

ספר מי השילוח - חלק ראשון

Mei Hashiloach - Vol I. Genesis - *Bereishith - Miketz*

ENLIGHTENMENT

After spending ten years in jail, Joseph interpreted the Chief Butler's dream; that after three days Pharaoh would restore him to his position as Butler. But though the interpretation came true the man forgot Joseph and did not mention to anyone on the outside that he had encountered a Hebrew prisoner who had been falsely accused, etc. Until Pharaoh dreamed of the seven fat cows swallowed by the seven thin cows, etc. This Torah uses as its springboard the Hebrew phrase שנתים ימים *Shnatayim Yanim* translated as Two Years of Days, with which the Sidra opens. Grammatically the verse might just have well used the word for years, *Shnatayim* and dispensed with the *Yanim* days, but the word 'days' is there for a good reason.

The original days are the days of Creation described in the first chapter of Genesis. When God created Light, the verse tells us, 'God saw the light and it was good.' The first appearance of the word Good in the Torah is right there in the description of Light. The Second day of Creation does not have the word Good associated with it. Tuesday, the Third day of Creation has it twice, as does Day Six.

Then God said, "Let the water beneath the sky come together into one area, and let dry ground appear!" And that is what happened. God called the dry ground 'land', and He called the water that had come together 'oceans'. And God saw how good it was.

Then God said, "Let vegetation sprout all over the earth, including seed-bearing plants and fruit trees, each kind containing its own seed!" And that is what happened. Vegetation sprouted all over the earth, including seed-bearing plants and fruit trees, each kind containing its own seed. And God saw that it was good. The twilight and the dawn were the third day. (Gen 1:9-13)

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth each kind of living creature, each kind of livestock and crawling thing, and each kind of earth's animals!" And that is what happened. God made each kind of the earth's animals, along with every kind of livestock and crawling thing. And God saw how good it was.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, the livestock, everything that crawls on the earth, and over the earth itself!"

So God created mankind in His own image; in His own image God created them; He created them male and female.

God blessed the humans by saying to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it! Be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, and every living thing that crawls on the earth!"

God also told them, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant that grows throughout the earth, along with every tree that grows seed-bearing fruit. They will produce your food. I have given all green plants as food for every wild animal of the earth, every bird that flies, and to every living thing that crawls on the earth." And that is what happened.

Now God saw all that he had made, and indeed, it was very good! The twilight and the dawn were the sixth day. (ibid. 24-31)

The two good days, the third and sixth, are the days alluded to in the first verse of this Sidra. The third day saw the growth of vegetation, seeds, fruit and grains for us to eat. The Talmud tells of an incident, In the days of R. Shmuel b. Nachmani there was both a famine and plague. ‘Which one should we pray for,’ people asked him. ‘Since we cannot pray for both, should we pray for the plague to end and simply continue to endure the famine?’

‘Pray for the famine to end,’ answered R. Shmuel b. Nachmani. ‘For when God sends abundance He sends it to people who are destined to live. As it written, “Open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with desire.”’ (Ps. 145:16) (Taanit 8b)

That there exists such abundance in the world is proof, according to R. Shmuel b. Nachmani, that God intends for us to live.

The Sixth day of Creation saw the creation of Humankind, Adam and Eve, and the possibility for transcendence; for a human being to become more than it was at the outset. Unlike the animal, the beast, fish, insect or bird, a person can ignore the dictates of their genes, their instincts and drives, to exercise choice and free will.

The Izbicy sees two aspects of humanity. The purely physical; the human being as a consumer of food and material things; this is the larger concept of Day Three. The other aspect of humanity is spiritual; the person as communicator, the apotheosis of mankind, the purpose of Day Six.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

[1:2] It was after the end of two years of days that Pharaoh dreamed...

Years of days hints at the two days of creation in which all the pleasures were created. On the third day, (Tuesday) the pleasures of eating were created, while on the sixth day, (Friday) the pleasures of humanity was created. The Human Being was formed, the Source of Life, Honor and Dominion, because the human has dominion over everything.

ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים ופרעה חלם. שנתים ימים רומז כי בשני ימים נבראו כל הטובות שבעולם היינו ביום ג' נברא טובת אכילה וביום ו' נברא צורת האדם היינו שורש חיים וכבוד והתנשאות, כי האדם מנושא על כל,

Before anything conscious is created God has already prepared its sustenance. The third day has seen to the provision of abundance. But abundance is nothing if the consumer is trapped in a cycle of blind addiction or compulsion. For the blessings of Day Three to be real, a person has to be able to stand above everything material and deny him or herself any pleasure. If I am unable to control my consumption in any way, I am not free. If I am not free I am stuck in prison, like Joseph was.

God creates Adam on the sixth day by breathing into him. Adam has something the animals do not, the ‘spirit of speech’; something essentially divine. This is what the Izbicy refers to as שורש חיים *Shoresh Chayim* - Source of Life in Adam. It makes possible the concept of honor and elevation.

Animals may have leaders but they don’t follow their leader because it has the most

persuasive ideas, or because it has the most convincing argument or because it has a deeper understanding of nature. Recently over one hundred million people voted in the USA presidential elections because of the words and ideas expressed by the candidate of their choice.

For the blessings of Day Six to become real a person has to be able to see how their abilities of speech and discernment are divine gifts, not political tools. If I cannot connect to God using words, if I am bound to grope in the darkness inside my own head for every idea and concept, I am stuck in prison, in the dark, like Joseph was.

