

Mei Hashiloach - Vol I. Genesis - Bereishith - Vayetze

AFFIRMATION

The Mei Hashiloach generally talks about Jacob using superlatives, which can make translation a challenge. Midrashic and Talmudic references to Jacob elevate him to near-god status, deliberately blurring the boundaries separating or at least distinguishing human from divine. The Talmud says that God refers to Jacob by the name אל *EL* - God. (Megilla 18a)

The Midrash talks about Jacob hyperbolically:

‘But now thus says the Lord, he who created you is Jacob, and he who formed you is Israel.’ (Is. 43:1) R. Pinchas in the name of R. Reuben said. ‘[Said] the Holy Blessed One to His world, ‘O my world, my world! Shall I tell you who created you? Shall I tell you who formed you? Jacob is the one who created you, Israel the one who formed you, as it written, ‘He who created you is Jacob, who formed you is Israel. (Is. 43:1)

R. Yehoshua of Sikhnin in the name of R. Levi said, ‘Behemoth was created only in the merit of Jacob, as it is written ‘Behold now the Behemoth, which I made with you.’ (Job 40:15)

R, Yehoshua b. Nehemiah in the name of R. Hananiah b. Isaac: ‘Heaven and Earth were only created on account of Jacob...’

The rabbis say ‘Abraham himself was only created in merit of Jacob (Levit. Rabbah 36:4)

If we bear this in mind as we learn the Izbicy Torah on this week’s Sidra, we may catch a glimpse of Jacob the man, our ancestor. The first and perhaps most important point to know about Jacob is the power of his certainty. Last week we read how Jacob maintains a tremendous level of self confidence.

Jacob’s policy was to avoid any type of dubious behavior; his way was to trust to God with all his heart. The truth is that wherever a person enters into dubious behavior in the service of God, he is much greater than one who avoids areas of doubt. This, however, only happens with the seed of Jacob, because they have total confidence that God clarifies their every act for the good. That’s why the seed of Jacob are permitted to put their safety in jeopardy by entering those grey areas. Whoever does not have that total confidence, must avoid doubtful situations. As Esau discovered when it became clear that all his risky behavior had been a poor choice, that God only clarifies and reinterprets the actions of Israel this way... So, those not of the seed of Jacob had better constrain themselves with all types of restriction, as has been discussed in regard to converts to Judaism, who must not take risks or put themselves in jeopardy.

This week’s Parasha opens with Jacob traveling from Be’er Sheva to Haran. Ostensibly he goes to find a wife, but more accurately to avoid Esau, whom he has stripped of birthright and blessing.

Jacob now has to deal with the incongruity between the blessing he recently received and his current circumstances. Instead of the comfort and abundance promised him by his father, he is reduced and straitened. Another person might blame himself or seek the cause for his predicament in his own behavior. ‘O, woe is me, for I defrauded my father and cheated my

brother!' Or words to that effect. But were Jacob to do so, were he to start doubting himself, he might undermine himself beyond redemption. Because the very definition of Jacob is as the 'Creative Destroyer', the man who can leave his brother an empty shell and move on without a backward glance; without a moment of self doubt. Doubts, second guessing and self criticism are not Jacob's path, as will be discussed at length in the unfolding narrative of Genesis.

Vayetze begins, according to the Midrash, with Jacob struggling to understand what exactly his current position is.

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

Jacob left Be'er Sheva and went to Haran.

The Midrash (Genesis Rabba 68:1) quotes the Psalm 'I lift my eyes unto the mountains, whence comes my salvation?' (Ps. 121:1)

The Hebrew word *Harim* - Mountains can be read *Horim* - Teachers and Begetters. What did Jacob say? "My grandfather Abraham's emissary, Eliezer [the slave] took ten camels fully laden with gifts to Haran, when he went to betroth my mother [Rebecca] to my father [Isaac]. I have nothing, not a single necklace or nose-ring."

R. Chanina says Jacob was sent off empty-handed. R. Yehoshua b. Levi disagrees: He says Jacob left home well provisioned, but Esau stopped him and stripped him of everything.

Jacob kept on repeating, 'What! Will I abandon faith in my Maker? No! I will not abandon my faith, God forbid. - My salvation comes from God, Creator of heaven and earth.' (Ps. 121:2))

ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה. במדרש [בראשית רבא ס"ח,א'] רבי שמואל בר נחמן פתח (תהלים קכא) שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים, אשא עיני אל ההורים למלפני ולמעבדני, מאין יבוא עזרי, אליעזר בשעה שהלך להביא את רבקה מה כתיב ביה ויקח העבד עשרה גמלים וגו' ואני לא נזם אחד ולא צמיד אחד, רבי חנינא אמר גדוד שלחו, רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר שילח עמו אלא שעמד עשו ונטלה ממנו, חזר ואמר מה אנא מובד סברי מן בריי חס ושלום לית אנא מובד סברי מן בריי אלא עזרי מעם ה',

