopotamian cultures like Assyria and Babylonia. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Yehezekel (Ezekiel)8:7-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Tammuz (Hebrew: תַּמּוּז‎, Transliterated Hebrew: Tammuz, "faithful or true son") is a Sumerian god of food and vegetation. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Easter is used only once in the KJV version of the Nazarean Codicil, in II Luqas (Acts) 12:4. It translates the Greek πάσχα pascha, meaning Passover. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Lent (Latin: Quadragesima: Fortieth) is a solemn religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing penance, mortifying the flesh, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Pars pro toto, Latin for "a part (taken) for the whole", is a figure of speech where the name of a portion of an object, place, or concept represents its entirety. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Quinquagesima is one of the names used in the Western Church for the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. It is also called Quinquagesima Sunday, Quinquagesimae, Estomihi, Shrove Sunday, or the Sunday next before Lent. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Tonsure is the practice of cutting or shaving some or all of the hair on the scalp, as a sign of religious devotion or humility. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Gematria is a Kabbalistic method of interpreting the Hebrew scriptures by computing the numerical value of words, based on those of their constituent letters. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Meaningful Life.com, “tish B’av and the three weeks.” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Meaningful Life, “Ten special Haftorah Readings” by Menachem Posner [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael Fishbane, eds., [*The Jewish Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jsb?ref=BibleBHS.Je2.1-3.5&off=158&ctx=o+%E2%80%9Cdivorce%E2%80%9D+Israel.+~The+use+of+the+marri) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 923. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Jeremiah, walter Brueggemann, Eerdmans Publishing 1998, pg.35. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Tremper Longman III, [*Jeremiah, Lamentations*](https://ref.ly/logosres/bakerubot24je?ref=Bible.Je2.9-13&off=1146&ctx=or+something+empty.%0a~The+oracle+concludes), ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, Baker Books, 2012), 30–31. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Me’am Lo’ez Anthology pg.31 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Jeremiah, Walter Brueggemann, Eerdmans Publishing 1998, pg.39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Me’am Lo’ez Anthology, pg.59 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Note here that the talmidim tried but they could not prevent this Tsaddiq/Hakham. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Bratcher, Robert G. *A Handbook on the Gospel of Mark*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1993. p. 299. Also not that this bears similarity to the Saying mimics Hillel’s sayings… “If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?” Aboth 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Note the similarity between Mordechai (Mk) 1:1 and the present reading. **“Behold, I send My messenger before your face, which will ‎prepare your way (Hebrew: Derekh/Halakha) before you” (Exodus 23:30; & Malachi 3:1).**  [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Prophecying [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Being sober-minded has nothing to do with drinking alcohol. Hakham Tsefet is referring here to being in a state of mental alertness. His use of this analogy is for the sake of understanding what it means to have mental clarity. It would also be noteworthy to say that if one has not experienced intoxication he will not understand Hakham Tsefet’s analogy. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Confirmation that we should be reading in Vayikra. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See ἅγιος (*hagios*) below [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Vayikra 19.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Σοφία καὶ τὰ σοφίας δόγματα, Philo Spec. Leg., I, 269: From the basic meaning there also derives the sense of “what is resolved,” the “resolution” of an individual (Hakham) or an assembly (of the Bench of there Hakhamim). Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. (2:230-231) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Cf. 2 Tsefet (Pet) 1:4. Reception of the “Divine Nature” is expressed in the Congregation through the 10 men, the three Hakhamim of the Bench and the seven Paqidim. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Trench, R. C. *Trench’s Synonyms of the New Testament*. Baker Books, 2000. p. 327 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Philo. *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*. New updated ed. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub, 1993. p. 40 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Here the “Mishkan” is not a “tent” per se. The Mishkan Hakham Tsefet is speaking of is a means of drawing down the Divine Presence/ Divine Mind. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. We could also interpret this to read “a wise Priesthood.” [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Sacrifices here take on the idea of Korbanot – those things, which bring us near to G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Πνευματικός – rooted in πνέω to *breathe* hard i.e. teaching. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. 1st Tsefet (Pet.) 2:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cf. Heb. 4:12. This pasuk can also be translated, “the Torah of G-d is living, making things happen.” [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Obviously the “living word of G-d is referring to the Oral Torah that is alive in the minded of the Torah talmidim. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Cf. m. Aboth 2:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Cf. Yirme'yahu (Jer.) 2:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Cf. m. Aboth 3:2-7, see also Matt. 18:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Urbach, Ephraim Elimelekh. *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1979. p. 289-90 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Neusner, Jacob. *First-Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan Ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of Torah*. Augmented ed. New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1982. p.95 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Cf. Yochanan 7:49. “Lawless” hands crucified the Master (2 Luqas 2:23). Here the Greek word **ἄνομος** – *anomos* means those who are 1st without the Torah. 2nd it refers to the Tz’dukim and their refusal to accept the Oral Torah. Similarly, Yeshua will speak to those who are **ἄνομος** – *anomos* and tell them to depart because he never knew them. Cf. Mt 7:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Google it ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Cf. Ya’akob (Jam.) 1:25, 4:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Neusner, Jacob. *First-Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan Ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of Torah*. Augmented ed. New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1982. p. 98 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. b. Shab. 31a; Sanh. 96a [↑](#footnote-ref-66)