This is what the Izbicy refers to as the evil in the two days; the inability to transcend the downward pull of earth and the stickiness of politics.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

When a person is purified in these two aspects they achieve salvation. This is the meaning of the verse ‘It was after the end of two years of days,’ meaning when a stop and end is put to the evil in these two days, the salvation comes immediately. This is why the Midrash opens this week’s Sidra with the quote, An end - He puts - to darkness. (Job 28:3)

God puts a time limit for the world, how many years it has to remain in darkness. And what was the reason the God set a time limit on it? Because as long as the evil desire rules in the world the world remains in darkness and in the shadow of death, as it is written, (ibid.) ‘Stone of gloom and death-shadow’. But, as soon as the evil desire is uprooted there is no more darkness and death shadow. (Genesis Rabbah 89:1)

וכאשר יזדכך האדם באלו השנים יבא לישועה, וזה פי' ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים היינו כשהיה הסוף וקץ בהרע שיש באלו השני ימים אז מיד תבא הישועה, וע"ז רומז התחלת המדרש בפ' הזאת: קץ שם לחשך, (איוב כח:ג) זמן נתן לעולם כמה שנים יעשה באפילה, ומאי טעם קץ שם לחושך שכל זמן שיצר הרע בעולם אופל וצלמות בעולם, דכתיב (שם) אבן אופל וצלמות, נעקר יצר הרע מן העולם אין אופל וצלמות בעולם, [בראשית רבא פ"ט א']

The Mei Hashiloach sees Joseph as incidental to this message. The Sidra is not so much about Joseph, Pharaoh, Egypt, dreams and famine, as it is about the lesson we each have to learn in order to escape or transcend our individual and collective exile. Before we make the connection between our relationship to the Two Days and our current situations, no amount of prayer and piety will bring us closer to our salvation. Salvation in Izbicy is enlightenment. No more and no less. Once we realize that we are stuck we are no longer stuck.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

What this means is that as soon as an end is put to the evil in these two things, then the salvation is immediate.

היינו כשיבא קץ לחושך היינו להרע הנמצא באלו הדברים אז יבא תיכף הישועה.

The next Mei Hashiloach Torah deals with Joseph's relationship to himself. After spending ten years in prison, Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's Butler and Baker. Subsequently he endured another two years of jail until Pharaoh's dream and the opening of this week's Sidra. Those last two years were the most unbearable for Joseph because he could think of no good reason why he should still be suffering. The first ten years had made sense to him. He had spoken bad about his brothers to their father Jacob and needed a year to work through his feelings for each of them, to see how each had his reason for acting as he did; but the two additional years? Prison was a penitentiary.

In order to make sense of those two added years one needs to understand Joseph's weakness. He had a tendency to speak before fully thinking through what the consequences of his speech might be.

In *Ma'amar Patach Eliyahu*, we were discussing the concept of Hidden Worlds. There it was taught that a closed world is anywhere or anything wherein God is hidden.

God tells Adam not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that he eats of it he will surely die. God's reasons are hidden because it is a closed world, not revealed. All Adam is told are the consequences of eating.

Along comes the serpent and reveals God in the eating, 'God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God,' the serpent tells Eve, without permission. 'You'll know good and evil.' Whenever you expose and reveal God from a closed world, God departs and the revelation is a dead one.

'Here's the stuff God doesn't want you to know,' explains the serpent. 'I'm giving you all the insider information because it's important for you to know what's going on. It's very serious.'

Adam and Eve acted on the information without delay, and that was their big mistake. The snake had revealed God's reason for telling them not to eat of the tree. But it was still hidden, in the sense that it was inside the minds of Adam and Eve. It was only revealed and brought out into the open by their acting out the information. By eating the fruit they were exposing God's reasons, they were immediately aware of good and evil, right and wrong, life and death.

What they should have done was sit with the information a while or overnight, before acting on it. That way God would have been revealed from their minds and their bodies which are revealed worlds. When God is revealed this way he does not depart. But if you reveal God out of a world in which He was hidden, He departs. They ate of the tree but God was not in the fruit; their act was just an act not a revelation. Their own eyes were opened but we, looking at them see nothing new.

When the snake told them about God's reasons for the prohibition - that eating of the tree would give them knowledge which would make them like gods - they could have tasted God, but they didn't want to. Instead they craved the taste of knowing good and evil. For that moment, when the serpent revealed God's motive, they could have sat back and said, 'Ahhhh! Now we understand.' That understanding would have become their own reality. Then when

they acted it out it would have revealed their understanding of God. Instead they exposed God directly from His hiding place. It was an empty revelation, dead and barren. No joy came of it. There was no sense of power and achievement, only shame and guilt.

Here Joseph made the same mistake. For as soon as he interpreted the dream of the Butler concerning the three vines he realized its message. He hadn't even heard the dream of the Baker concerning the three baskets of bread yet. No sooner had Joseph seen that the dream was a 'remembering-dream', that he had not been forgotten or abandoned, that God was speaking out of the mouth of the Butler, Joseph acted on it without a moment's hesitation. He didn't even finish the sentence he was speaking. As we read,

The chief butler related his dream to Joseph. "In my dream," he said, "all of a sudden there was a vine in front of me! On the vine were three branches that budded. Blossoms shot out, and clusters grew up that produced ripe grapes. Then, with Pharaoh's cup in my hand, I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, then handed the cup directly to Pharaoh."

Then Joseph told him, "This is what your dream means. The three branches are three days. Within three days, Pharaoh will encourage you and return you to your responsibilities. You'll attend to Pharaoh's personal wine cup, just as you did when you were his butler. But keep me in mind when things go well for you. Be sure to extend kindness to me by remembering me to Pharaoh. Bring me out of this prison, because I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews. Not only that, I haven't done anything that deserves me being confined to this pit." (Gen. 40:9-15)

It may seem harsh and judgmental to us sitting and reading this, to say that it was wrong of Joseph, who had been incarcerated for ten years, to blurt out his request to the butler after interpreting the dream. What should Joseph have done instead?