The Izbicy tries to contextualize the Midrash, to explain why the Midrash felt it important to tell us about Jacob's pain. The rebbe interprets the cause of Jacob's anguish as the obvious and unflattering comparisons between himself on the one hand, and his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham, on the other. What bothered him was how petty and how banal his struggles were. Here he was looking for a shirt to wear, for a piece of bread to eat; whither the search for the Meaning of Life, the Universe and Everything? When the verse says 'I lift my

eyes to the mountains,' where 'mountains' may be read as 'parents', Jacob is comparing himself unfavorably with them. Yet instead of despairing, Jacob insists on reaffirming his self-image.

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

The meaning of this Midrash is as follows; when Jacob left Be'er Sheva impoverished and without food to eat; when he found himself having to look for work in his uncle's house as a shepherd, he felt very bad about it. By comparison with his forbears who spent their lives in worship and in contemplation of the *Merkava* - Chariot, Jacob was very much in reduced circumstances, forced to deal with the petty details of survival; concerns his ancestors were free of.

הענין בזה כשיצא יעקב מבאר שבע ולא היה לו לחם לאכול ולא שום דבר והוצרך לילך אל לבן ולעסוק בצאן למען פרנסתו, נפל דעתו מאד, לאשר הביט וראה עצמו קטן נגד אבותיו, כי הם לא היו צריכים כלל להביט לעניני עוה"ז והיו עוסקים תמיד בעבודה ובמעשה מרכבה, והוא יצטרך לעסוק בדברים קטנים כאלו,

'It doesn't really matter,' Jacob then decided, 'if my parents are mountains and I am small stones and scree. The worship of God is not contingent on the importance of one's job or the brilliance of one's Torah. The importance of one's job depends on the extent to which it is worshipful of God, and Torah is everywhere.'

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

But then he thought it through and came to another conclusion: 'I will not abandon faith in my Maker. My ancestors may have been greater than me by far, and I of very little consequence. Nonetheless, even in this petty, mundane life there are ways of worshipping God, because He is Maker of everything.'

חזר ואמר לית אנא מוביד סברי מן בריה, היינו אף שהם היו בדברים גדולים ואני רואה את עצמי בדברים קטנים, מכל מקום גם בזה יש עבודת הש"י כי יוצר הכל הוא.

PERMANENCE

The second Izbicy Torah helps us understand Jacob's role in the big picture of the world. The Torah tells us:

'Jacob left Be'er Sheva and went to Haran. He reached a certain place and lodged there, for the sun had set, and he took of the stones of the place and made them his

pillows, and lay down in that place. And he dreamt, and lo, a ladder set up on the earth, and its head is touching the heavens; and lo, messengers of God are going up and coming down by it; and lo, the LORD is standing upon it, and He says, 'I am the LORD, God of Abraham your father, and God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying, to you I give it, and to your seed.' (Gen 28:10-13)

The key to understanding the text is the reference to 'a certain place'. What is this certain place Jacob reaches?

One of the names by which God is called is המקום *HAMAKOM* - The Place. The Midrash about Jacob reaching 'The Place' says, 'Why do we refer to God as The Place? Because God is the place of the world, but the world is not God's place.' (Gen. Rabbah 68:9)

Izbicy Torah expounds upon this Midrash many times. In the book *Beis Yaakov* written by R. Yaakov Leiner of Izbicy, the son of the Mei Hashiloach, we read the following.

[The closest anyone ever came to being human while at the same time understanding the purpose of everything, was Jacob, because he contains all the souls of Israel that will ever be born. The souls of Israel are both beginning and end of the reason for Creation.] The truth is that nothing happens without the will of God, for were it not the will of God that this deed be done, it would not be in the power of Creation to do it nor anything else in the world. All the acts of man are also from God, but not by way of man's reason or in any way that a person can grasp. It is simply that God wants that act to happen for reasons much deeper than a human can possibly fathom. For God's purposes are much, much deeper than anything we can possibly imagine, and that is the meaning of the phrase 'God is the place of the world.' Everything in the world happens only because it is the will of God, for nothing happens against the will of God. Yet 'the world is not God's place' therefore no human can grasp the meaning or purpose of events... (Beis Yaakov - Vayetze 14)

The Talmud says 'Pliers were also created on the Sixth Day of Creation, for a pair of pliers cannot be fashioned without a pair of pliers. Now where might the first pair of pliers have come from, were they not fashioned by heaven?' (Pesachim 54a)

Pliers are the implement with which everything in the world may be grasped, both physically and metaphorically. Thus they hint at Jacob, who can grasp the will of God. Jacob is the reason for the will of God. That's why it says 'he reached the Place,' for he arrived at that very place where exists the place of the world which is not the place of God. (Beis Yaakov - Vayetze 10)

While Jacob, this larger-than-life man, sleeps, he dreams, and 'Behold, God is standing over him.' Jacob has reached a certain place, not merely in his spiritual journey and evolution, but in time and space as well.

