

MILA YOMIT: THE TORAH, WORD BY WORD

MILA YOMIT 34:

וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקִיעַ

VA'YAAS (ELOHIM ET HA'RAQIYAA)
Breishit 1:7

TRANSLATION: AND (ELOHIM) MADE (THE FIRMAMENT)

CONTEXT- We are beginning Breisheet 1, verse 7.

It would be appropriate to review verse 6 now:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רַקִּיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם

VA'YOMER ELOHIM YEHEE RAQIYAA BE'TOCH HA'MAYIM-

And ELOHIM Said: Let There Be An Expanse (or Sky) In The Midst Of The Waters...

וַיְהִי מִבְּדִיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם

VEE'YEHEE MAVDIL BEYN MAYIM LA'MAYIM-

And Let IT Divide Between Water And Water:

Verse 7 continues this unfolding:

MILA CHADASHA-New Word:

וַיַּעַשׂ -VA'YAAS :

OTIOT:LETTERS

ו VAV: connection, meaning "and"

י YOD :Divine Spark

ע AYIN :sight

ש SHIN: flame-

The Shin is composed of three VAV's joined together at the base>
On the left side of the tefillin the SHIN is four-headed (four VAV"s)
Kabbalah explain the four headed SHIN as being the shin of the future. As Ginsburg explains : "In the form of the SHIN, the three vav's indicate three general 'vectors' of change. Their common base point symbolizes the changeless origin. The four headed SHIN of the future indicates that in the future, change itself will increase, for all reality will ascend in ever accelerating motion, while simultaneously, in direct proportion to the acceleration of change, the changeless Source will become manifest." (Ginsburg. p. 319)

Things are speeding up, as we delve deeper into the power of fire:electricity.

The letters suggest that the act of doing involves a process of Divinity, Vision, and Creativity. The fire of creativity, as it were.

MEANING and RELATED WORDS:

יעש YA'AAS is a form of the transitive verb עשה AASAH which means 'to make, do, act, produce, accomplish, etc.' (widely used)

לעשות -L'AASOT - to make

עשיה -ASSIYA is the fourth of the four worlds (see MILA 2 for Atzilut:Emanation and Briya:Creation) of the unfolding. It is the

material world, "the world in which we ordinarily live, with all that it embraces, is called the 'world of action' and it includes the world of both our sensual and our nonsensual apprehension." (Steinsaltz, 13 Petalled Rose, p. 4)

"Assiya...has the connotation of final action and completion...it represents a consciousness of the world as a vessel that was made to receive God's light. It is in the universe of Assiya that the spiritual actual interacts with the physical dimension, bringing the entire continuum of the universes to its intended fulfillment." (Kaplan, Innerspace, p. 27)

It corresponds to the final ׀HEH of the Divine Name

יְ-וָה-יְ-וָה-יְ-YHVH.

An interesting related MILA is the name of Jacob's twin brother and nemesis (until a healing occurs) - עֵשָׂו-ESAU -literally 'made' or 'completed'

As Itzchak, their father says: "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." (Breishit 27:22.)

Esau is a being of this world. The conflict and the healing are perhaps a teaching of our need to integrate our inner(voice) and outer (hands).

MILOT CHOZROT-Repeating Words:

אֱלֹהִים ELOHIM- 8th appearance (of 32) in Creation narrative, This is the first time (of 3) that ELOHIM is associated with the verb -YAAS:Made.

As we learnt earlier, each of the 32 appearances of ELOHIM in the Creation narrative correspond to a path of the Tree of Life.

Three times the verb 'YAAS: is used along with ELOHIM. Sefer Yetzira teaches that this corresponds to the 'creation' of the three mother letters.-א-Alef, מ-Mem, and ש-Shin.

Therefore this appearance of וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים -VA'YAAS ELOHIM is the creation of א-ALEPH. Aleph corresponds to the element of air. It seems significant that the firmament that is being 'made' is the 'membrane' that holds within it this environment of air. This enables us to live and serves as a filter between us and the cosmos. The inner teaching of the letter Aleph is 'as above, so below' and vice versa.

אֶת-ET- the-sign of the accusative denoting 'an object is about to appear'- (see MILA 4 and 6) and that object is

הַרְקִיעַ HA'RAQIYAA: the firmament. (MILA 32)

CONCEPTUAL MEANING-

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni and other places) relates that this is one the verses that the sage Ben Zoma found extraordinary. He wondered why the Creator had to make the firmament. Was it not enough to simply say “ יְהִי רָקִיעַ -YEHEE RAQIYAA-Let There Be A Firmament...”

In the first day of Creation, ‘ELOHIM Said: Let There Be Light and There Was Light.’ Why was the step of ELOHIM Making the firmament necessary.

The commentators respond to this excellent question in a variety of ways.

Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Itzchaki (1040-1105, France) the pre-eminent presenter of the oral tradition explains that 'Va'Yaas means that the Creator set it in its ordained position, which is not inconsistent with creation by the Word of the Creator's Mouth.

The Ramban, (Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman(1194-1270, Spain)explains that 'the terms ASAA always means putting an object into its ultimate condition.

Rav Yehuda in the Zohar offers an answer:"It does not say here 'God Said and here was' instead 'God said and God made' because this involved 'melacha begvura elyona:action of the highest power' 've'heechzeeko be koach atzum: and maintaining it with huge power."

The implication seems to be that this creation requires extraordinary strength to manifest and exist. Perhaps this refers constant tension dynamic of gravity and verticality, entropy and its opposite.

This may also relate to the teaching that the Creator is constantly bringing the creation into being, and existence would cease instantly if this is not continued every moment.

Do you have a possible understanding of why here it follows the Speaking with the Acting while in most other places Speaking is enough to manifest the object? I invite your thinking about this.

This moment is the introduction of action as the fulfillment and culmination of desire, vision, understanding, and emotion. All of this is brought into physicality through ASSIYA-action.

Action of course is a realm of huge holiness. Here are some contemporary perspectives on action:

Rav Kook on Action:

"The heart must be filled with love for all. The love of all creation comes first, then comes the love for all humankind, and then follows the love for the Jewish people, in which all other loves are included, since it is the destiny of the Jews to serve toward the perfection of all things.

All of these loves are to be expression in practical action, by pursuing the welfare of those we are bidden to love, and to seek their advancement.

(from Moral Principles, Love)

Allen Afterman, z'l on Action (from Kabbala and Consciousness):

"Action that expands consciousness, that leads toward the revelation of the unity of all existence in God, is rectifying...No action is meaningless or without effect. Each person has a special purpose or life's work which is the major area of their tikkun:repair; this work, in turn, defines their true identity."

VA'YAAS ELOHIM ET HA'RAQIYAA:

The Creator Brought Into Physicality The Matter Of Life, the Vessel, the Background out which all further Life will emerge.

וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ

May we be blessed to fully discover and experience the blessing and the power of Action in our temporary sojourn in Olam: World of ASSIYA.

Itzchak

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