Well, remember, Joseph had just spent ten years in prison meditating on his propensity for blurting out the truth without consider its consequences. If he was cured of the blurting weakness he certainly failed to display it in this instance.

In acting out his first impulse to beg the butler to remember him and mention him to Pharaoh, Joseph was revealing God from a hidden world, and God departed. Joseph needed to wait overnight, to internalize the revelation God had just sent him, that he had been remembered and not forgotten. Then, on the morrow, when he mentioned his request to the butler, to be remembered and mentioned to Pharaoh, the revelation would have been coming from inside him, from a revealed world.

It is against this background that the Izbicy sets the coming Torah.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

[1:3] It was after two years that Pharaoh dreamed...

The reason Joseph had to endure another two years of prison - in addition to the ten years he had already suffered - is this. To begin with it was decreed that he go to prison because he sinned against the ten tribes, his brothers. After going through the testing of his prison term, another two years were added to his sentence corresponding to Joseph himself, and his brother Benjamin.

ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים. הענין שהיה יוסף בבית הסוהר תחילה עשר שנים ואח"כ נתוסף לו עוד שניים, כי תחלה נגזר עליו עשר יען כי חטא נגד עשרה שבטים ואח"כ כאשר נתברר בבית הסוהר אז נתוסף לו עוד שנים נגד עצמו ונגד בנימין,

The way Izbicy sees the world, everything is necessary. There is no such thing as an accident. When a person does something wrong they are merely starting a lengthy process of *Birur* - Clarification, through which the act will in retrospect be seen and proven to have been necessary.

When we worshiped the Golden Calf, God said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff necked people.' (Ex. 32:9) Little did we know how God was already rearranging the facts and details of the deed we had just committed to make it a story about our stiff-neckedness rather than about our idolatry. And here we are 3300 years later, having defied every earthly power including time itself, to remain Jewish, stiff-necked as ever, still insisting we are God's people, that we belong to Him.

90 days after we came out of Egypt we worshiped a Golden Calf because we were stiff necked. Thousands of years later we worship God because we are stiff necked people, we do what stiff necked people do and always have done. Our post-Egyptian paganism was a function of stiff-neckedness, nothing more. And so God clarifies our acts, even our worst sins become other than they were, become virtues.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

For that is the measure by which such things are counted. When a man sins against God, he has to be moved by God - through the process of *Birur* - assaying and clarification - a process which may be painful, to the point where the sin will be shown to have been necessary, and atoned for.

כי כך הוא המדה כאשר יחטא האדם נגד הש"י אז יביאהו ה' לברורים אשר האדם יסבול מהם, ואח"כ כאשר יתברר לטוב ויתכפר

Hurting yourself is a sin for which you get punished. And then, because you put yourself through pain, you are punished again for having hurt yourself by needing punishment. And then you have to answer to God for putting God through your process with you. When you cause your own suffering it is not only you who have to suffer. God suffers with you. Now answer to God for causing His suffering, and then answer to yourself again for doing something to hurt yourself again.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

But then, when the clarifying process is finished and everything is atoned

for, the person may have to suffer for having put himself through the process in the first place.

Why did he need to go through the whole cycle, why did he have to put himself in the situation that would subsequently require the painful assaying process? Whatever a person suffers is also the cause of God's suffering, as it is written 'In their suffering is His suffering.' (Isa. 63:9)

That explains why when the person is finished his process of *Birur* - clarifying, brought on through the sin, only then is there an additional reckoning to be dealt with. He must now go through *Birur* - process with regard to the pain he has just subjected himself to. For this is also somewhat sinful. As we see in the Talmud, 'Why does the Nazir, who foreswore drinking wine, have to bring a sin offering? Because he foreswore wine and thus punished himself.' (Taanit 11a)

אז צריך לסבול מזה עצמו כי למה היה צריך להכניס עצמו בדבר הצריך בירור ויוצרך לסבול מזה כי ממה שהאדם סובל גם כביכול הש"י סובל עמו כי בכל צרתם לו צר [ישעיה ס"ג ט'], ולכן כאשר יברר האדם את עצמו כפי חטאו, אז נוסף לזה הבירור צריך לברר את עצמו גם על צערו, כי גם זה הוא שמץ חטא כמו שמבואר בגמ' [תענית י"א]. אשר חטא שציער את עצמו,

God, as was said in the first *Mei Hashiloach* of the previous *Sidra*, treats Joseph as though under a microscope. In Talmudic parlance we would say that God is being fussy, pedantic and exacting with Joseph, measuring everything down to a hair's-breadth. But that is because Joseph has chosen to live his life under a microscope. Having chosen to follow in his father's footsteps, attempting to live free of doubt, every moment spent in fear and trembling at the thought of doing something wrong, Joseph invites God to treat him just so.

That very same night, when Joseph came to the realization that with his judgmental behavior he had wronged himself and his brother Benjamin, Pharaoh had his dream and the next morning Joseph was released from jail.

***** *Mei Hashiloach Text* *****

That's why Joseph was first sentenced to ten years of prison for hurting his ten brothers and only then, after having been assayed in prison like silver purified for all to see, only then was he required to go through the process again to atone for his own pain and the pain of Benjamin. Then, as soon as that was over, he was redeemed immediately

לכן בתחילה נגזר על יוסף עשר שנים נגד עשרה אחיו ואח"כ כאשר נתברר בבית הסוהר

ככסף צרוף בעליל, אז הוצרך להתברר על צערו ועל צער בנימין אחיו ואחר שבירר גם את זה באלו השתי שנים אז מיד נפדה.

The next Torah begins with a quote from the Midrash dealing with Pharaoh's dream and juxtaposing it against Jacob's ladder-dream. Jacob's dream had the phrase 'And behold, God was standing over him.' Pharaoh's dream begins, 'And behold, he is standing over the river.' The Hebrew word על *AL* may be translated variously as On Top Of, Over, Upon. In the ladder-dream God is standing, so to speak, on Jacob. In this dream Pharaoh is standing on the river; the Nile is his god, so in contrast to Jacob, Pharaoh stands on top of his god.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

[1:4] And behold, he is standing over the river.