The core thesis of *Sefer Yetzira* is this: all reality as we understand it, as we perceive it through our senses, manifests in each of three forms or frames; 1.) in three dimensional space, 2.) in the cycles of the seasons in time, 3.) in various parts of the human body. Every person may approach God at a particular time, in a certain space or within the self. The Izbicy brings to our attention that here, in our narrative, there is a special time, a sacred space and a unique person.

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

Behold, God is standing over him.

This is well known, the chief revelation of God in this world is through the three elements of *Olam*, *Shana* and *Nefesh* - Space, Time and Soul. 'Space' means the location of the Holy Temple where the chief revelation of God happens. 'Time' means Shabbat, the choice moment in time when all the revelation of God occurs. 'Soul' means the souls of Israel upon whom the Shechinah dwells.

והנה ה' נצב עליו. הנה זאת ידוע כי עיקר התגלות הש"י בעולם הוא ע"י שלשה היינו עולם, שנה, נפש. עולם הוא מקום המקדש אשר שם הוא התגלות אלקותו ית', ושנה היא בהמובחר שבזמנים הוא שבת שבו נמצא התגלות אלקותו, ונפש הוא על נפשות מישראל יתגלה שכינתו.

In some sense, the Izbicy is hinting that God is almost bound to be there, standing upon him, i.e. Jacob. Because every reason for the Creation of the world is concentrated there in that place, at that moment. The entire Jewish People is present inside Jacob, inside Shabbes, inside the Beit Hamikdash. All of God's desire was in harmony at that moment in history.

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

Behold, here was the confluence of all these three circumstances. 1.) 'Space' - The Temple Mount was the the spot, as Jacob later said, 'This can only be the House of God, and this the Gate of Heaven.' 'Time' was optimal because the event obviously occurred on Shabbat. 'Soul' refers to Jacob himself, choice among souls, in whom all the souls of Israel were combined. As it is written 'But when he sees his children, the work of my hands, inside the middle of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.' (Isa. 29:23)

והנה כאן היו אלא השלשה בשלימות, מקום המקדש שנא' אין זה כי אם בית אלקים, וזמן המבחר כי בטח היה זה בשבת קודש, ונפש הוא יעקב אבינו המובחר שבנפשות שבו נכללו כל נפשות ישראל כמ"ש [ישעיה כ"ט, כ"ג] והקדישו את קדוש יעקב.

The third Torah adds another layer of detail to the previous one, emphasizing two aspects of the same idea. God stands over Jacob because that is God's position, so to speak, and not because of some new circumstance or development. It is Jacob's perception that is new, not the fact of God's position - standing over him.

Deeply asleep, completely unconscious of the word around him, at a time when Jacob might be justified in thinking his connection to God the most tenuous and flimsy, God is there. Standing. Jacob's connection is not a conscious one, although he is always in a state of worship and devotion. The very purpose of the dream is to inform him that he is connected on a far deeper level than he can possibly be aware of. Because he is the repository of souls, the focus

of all God's desire, locus of all holiness.

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

Behold, God is standing over him.

This verse itself is the blessing. Its meaning is as follows: just as the holiness of Shabbat is fixed and permanent without any need for sanctification on the part of the Jewish People; coming as it does directly from God, (unlike the festivals which require that the Jewish People make them holy) so is the holiness of Jacob our father, exactly like the holiness of Shabbat.

והנה ה' נצב עליו. זה הפסוק בעצמו הוא ברכה, וביאר זה כמו שקדושת שבת היא קבוע וקיימא בלי שום הקדשה ואתערותא מישראל רק מצד הש"י בעצמו קדוש, לא כימים טובים שישראל מקדשין אותם, כך הוא קדושת יעקב אבינו כקדושת שבת,

Now the Izbicy takes the exegesis to its conclusion, as far as it can go. What Jacob is being shown in his dream is the Universe as it really is, rather than the illusion with which we all have to muddle through our lives. The truth of the matter is that God and Jacob are in union, they are One. This is not a novel idea of the Izbicy's suggestion, it is standard Jewish Theology 101. But the Izbicy places it here at this juncture instead of in the Exodus narrative. It becomes the center stage of Genesis. Rather than a mystical interpretation of history, as it unfolds through the Exodus from Egypt to the Revelation at Sinai, the unity of God and Jacob becomes the first scene in act three of the patriarchal drama.