We learn in the Midrash, 'Pharaoh asked Joseph, "Who sustains whom; do I depend upon my god or my god upon me?" Joseph told him, "Your god depends upon you," as it is written, And behold, he is standing over the river.' (Genesis Rabba 89:3)

והנה עומד על היאור, איתא במדרש [בראשית רבה פ"ט ג'] אמר פרעה מי מתקיים על מי אני על אלהי או אלהי עלי, אמר לו אתה על אלהיך שנאמר והנה עומד על היאור,

While the Midrash quoted above can be interpreted in many different conventional ways, the Izbicy offers a radical reading.

Where do the gods come from? Well, obviously they come from our minds. But just because they are human constructs it doesn't necessarily mean that they are therefore powerless. As we read in the Midrash;

When the world's population gathered on the plain (at Babylon) to build the tower of babel, God gathered 70 angels who would each become the avatars of their distinct pagan nations and said, 'Let us divide this multitude among ourselves, let us each choose a group and set ourselves up as separate entities.' They threw lots, every angel chose his allotted people, and by chance it was Abraham and his seed who fell to God's portion. Then God said, 'Now let us all go down and confuse their languages,' and so it was that God and those gods descended into the world, and so nations were spread out over the face of the earth. (Pirkei D'Reb Eliezer 24)

Those angels later become the gods of those nations, fighting among themselves for dominion and supremacy, but mostly fighting to defeat Israel, whom none of them wanted for their portion. The angel who struggled and lost his fight with Jacob, who hurt Jacob's hip and sciatic-nerve, was none other than the Angel of Esau - Edom; the Avatar of Rome. The god of Rome is not Christian, it is much older. Pagans worship that which they fear, says the Izbicy.

Perhaps they fear rejection above all else, and have therefore evolved a religion, Christianity, whose bleeding heart is unconditional love?

The god/angel of Egypt has a name, *Rahab*. רהב - Rahab means a boastful lie. When I think so highly of myself that I make promises I am never going to be able to keep, those are *RAHABIM* - Boastful Lies.

In Egypt it was the common belief that their gods transport dead people to another world where they continue to live a parallel life. Now on the surface of it it might seem to be no more boastful than our Jewish beliefs in life after death, and the whole elaborate concept of *Olam Haba* - The World to Come. And that is precisely why Egypt is such an enduring theme in Judaism, because their ideas parallel ours on many levels. We lived there, and we know all about them.

Nowhere in the Torah, however, does God boast about the things He will do for us in the World to Come. Every promise concerns His power in this world, over the rain and wind, over the seas and skies, over the earth and animals. And this far God has shown His ability to fulfil every word of every promise, not a syllable has fallen on fallow ground. What we are all still waiting for is the denouement of history, not proof of God's strength.

Now it is important to know that gods take on the shape and form their believers give them. This is the crucial element of worship. We believe that by giving God pleasure we also give Him power; that obedience and commitment to God fulfil the instruction in Psalms, 'Give power to God, for His pride is over Israel and His might in the Frisson.' (Ps. 68:35)

Pharaoh understands perfectly well that his gods were shaped by his people, through their thoughts, fears, hopes and desires. The stories Egyptian people learn and tell their children, the events, both natural and political, like war or famine, which transpire in their lifetime, all combine to shape a nation's ideas of worship. What Pharaoh wanted Joseph to tell him was which is more powerfully motivating, the effect of Pharaoh on his god, or vice versa?

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

What this means is that Pharaoh, after seeing how successful he was in all his endeavors, wanted to know and get a proper understanding of whether his god and his religion rule over him and dictate his thoughts, and - it follows logically therefore - the reason for his success is that everything coming into his mind is prompted by the god who has made the decisions. Or whether he is capable of independent thinking and desire, and that when Pharaoh decides to try something his god is called upon and compelled to make it succeed?

Joseph told him that his dream proves the latter - Pharaoh, you sustain your god, and the thoughts and desires first come to you independently and only then is your god forced to come to your assistance.

הענין בזה כי פרעה רצה לדעת אחרי ראותו כי כל אשר יחפץ יצליח רצה לעמוד על התבוננת הדבר אם אלהיו ויראתו מושלים עליו ולא יבא למחשבתו שום דבר רק מה שאלהיו ישלח לו לפיכך יצליח, או תחילה יבא למחשבתו ולרצונו לעשות ואח"כ אלהיו וכחו עוזרים לו להצליח, ואמר לו אתה על אלהיך, היינו תחילה יבא למחשבתך ואח"כ

הכח המושל עליך יכרח לעזורך,

It is axiomatic of the Mei Hashiloach that God is in charge of us. That if we are not actually prophets we are children of prophets. Everything is from Heaven, even Fear of Heaven. And as has been emphasized in Izbicy ever since the ladder-dream of Jacob, God stands over us, even when we are in deepest sleep.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

It is not so with Israel, for Israel is the *Merkava* - Chariot for the *Shechina* and are always only acting on the desire of God.

אבל בישראל אינו כן כי ישראל הם מרכבה לשכינה וכפי רצונו ית' כן יתנהגו

We are the vehicle God uses to move and evolve through time and space; He is in the driving seat. In the future, things may be different, for once God's purpose is achieved we will have much greater autonomy. When the World to Come is actualized then all the restrictions of this world will fall away and it will all have been a dream. Every prohibition and restriction will be shown to have been a metaphor, as has been discussed. In the future we may be in the driving seats, as we find with the Patriarchs, once they achieved enlightenment they were allowed to dictate terms to God; telling God how they want to live. Abraham refused to leave Mount Moriah after the *Akedah* until God swore he would not test him any more. Nowadays God delights *upon* us, but in the future the roles will be reversed.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

It is only in the future when the world achieves its ultimate purpose that the verse 'You will decree a saying and it will be fulfilled for you,' shall come to pass. (Job 22:28)

As with Abraham after he had successfully passed the ten trials, and with Isaac and Jacob after they had achieved their perfection, it is written about them 'Then will you delight upon God.' (Isa. 58:14)

רק לעתיד כשיגיעו לתכלית השלמות אז נאמר ותגזור אומר ויקם לך, [איוב כ"ב כ"ח]
וכמו אברהם אע"ה אחר נסיון העשירי ויצחק ויעקב כשנשלמו עליהם נאמר אז תתענג על
ה', [ישעי' נ"ח י"ד]

The idea that God is manipulating the narrative is not a novel Izbicy suggestion. It is a basic assumption in Judaism. One of the most basic and comprehensive texts teaching this idea is a well known Midrash.

‘Go, look at the actions of God, awesome in His plotting and scheming over people.’ (Ps. 66:5)

R. Yehoshua b. Korcha said: Even the wonderful things You do for us, God, are brought about through schemes, plots and conspiracy. Come and see. From the first day that God created the world He already created the angel of death, as it is written, ‘And darkness on the face of the water.’ (Gen 1:2) Which, as R. B’rachya explains, refers to the Angel of Death who blackens the face of all creatures. Adam wasn’t created until the sixth day, yet he is libeled as the one who is responsible for the Angel of Death, as it is written, ‘For on the day you eat of it you will surely die.’ (ibid)

Do you know what it resembles most? It’s like someone who wanted to divorce his wife. So, on his way home from work he dropped into the scribe’s office and had him write her a bill of divorce. He walked into the house with the divorce in his hand (and his friends to act as witnesses) looking for an excuse to hand it to her.

“Pour me a drink,” he said to her. She brought him the drink.

“Here, this is your divorce,” he said, taking the drink from her hand.

“What did I do wrong?” she asked.

“Leave my house,” he replied. “This drink is tepid.”

“How did you know,” she asked him, “that I would pour you a lukewarm drink, that you came home with the divorce all ready and prepared?”

That’s what Adam said to God. “Master of the Universe,” he complained. “Two thousand years before the world was created the Torah was already your nursling, as it is written ‘Then I was by him his nursling, and I was His delight for a day and a day, rejoicing always before him.’ (Prov. 8:30) A day and a day equal two thousand years at is is written, ‘For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.’ (Ps. 90:4) And in Your Torah it is written: ‘This is the law when a man dies in a tent.’ (Num. 19:14) Now, if You hadn’t already decreed death upon Your creatures would You have written it into the Torah? Obviously it’s nothing more than a conspiracy to find an excuse to blame ‘Death’ on me,” says Adam to God. This is what the verse refers to when it says ‘Go, look at the actions of God, awesome in plotting and scheming over people.’ (Ps. 66:5)

Similarly we find God saying to Moses, ‘Not a man of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your forefathers,’ (Deut.1:35) ‘A Man’ in the verse above refers to Moses himself, for we often find Moses referred to as the man in the Torah, as it is written, ‘The man, Moses,’ (Num. 12) referring to one particular man. As we read elsewhere in Scripture, ‘And the man, at the time of Saul, who was senior among men.’ (I Sam. 17) So we find God saying to Moses, ‘Now you will see what I do to Pharaoh.’ (Ex. 6:1) God was already hinting to Moses (at their first encounter at the Burning Bush) that while he would witness the downfall of Pharaoh, he would not live to see the war against the thirty one kings who ruled Canaan when Joshua conquered it. And now that Moses rebuked the people, saying, ‘Listen you rebels,’ (Num. 20) God told him, ‘Therefore you will not lead the congregation into the land.’ (ibid.) So, as you see, God is awesome in His plotting and scheming.

You find the same thing with Joseph. The Torah tells us his brothers saw that their father favored him. Because of a few ounces of purple wool with which their father made Joseph a striped tunic he caused all that fraud and deception? The Hebrew word פסים *PASIM* - Stripes has four letters, corresponding to the four times Joseph was sold. P =

Potiphar. S = Slavers. I = Ishmaelites. M = Midianites. A striped tunic was sufficient to force all the tribes to descend into Egypt? R. Yudan says it was because God was trying to find a way of fulfilling the decree He had made with Abraham at the Covenant Between The Pieces, when God had said, 'Knowing - know that your seed will be a sojourner in a land not theirs, and they will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.' (Gen. 15:13)

So, God brought it about that this entire calumny came upon them. He arranged for Jacob to love Joseph more than his brothers, who therefore resented him, and sold him to the Ishmaelites who took him down to Egypt. So that Jacob who would eventually hear that Joseph was alive in Egypt might take his entire family down there to be enslaved. Don't read the verse, 'And Joseph was brought down to Egypt,' (Gen 39:1) rather read it, 'And Joseph brought his father and the tribes down to Egypt.'

R. Tanhuma said, 'Do you know what this is like? It's like a cow that refused to allow the farmer to put a yoke over its shoulders. You know what they did? They dragged the calf from the cow's side and put it in the field the farmer wanted to plow. The calf stood there lowing and calling for its mother. The cow, hearing its calf in distress, allowed itself to be yoked just to get access to the field to join its calf. So it was. God wanted to fulfil His decree to to enslave Abraham's grandchildren, (and subsequently bring them forth with great wealth) so what did God do? He manipulated all these events in order to bring them down into Egypt, in order to have them redeem the pledge. That's why the text says: 'Joseph is brought down to Egypt.' So you can clearly see how God is awesome in plotting and scheming over people. (Tanchuma - Vayeshev 4)

King David refers to God as the *נורא עלילה Nora Alila* - Terrifying Schemer. We are but pawns in God's hands as He moves us through our lives in pursuit of His goals. Or, as Omar Khayam suggests, '

Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.'
(Rubaiyat - Quatrain 49)

The implication of this Midrash is that even the death of his wife Rachel was part of God's design to have Jacob favor Joseph over his brothers, because Rachel had been his true love, and Joseph was her first child. When she died Jacob's feeling were somehow transferred to Joseph, triggering his brothers' resentment.