Elsewhere in the Mei Hashiloach the Izbicy reveals the third element which must always be present in a sacred union: the Torah herself. The dream is the Torah. This dream will have to sustain the Jewish people until the revelation at Sinai. Jacob will teach it to his children who will continue learning it and reading new meaning into it through the long dark exile of Egypt, until they become ready for fresh revelation.

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

The holiness is intrinsic, put there by God and without need for any input from Jacob. That's why the verse does not describe God *Omed* - Standing, rather God *Nitzav* - Erect. *Omed* - Standing suggests something happening in the present moment that may not endure, something dependent on Jacob's actions, perhaps. *Nitzav* - Erect, however, suggests a permanent connection between God and Jacob.

שקדוש מצד הש"י ואינו צריך לשום אתערותא, וע"כ לא נאמר עומד עליו רק נצב כי עומד משמע שעתה עומד עליו ולא מקודם והיינו מכח אתערותא דיליה, אבל נצב היינו שתמיד מקושר עמו.

TRANSCENDENCE

The fourth Mei Hashiloach Torah refers briefly to a quote from the Zohar. Understanding the connection the Izbicy makes between the verse and the Zohar, requires a little background information.

We often talk of there being an upper and lower world, heaven opposed to earth, as though it were obvious to everyone that such a clear separation of states exists. It's convenient to think of the spiritual and mundane as two distinct entities or beings, but we ought to understand why we have come to see things so dualistically.

Heaven, if such a place exists, is clearly lit. This is to say, its chief characteristic is crystal clarity. When we talk of the Divine Light, or whatever metaphor we use to describe heaven, what we really mean is that it contains no obscurity. Everything is perfectly clear. Nothing in heaven is ambiguous, vague or impenetrable. When you are in heaven things make sense, purposes are obvious. Right and wrong are so obvious and self defining that they need no careful distinction or splitting. Hence we talk of heaven as being a place of 'Light', a place where angels dwell; beings who are incapable of ambiguity or ambivalence.

The opposite of heaven is Earth. Doubt is its chief characteristic. Rarely, if ever, is anything perfectly, crystal clear. Purposes are always dual or multiple, intentions are clouded and contradictory. Most of the time we hardly know what we ourselves are thinking, let alone what motives drive other people.

The way the Izbicy explains it, God put a singularity outside of Himself, so to speak; placed something of Himself in the dark, something much more precious than the 'light' which exists with Him in His place, as it were.

The preciousness buried in the deepest abyss is of much greater value, beauty, desirability, attraction and fascination than the pure brilliant light which glitters so brightly in the Empyrean.

The preciousness has no eyes, which is to say it has no light, for having eyes and having light are the same thing. For it to access the light, it must be seen. When it is being looked at, it is in the light; and when preciousness is in the light, its brilliance far outshines all the most luminous bodies of heaven. The preciousness is God's desire for us. It is hidden in the physical world, in every atom and molecule of it. It is most prominent and therefore most deeply buried and concealed inside the human body. Our desires are the presence of the divine, God hides Himself in plain sight when we receive us mixed messages about our own desires. Doubt clouds everything we do because our motives are always mixed and muddled. We cannot access God because we cannot clarify our own motives or see our own desires in any clear light. While desires are everything, since they are the preciousness in which God hid Himself, yet we perceive all our desires as self-centered and so become riddled with doubt.

Your soul tries to escape from your body into the light of heaven, where everything makes sense. But as soon as it attempts to flee it is pulled back by the gravity of its fascination with the preciousness hidden within the body, by the pull of the beauty and the desirability of the hidden treasure. For as much as God's light draws the soul upward and away from this world, the preciousness of God is stronger. And so, again and again the soul is seduced back into the body to find the object of desire and look at her, giving her eyes and freeing her from the dark. But the body's exigencies are overwhelming, and it is not long before the clouds of dark overwhelm the light of the precious, before doubts creep in to darken the eyes of the soul, sin peppers and mottles the divine looking glass with specks of rust and aberrations. Soon everything looks ugly and threatening and the soul attempts to flee the body once again. Striving for the light, it powers its way upwards only to be dragged back by the inexorable pull of the

divine desire buried in the muck.

Your soul traverses the void, leaping up and outward into the light and plunging back again and again into the dark of the abyss. As it does so, it flings off a million sparks of light. As your soul scrapes and batters itself against the dark, tearing and ripping itself away from the light, it trails a blazing retinue of sparks, a coruscating pyrotechnion of cosmos behind it.

Everything alive and thrumming with energy is a product of this battering. Even space itself is a consequence of it. If you batter the Name of God, יהו"ה YHV" H thus:

י פעמים י	Yod against Yod	10 x 10 = 100
ה פעמים ה	Heh against Heh	5 x 5 = 25
ו פעמים ו	Vav against Vav	6 x 6 = 36
ה פעמים ה	Heh against Heh	5 x 5 = 25

the total = 186, is exactly the same as the value of the word מקום *MAKOM* Place = 186.

Earlier we talked at some length about Jacob reaching ‘that place’. Here the Izbicy points to the logical conclusion following from that. Jacob is the perfect man in the perfect place at the perfect moment, because he is the soul doing the most original battering. All the billions of brilliant sparks he trails represent the souls of all of us, his descendents. With his battering of the divine name, Jacob creates the place where God reveals Himself standing over him.

As has been said in previous Sidras, Abraham represents the quality of divine light, God the Obvious, the clearly, blatantly and brilliantly revealed Light. That’s the quality of *Chesed* - Lovingkindness. Everywhere Abraham looks in the world he sees God, so when he removes his own foreskin he suddenly sees God right there, in the act.

Isaac represents the quality of divine darkness, God the Hidden, the obscure, the deniable, arguable and metaphorical light of the precious. That’s the quality of *Din* - Withholding. Isaac looks into himself and sees God, immanent. Isaac is blind to what is ‘out there’ because nothing out there matters. Only inside himself, in the abyss of Self, inside his own desires can he sense the immanence of God.

Jacob plunges into his father Isaac’s darkness, drawn by the allure of the preciousness, by his hunger for the beauty of God in the desires of the body, only to be dragged down by the humble doubts imposed by his own humanity. He flings himself upward to escape the dark, reaching for the brilliant light of certainty that his father Abraham brought into the world, only to falter at the apex of his trajectory, torn by his inability to resist the preciousness of the desire he left behind. Knowing everything with complete clarity no longer seems as important to Jacob as falling in love and getting married.

Jacob has just spent 14 years in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, drinking in the *Chesed* Torah of Abraham, tasting the sweet crystal waters of a life without doubts, in which everything makes perfect sense. But no sooner does Jacob make tracks and set his feet upon the road for Haran, than he is acutely aware of the longing inside him for the darkness and its treasures. He is desperately thirsty for the muddy, salty and teeming *Din* Torah of Isaac. Jacob’s alternating between the light and the dark, between *Chesed* and *Din* has created heat and friction; sparks and glitter, souls and spirits, ideas and longings.

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

He said, “I am the LORD, God of Abraham your father, and God of Isaac.”

We learn in the Zohar ‘He was in the middle.’ (Vol 1. 150a)

ויאמר אני ה' אלקי אברהם אביך ואלקי יצחק. איתא בזוה"ק [בראשית ק"נ.] איהו באמצעותא.

The verse ought to have read 'I am God of Abraham and Isaac your father', or words to that effect. As a literary device, the sentence 'I am God of Abraham your father, and God of Isaac' has an empty space in the middle, a space that Jacob fills. But there is a good reason why God calls Jacob son of Abraham and not Isaac: Jacob has moved 'preciousness' beyond the paradigm. Where it used to dwell in the domain of Isaac, inside his desires, the preciousness now shares the light in the open. Jacob is capable of the following sentence: 'I have fulfilled my agreement,' Jacob said to Laban. 'Now give me my wife so I can come into her.' (Gen. 29:21) The speed and power of Jacob's oscillation between the light and the dark has created *MAKOM* - Space where both light and dark coexist. Jacob has endowed his darkness with eyes, he sees it with perfect clarity and so it is no longer dark. Isaac is no longer the father because Abraham's light has overtaken everything. Everything is illuminated. In Jacob there is no heaven and earth, there is *MAKOM* - Space, where it always *Shabbes* in the *Beit Hamikdash*.

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

The reason why God refers to Himself as God of Jacob's father Abraham, and not of his father Isaac is because Abraham's quality was Love, while that of Isaac was Fear. Now, usually when Love flows in abundance then Fear must constrict itself, and when Fear reigns completely then Love must constrict itself. Jacob, however, comprised both characteristics in equal measure. This quality is called *Tifferet* - Glory, uniquely associated with our father Jacob, because he encompasses both of them and inside him they do not contradict one another.

והיינו דאמר אביך גבי אברהם ולא גבי יצחק, דהנה מדות אברהם הוא מדות אהבה ומדות יצחק הוא מדות יראה והנה במקום שהאהבה בהשפעה מרובה מצטמצם מדות היראה וכן כשנמצא מדת היראה בשלימות מצטמצם מדות האהבה, אבל ליעקב אבינו ע"ה היו שניהם במשקל וזאת נקרא מדות תפארת והיא מדות יעקב אבינו כלול משניהם ואינם סותרים זה אם זה

There follows a short qualification of the above from the Appendix to the Mei Hashiloach. While it is true that Jacob was responsible for a paradigm shift. Where previously the separation of *Chesed* from *Din* was like that of light and dark, there was a new synthesis combining them both. That Jacob's qualities shed a bright light on Isaac, and so Abraham and not Isaac is Jacob's metaphorical father. Still, the Izbicy suggests one more reason for calling Jacob son of Abraham and not Isaac.