Pharaoh is somewhat chagrined to discover that he is not a pawn in his gods' hands, claws, hoofs, flagellae or tentacles, that in fact he is the one doing all the manipulating. He would have preferred, perhaps, to be an agent rather than the vector of events.

But then the rebbe says the most extraordinary thing. That God is looking forward to the time when He can be manipulated, like a father waiting for his children to grow old enough to play rough with him. That once the plot is acted out and the goal is reached, God wants His loved ones to order Him about. That in the future the verse 'You will decree a saying and it will be fulfilled for you,' shall come to pass. (Job 22:28)

The rebbe uses the Talmudic discussion which follows as a metaphor, interpreting it to show that God wants us to reach a place where we are telling Him who to be, so to speak.

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

This is hinted at in the debate in the Talmud, ‘Whoever is traveling in the wilderness and does not know when the Sabbath day falls; R. Huna says He should count six and observe one day, Chiya bar Rav says, Observe one day and then count six.’ (Shabbat 69b)

Six working days are an analogy corresponding to the efforts a person puts into his life, while the Sabbath hints at the assistance he gets from God. Now, R. Huna is talking about someone who has achieved his perfection, whose entire heart is always and only drawn after the will of God. Such a person is permitted to act upon his intuition and call upon God to bring it to completion. But so long as a person has not achieved perfection he is required to take the Yoke of Heaven upon himself first, before doing anything. To see to it that God agrees to his act before doing it.

וזה נרמז בגמ' [שבת ס"ט:] המהלך בדרך ואינו יודע מתי שבת רב הונא אמר מונה ששה ימים ומשמר יום אחד, חייא בר רב אומר משמר יום אחד ומונה ששה, כי ששת ימי המעשה הם השתדלות האדם ושבת היינו הסייעתא מהש"י, ור"ה מדבר באדם שנשלם בכל שלבו נמשך אחר רצון הש"י אז מותר לו לעשות השתדלות ואח"כ יבקש מהש"י שיגמור בעדו, אבל בעוד שאין האדם בשלימות אז צריך לקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים קודם כל מעשה ואם יסכים לו הש"י אז יעשה.

Elsewhere the rebbe explains how the names of the two sages, R. Huna and Chiya bar Rav, are the keys to understanding their positions. *Huna* means great wealth. R. Huna represents someone who has already achieved enlightenment. Such a person may tell God what to do. *Chiya bar Rav* means someone who is still a *Bar Rav* - Student. Such a person needs first to submit and be told what God wants from him, before acting. (See *Mei Hashiloach* - Vol. I. Mishpatim)

***** Mei Hashiloach Text *****

[1:5] Pharaoh had Joseph sent for... They hurried Joseph from the pit.

The Hebrew word for hurry - *Yaratz* - is cognate with the word - *Rotzeh* - Desire. That is to say Joseph was completely comfortable with all the events he had undergone. Because God sent great joy into his heart in order that he not hold any resentments against Him.

וישלח פרעה וכו' ויריצהו מן הבור. היינו שנתרצה על כל מה שעבר עליו, כי הש"י שלח שמחה בלבו לבל יהיה לו שום תרעומות עליו.

[1:6] You hear a dream to interpret it.

Because everything that happens in this life is but a dream requiring interpretation. And as it is interpreted, so it actualizes as the person's reality.

תשמע חלום לפתור אתו. היינו כי כל עניני עוה"ז הם כחלום הצריך פתרון וכמו שיפתור לו האדם כן יקום אצלו,

A person who comprehends that everything happening to him is a word from God, that everything lives at the Mouth of God, understands the reason for everything (and can taste the divine in each event) and realizes true Life.

והאדם המבין בכל כי הכל הוא רק מהש"י ורק ממוצא פיו יחיה הכל, זה מבין טעם בכל דבר ומגיע לחיים אמיתיים,

As with bread which provides us with life, the chief life force which comes through the bread is the Word of God in the bread. Whoever eats without understanding this eats as an animal and therefore only takes from the bread the most rudimentary and temporary Life Force.

כמו לחם העיקר המחיה הנמצא בו המוצא פי ה' ומי שאוכל פשוט כבהמה, אינו משיג מהלחם רק חיי עוה"ז,

But one who comprehends that it is the Word of God coming through the bread as nourishment also receives the divine and eternal Life coming through the bread. For bread - *LECHEM* has the same letters *CHALOM* as the word Dream. Bread, like dreams also requires interpretation. And similarly, so do all the pleasures, for bread is a metaphor describing all the pleasures and good things of this world.

והמבין כי מוצא פי ה' הוא המחיה זה ישיג חיי עולם, כי לחם הוא אותיות חלם היינו שצריך פתרון, וכן כל הנאות, כי כל ההנאות והטובות שבעולם נמשלין ללחם.

[1:8] May *EL-SHADAI* give you mercy...

Rashi explains it thus. May He who said, "Dy - Enough," to His world, say, "Dy - Enough," to my troubles.

The holy rebbe, the Rebbe Reb Bunim of P'shischa said about this holy Name of God, *Shadai*, that when created, the world kept on expanding and growing until God said, "Dy - Enough." As is written in the Talmud. (Hagigah 14a)

ואל שדי יתן לכם רחמים. פירש"י מי שאמר לעולמו די הוא יאמר לצרתי די. הרב הקדוש מפרשיסחא אמר על שם שדי, כי כשנברא העולם היה מרחיב והולך כמאמר הגמ' [חגיגה י"ד]. עד שאמר הקב"ה די,

The explanation for this is that the creation of the world was meant to reveal God's greatness to all. God said, "Enough," because the world was sufficient for the revelation of God's greatness.

והוא כי עיקר בריאות העולם היה כדי שיוכר גדלותו ית' ולכן אמר די שמזה יוכל להוודע,

This is why Jacob mentions this holy Name here at this juncture. Because God brings pain on a person in order to assay him into recognizing his Creator. So, Jacob mentions this holy

Name in the hope that God would say, “Enough,” the pain I have already suffered is sufficient for the revelation of everything I need to know.

וזה שהזכיר יעקב כאן זה השם, היינו כי הש"י מביא יסורין על האדם כדי לבררו שיכיר את בוראו, ולכן אמר זה השם הוא שיאמר הש"י די שמזה שעבר עלי הכרתי הכל,

In truth everything the patriarchs underwent was not of their own making, it was only from the divine flow; it was God inspiring them to pray to Him. All of their prayers were timed exactly and serendipitously. For here God had already agreed to say, “Enough,” to all Jacob’s troubles.

ובאמת כל דברי האבות לא היו מצד עצמם, רק ממה שהשפיע להם הש"י כן התפללו אליו, וכל תפלתם היה בעתו ובזמנו, כי כאן הסכים הש"י לאמר די על כל צרותיו,

We find a parallel with Abraham after the end of the tenth test, the *Akedah*, binding of Isaac, he began praying that God not test him anymore. And that was because his mind and the Mind of God were already in agreement, as God had already decided not to test him anymore.

וכמו כן אברהם אבינו אחר נסיון העשירי התחיל לבקש רחמים מהש"י שלא ינסנו עוד, וזאת היה לפי שהוסכם אז גם דעת הש"י שלא ינסנו עוד.

[1:9] What can we say? God has revealed your servants’ sin.

In the Midrash (Genesis Rabba 92:9) we learn, They said, “If we say we sinned, God knows we did not sin. If we say we have not sinned, God has revealed your servants’ sin.”

מה נאמר לאדני מה נדבר וכו' האלקים מצא את עון עבדיך. במדרש [רבא צ"ב ט'] אם נאמר לך חטאנו גלוי וידוע שלא חטאנו, ואם נאמר לך שלא חטאנו האלהים מצא את עון עבדיך,

They meant to say that although they were clear that in regard to the crime of which they stood accused, they were completely innocent, it was clear to them that God had brought it about. God orchestrated events in order to point out to them that they had a fault similar to the current crime. The fault was also a theft. They had lied to their father and misled him about the sale of Joseph. (stealing his mind) That was the cause and pretext behind the libel they were now being charged with.

היינו בזה המעשה יודעים אנו בבירר שאין בנו שום שמץ מנהו, רק אחר כי אנה ה' לפנינו מעשה כזה בטח נמצא בנו איזה ענין כדומה. והיא שגנבנו דעת אבינו במכירת יוסף, ומסיבת זה נתעולל עלינו מעשה הלזו.

חלק שני - Vol II.

[2:4] May God give you Grace.

We learn in the Babylonian Talmud, (Berachoth 33a). Why is the *Havdallah* - Shabbat

ending mentioned only in *Chonen HaDa'at* - the (4th) Blessing of Knowledge in the Amidah meditation? R. Joseph says, Because Havdallah - Distinction requires wisdom, therefore it receives mention in the Wisdom Blessing. The Palestinian Talmud (Berachoth 5:2) answers the same question with the phrase, Without knowledge, where is discernment to come from?

אלקים יחנך בני. איתא בגמ' (ברכות ל"ג). הבדלה בחונן הדעת מ"ט א"ר יוסף מתוך שהיא חכמה קבעוה בברכת חכמה, ובירושלמי (ברכות פ"ה ה"ב) אם אין דיעה הבדלה מניין.

It is only a composed, self-possessed and tranquil mind that affords its owner the wisdom to distinguish one thing from another. That's why Joseph blessed Benjamin with *Chen* - Grace that is he blessed him with *Chonen HaDa'at* - Blessing of Knowledge in the Amidah meditation

כי הישוב הדעת שיש באדם מלמדתו חכמה להבדיל בין דבר לחבירו, וזה שברכו בחנינה היינו חונן הדעת,

Because the Tribe of Benjamin's characteristic is to plunder genius from the pagans and assimilate their loot into the Jewish People. If he sees something good among them he snatches that good thing from them and brings into Israel, as is explained in Volume I (Vayechi).

כי שבט בנימין מדתו היא לחטוף מהעכו"ם ולהכניס שללם לתוך ישראל. אם רואה בהם דבר טוב חוטף מהם הטובה ומכניסה לישראל, כמו שנתבאר בחלק ראשון (פרשת ויחי)

But if he sees that the good is not safe for the Jewish People he throws it away behind him. This process requires tremendous self-possession. Like someone running down a very steep mountain slope into the valley. He is running very fast and it is almost impossible to stop running half way down. Only someone with extraordinary strength could stop during such a headlong flight and stop halfway.

ואם רואה שהדבר הזה אינו טוב להכניסה לתוך ישראל אזי ישליך הטובה מאחריו, ולזה צריך ישוב הדעת מאוד. כמו מי שרץ מראש הר משופע לתחתית העמק רץ במהירות מאוד וקשה לפניו לעמוד באמצע, ורק מי שיש לו כח עצום לעצור מהירותו יש לו כח לעמוד באמצע.