With Jacob occupying the middle column, as the Zohar suggests, Abraham and Isaac are in the position of the six arms of the Menorah. Jacob is the 'Face of the Menorah' described in the Book of Numbers.

God spoke to Moses, saying: ‘speak to Aaron, and say to him, “When you kindle the lights, towards the face of the Menorah, shall the seven lights shine.”’ (Num. 8:2)

The Izbicy discusses the lights and the concept of ‘Face of the Menorah’.

Why does the verse talk about seven lights pointing towards the center column. There were six lamps on the six arms of the menorah, and they were pointed toward the seventh and central light. It should therefore have stated, ‘towards the face of the Menorah, the six lights shall point’, since the seventh points straight up of its own accord?

The right and left pointing towards the middle represents the idea that *Chesed* and *Din* are both in the service of *Tifferet*. But this is where Jacob had some clarifying to do. He had cheated his father and misled him in deed and word. Isaac, the left side, held no grudges against Jacob, even after the full extent of Jacob’s scheme to obtain the blessing Isaac intended for Esau became clear. Isaac assumed that Jacob’s motives were 100% pure. But Jacob was not 100% sure of himself, and so the three lamps on the left side did not point toward the ‘face of the menorah’, only the three on the right, Abraham’s side, did so. Many years later, when Jacob went down to Egypt and confronted the reality that his ten sons had cheated and misled him about the supposed death of Joseph, when they brought him Joseph’s coat covered in blood, asking that he recognize it, that’s when he was faced with the same choice Isaac faced; how to deal with his sons’ treachery? And just as Isaac never even referred to it, so Jacob never even hinted at it. That’s when the three lights on the left side of the menorah turned to point to the middle.

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

Appendix: The reason God refers to Jacob’s father Abraham and not his father Isaac, however, is because while Jacob was accomplished in the quality of Love, he still needed to do work in the field of the quality of Fear.

[גליון: ולכן לא נאמר אביך על יצחק כי במדת האהבה היה כבר מזוקק אבל במדת היראה היה צריך להתברר.]

I will give the land upon which you are sleeping to you.

The meaning of this blessing is that even when you are sleeping and resting, all your thoughts and ideas will be pure and sorted.

הארץ אשר אתה שוכב עליה לך אתננה. ענין הברכה הזאת היא שאפילו בשעת השכיבה והשינה יהיו רעיונותיך ברורים ונקיים.

All the families of Earth will be blessed in you. Meaning that your Torah will be glorious; as it is written; (Deut. 4:6) For it is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of all people.

ונברכו בך כל משפחות וכו' היינו בהד"ת שלך יפארוך כל האומות כמ"ש [דברים ד', ו'] כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם.

And behold, I will be with you. The Hebrew word for I - *Anochi* is used here instead of the simpler I - *Ani*; *Anochi* contains an extra letter *Chaf*. The letter *Chaf* hints at a pure, unadulterated and unrestricted Life Force, as we learn in Sefer Yetzirah. (4:1) Then God showed Jacob all the tests and assaying through which he would have to pass and that he would have to bear.

והנה אנכי עמך, ולא נאמר אני כי אות הכ' מורה על מקור החיים בלי די כדאיתא בספר יצירה [פרק ד' מ"א] והראה לו הקב"ה אז הברורים שיצטרך עוד להתברר ולסבול,

That's why God told him, **I will guard you wherever you go and I will return you to this place.** 'I will return you', is an expression of returning, as in the Mitzvah of returning the found article. Because no one can understand the words of Torah until they have tripped over them (Gittin 43a). because it is only through the stumbling that the words of Torah penetrate into the heart of the man with a thirst and longing for connection greater than before.

Thus the phrase, And I will return you, refers to the *Teshuvah* process.

וע"ז הבטיח לו ושמרתך בכל אשר תלך והשיבותך אל האדמה הזאת, והשיבותך הוא לשון השבת אבידה, כי אין אדם עומד על דברי תורה אלא אם כן נכשל בהם [גיטין מ"ג.], והיינו כי ע"י המכשול שבא לאדם יכנסו הד"ת בלב האדם בחשק גדול יותר ממקודם, וזהו והשיבותך היינו לשון תשובה.

She said, "This time I will thank God."

We learn in the Talmud, (Megilla 6b) R. Yitzchak said, 'If someone says, I toiled but found not,' don't believe it. If they say, 'I toiled not but found,' don't believe it. But if they say, 'I toiled and found, believe it'.

Obviously the Talmud is not talking to fools. We have seen people saying "I toiled," i.e. working hard, and yet we observe they do not always find what they seek. A person who says he did not toil, obviously did not toil, and yet we have seen such persons finding what they seek. How can the Talmud tell us not to believe?