Similarly with the Tribe of Benjamin, they have tremendous self-possession. For even while in the process of selecting and snatching they can take the time to make split those split-second decisions necessary to proper discernment, throwing away, behind them, whatever is deemed unfit to assimilate into Israel.

וכן בזה השבט שיש לו ישוב הדעת בעת שרץ במהירות ללקוט ולחטוף שלל, ואם רואה באמצע שלא טוב זה לפניו משליך מאחריו.

This is the meaning of the verse in Genesis 49:27, Benjamin is a ravenous wolf. In the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the spoil.

In the morning he devours his prey. He runs to grab everything he can, anything looking like it contains goodness worth the effort of assimilation.

In the evening he divides the spoil. Whatever is good he assimilates and whatever is not good he throws behind him.

And this is why Joseph blessed him with *Chen* - Grace (*Chonen HaDa'at* Blessing of Knowledge in the *Amidah* meditation) he blessed him with the tremendous self-possession and composure to be able to make the right choices and to discern between good and bad.

וזה שכתוב (בראשית מ"ט כ"ז) בנימין זאב יטרף בבקר יאכל עד, היינו שירוצן לחטוף הכל, ולערב יחלק שלל, שמה שיש בו טובה יקח אותה, ומה שאין בו טובה ישלח אחריו. וזה שברכו יוסף אלקים יחנך בני שיהיה לו דעת ובחירה עצומה מאד להבדיל ולהבחין בין טוב לרע.

[1:3] (Talmud Shabbat 21b) **What is Chanuka?**

We read in Psalms, 'Your word is a candle for my feet, a light to my pathway.' (Ps. 119:105)

A candle for my feet means that God endowed us with the Torah which provides guidance for every single act a person might do, so that God's dominion over all things becomes obvious from every particular detail.

A light to my pathway suggests that in a more general sense God enlightens us with His dominion over everything, which becomes obvious from all things in general. Because a candle is a particular detail of light, while light is a general thing.

מסכת ברכות דף כ"א:

מאי חנוכה וכו', כתיב [תהלים קי"ט ק"ה] נר לרגלי דבריך ואור לנתיבתי. נר לרגל היינו שהש"י הנחיל ד"ת אשר בכל פרט מעשה יוכר כי מלכות ה' בכל משלה. ואור לנתיבתי היינו שבכלל האיר השי"ת ג"כ הכרה מיוחדת כי המלכות שלו היא, כי נר הוא דבר פרטי, ואור הוא דבר כללי,

Now, as we look at the world God created, we see that in general things are included within one of the following three categories, Universe, Soul and Year.

It is written (ibid 139:16) Your eyes saw my form. In your book they were all written. The days that were ordained. When as yet there were none of them.

There is an alternative reading: Your eyes saw my form. In Your book they were all written. Days were created, and for Him was one of them.

והנה הש"י ברא את עולמו בכלל ונכללים בשלשה כללים, עולם, שנה, נפש, וכתוב [שם קל"ט ט"ז] ימים יצרו ולו\ולא אחד בהם,

Because it was from these generalities that God chose a single aspect, picking on a particular detail to be designated as the vehicle whereby the Light of the revelation of God's dominion be revealed to the world.

היינו כי מן הכללים הללו בחר בפרט בהמובחר שבכלל כלל להאיר בהתגלות אור פרטי והכרה במלכותו ית',

In Universe (space) God created Earth, elevating the Land of Israel to be holy above all others in general, (Mishna Kelim 1:6). Jerusalem is sanctified above the Land of Israel, while the 500 cubits square of the Temple Mount are holier than Jerusalem. The courtyard of the Temple and the Sanctuary are still holier. It is there in particular that God commanded the lighting of the Menorah to reveal and symbolize God's dominion over the entire world in general.

והיינו בעולם ברא הקב"ה את עולמו בכלל וארץ ישראל מקודש מכל הארץ [כלים א:ו] וירושלים מקודש מכל א"י והת"ק אמה מקודשין ומקום העזרה וההיכל מקודשין, ושם צוה להדליק את המנורה להאיר הכרה פרטיות במקום הזה,

Year means Time. God created the six working days in general, choosing the seventh, Shabbes day in particular. It also has the commandment to light the Shabbes candles associated with it.

ושנה היינו בזמן, ברא ששת ימי המעשה ובחר בפרט ביום השבת וג"כ נמצא מצות נר של שבת,

Among all Souls in general God chose His people Israel as the particular choice from among all nations. For the moment, before all the *Biruin* - Assaying among the Jewish People is finished, the Tribe of Levi is the chosen detail. From among them God has elevated the priestly family of the Cohens, and from among them the High Priest. The High Priest is also give the specific commandment to light the Menorah.

ובנפשות בחר בפרט בעמו ישראל מכל האומות, ולעת עתה קודם שנגמר הבירור בישראל בחר מהם בשבט לוי ומתוכם הכהנים ומהם הכהן גדול ונתן לו מצוה בפרט להדליק את המנורה,

Now, in the days of the Hasmoneans when God sent them the Light from the future, when the High Priest was also privileged to enjoy *Malkhut* - Sovereignty, which is going to be revealed through Messiah, the Son of David, when the *Biruin* - Sorting will have ended, and the choice will be in the House of David in particular. Then, when the Hasmonean High Priests enjoyed a taste of *Malkhut* - Sovereignty, there was an added revelation of the chosenness of the entire nation, of ever soul of Israel in particular... (see there)

והנה בימי חשמונאי שהאיר להם הקב"ה מההארה של עתיד שזכה הכהן הגדול למלכות כמו שעתידי להתגלות ע"י משיח בן דוד שיגמור הבירור ואז יהיה הבחירה בשבט יהודה, ואז כאשר זכה חשמונאי למלכות ניתוסף ג"כ אור הכרת בחירת כל נפש מישראל בפרט, עי"ש עוד באריכות.