ותאמר הפעם אודה את ה'. איתא בגמ' [מגילה ו:]: אמר ר' יצחק אם יאמר לך יגעתי ולא מצאתי אל תאמין לא יגעתי ומצאתי אל תאמין יגעתי ומצאתי תאמין. והנה הגמ' ודאי לא בשופטני עסקינן שזה האומר יגעתי ולא מצאתי איירי שאנו רואין שיגע הרבה ולא מצא, וכן האומר לא יגעתי ומצאתי איירי שאנו רואין שלא יגע ומצא וא"כ איך שייך לאמור אל תאמין.

The depths of this matter can be explained through the stories of Rachel and Leah. Now, obviously Rachel our matriarch did not spare prayers and pleas to God for help that she bear children. The reason her prayers went unanswered is as follows. The Torah tells us that Rachel was jealous of her sister. Now Rachel's jealousy needed to go through a process of *Birruin* - assaying to establish whether her jealousy was of the holy sort, like the jealousy among scribes, a jealousy for the sake of heaven, or whether it was it was a petty jealousy of her sister's good fortune, God forbid.

אך עומק הענין הוא מבואר ברחל ובלאה, כי בטח אמנו רחל כמה תפלות וכמה בקשות בקשה שיושיע לה ה', אך

מפני זה לא הועיל לה לפי שנאמר ותקנא רחל באחותה והוצרכה הקנאה להתברר אם היא קנאת סופרים שהיא לשם שמים או קנאה בעלמא כפי דרך הטבע ח"ו.

Now, the way God runs the world is like this. When God gives a person a gift, He builds a flaw into that very gift itself. So the gift cannot be actualized and expressed before the flaw is fixed and healed. Before the flaw is healed and fixed no amount of prayers and penitence and suffering will be of any avail, nothing will happen until the flaw is fixed and then salvation can occur.

והנה התנהגות הש"י עם האדם אשר באותה הטובה שנתן בהמדה, בהמדה הזאת עצמה ברא בו חסרון, ע"כ לא יוכל הטובה לצאת לפועל קודם שיתרפא חסרונו, וקודם שירפא החסרון לא יועיל כמה תפלות וסיגופים להאדם עד שיתרפא חסרונו ואז יושע.

Now, because Rachel had need to be assayed in the nature of her jealousy, and because until that determination had been made no amount of prayers or worship was going to prevail to bring her salvation down to earth, Jacob became angry at her when she asked him to pray for her.

ע"כ לפי שרחל הוצרכה להתברר במדות קנאה וקודם שנתבררה בזאת לא הועיל לה שום תפלה וכל יגיעתה, וע"כ כאשר בקשה מיעקב אבינו שיתפלל בעדה חרה אפו עליה.

Understanding the cause of his anger is difficult, Rachel would appear to have done the right thing. The Talmud says: (Bava Batra 116a) Whoever has troubles at home should go to the sage and ask for help. Nahmanides asks precisely this question. It's because the Torah tells us that Rachel was jealous of her sister that she needed to go through the process of assaying, that's why Jacob grew angry at her when she consulted him, since she first needed to assay her jealousy.

ולהבין זאת כי הלא כדין עשתה, כי מי שיש לו צרה בתוך ביתו ילך אצל חכם [בבא בתרא קט"ז]. וכן הקשה הרמב"ן ז"ל. אך מחמת שכתוב קודם ותקנא רחל, ע"כ ויחר ליעקב מחמת שמקודם היתה צריכה להתברר קנאתה,

As soon, however, as she told Jacob, 'Here is my maidservant etc, that I be built up through her...' It was immediately apparent that her intention was always for the sake of heaven. For she had brought her rival into her own house. This is the meaning of the Mishna, 'If someone says: I toiled but found not, believe it not'. Even when we see all the toil with our own eyes.

אך כשאמרה ליעקב הנה אמתי לפניך וכו' ואבנה גם אנוכי ממנה, מזה נראה שכוונתה היתה לש"ש שהרי הכניסה צרתה לתוך ביתה. וזה פי' יגעתי ולא מצאתי אל תאמין אף שאנו רואין שיגע את עצמו,

If the toil is not in the right place it is no better than a man who instead of knocking on the door in order to enter the house, knocks somewhere else. He can knock all day in the wrong place and never have it open for him. But it opens immediately when he knocks at the door proper

מ"מ לא היה במקום הראוי לפניו להתיגע כאדם הרוצה לכונוס לבית ודופק שלא במקום הפתח אפילו ידפוק כל היום לא יועיל לו, אבל כשיבא למקום הפתח וידפוק אז מיד יפתח לו.

I toiled not and found. We can understand this from Leah.. For when she gave birth to Judah she, 'This time I will thank God.' Because she'd never prayed for Judah. She had already taken her portion among the twelve tribes with the birth of Levi, her third child. So the birth

of Judah might give the appearance of, 'I toiled not but found'. But vis-a-vis God everything happens according to a just plan. God bore witness how much toil she had exerted in connection with the the birth of the first three children. As it is written; God saw my pain... Because God understood that I was hated.

ולא יגעתי ומצאתי, מוכן בלאה, כי כשילדה את יהודה אמרה הפעם אודה את ה' לפי שלא בקשה על זה, כי כבר נטלה חלקה מקודם כפי החשבון על ארבע אמהות ונראה כלא יגעתי ומצאתי, ואצל הש"י הוא הכל במשפט כי הש"י העיד עליה כי יגעה את עצמה מאד בג' בנים הראשונים, כמ"ש כי ראה ה' בעניי, כי שמע ה' כי שנואה אנוכי,

God gave Leah a gift of Judah like a trader throwing in some extra weight in appreciation for a wholesale transaction. Whenever God adds on a little as an extra, it equals more than the original sum. And this is the preciousness of the soul of Judah, who is greater than his brothers and from whom all the greatness springs. That's why Leah says, 'This time I will thank God.' Because a soul like that of Judah cannot be born as payment or in reward or on the strength of some saintly deed. It is a blessing from God. Because when it comes in payment for a human deed it can only come in a measure, compared to the deed performed. But when God throws it in as an extra it can be infinite in measure. That's why we say, 'God's extras are bigger than the whole.'

ונתן לה הש"י את יהודה כאדם שנותן הכרע לחבירו אם לוקח ממנו הרבה, ותוספתו של הקב"ה הוא מרובה על העיקר, וזהו יקרת נפש יהודה אשר גבר באחיו כי כל הגדולות יצאו ממנו, ועל זה אמרה הפעם אודה את ה', כי נפש כזה לא יולד בכח ובשכר צדקות וישרת האדם רק מברכת הש"י, כי כשיבא מכח האדם אינו בא רק כפי מעשיו, אבל מה שהש"י נותן הכרע מצדו אז הוא בלי שום גבול ע"כ תוספתו מרובה על העיקר.

And this explains why the musical trope over the phrases 'She conceived again,' (viz Simeon) and 'She conceived again,' (viz Levi) is a *Munach Zarka*, an expression of labor, for she worked hard. But with her fourth pregnancy when it says 'She conceived again,' (viz Judah) the trope is *Kadma V'Azla* an expression of progress and movement. Because it came without her efforts. Understand this.

וע"כ נכתב על ותהר עוד של שמעון ולוי מונח זרקא, על כי הם באו לה ביגיעתה, אבל על ותהר עוד על יהודה נקוד קדמא ואזלא היינו בלא יגיעתה והבן.

This explains the phrasing of the prayer we say in the *Amidah* - Meditation on the 18 blessings: [God] Acquires all, recalls the kindness of the patriarchs and brings salvation to their descendents for His name's sake, with love.

וזהו שאנו מתפללין בתפילת שמונה עשרה וקונה הכל וזוכר חסדי אבות ומביא גואל למען שמו,

Acquires all means that God has business with all his creatures, because He created nothing in vain.

וקונה הכל היינו שהש"י יש לו עסק עם כל בריותיו כי לא ברא דבר אחד לבטלה,

Recalls the kindness of the patriarchs means that God remembers the goodness the patriarchs used to do with all the might and all their soul; how they brought the whole world close to God. They didn't spend a single moment without Love and Awe of God. Nevertheless, the prayer continues, and brings salvation to their descendents for His name's sake. Because their merit is not sufficient to warrant the revelation of the light of the Messiah, were it not for

God's Name's sake.

וזוכר חסדי אבות היינו הש"י זוכר הטוב שהיו האבות עושים בכל כחם ובכל נפשם והיו מקרבים כל העולם להש"י, ולא היו עומדים רגע בלא אהבה ויראה, ואעפ"כ ומביא גואל לבני בניהם למאן שמו כי בזכותם אינו כדאי לגלות אורו של מלך המשיח רק למען שמו,

This is explains the Talmud (Sanhedrin 100a), Whoever gives a full measure to the poor in this world, God will give him a full measure in the world to come. Because they drive themselves so hard, with all their strength, in order that the glory of God be spread in the world through them, so, measure for measure dictates that God pay them with all His strength.

והיינו מה דאיתא בגמ' (סנהדרין ק.), הנותן לעני מלא עומסו בעוה"ז הקב"ה נותן לו מלא עומסו לעוה"ב, והיינו מחמת שהם מיגעים את עצמם בכל כחם, שיתגלה כבוד שמים על ידם, ע"כ מדת הדין נותנת שהקב"ה ישלם להם כפי כחו יתברך.
