

BEHUKOTAI - 5777 - YAAKOV HOLDS COLLATERAL TO INSURE ELIYAHU'S ARRIVAL

The Talmud (Megila 32) relates in the name of R. Shimon B. Elazar that Ezra HaSofer decreed for Israel that they should read the curses of Torat Kohanim (בחקתי) prior to the festival of Shavuot. Evidently the holiday of תורה will thereby emerge post to the reading to quash the negativity that is expounded in the curses of our parasha. Based on Torat Kohanim the Sages teach that a protection from the curses is toil in Torah as they explain the opening verse - "If you follow my laws and careful to keep my commandments" as a reference to toil in Torah study. We will learn that if one has already incurred the curses and especially that of the prolonged exile - The study of Torah will be the essential cure leading to redemption. After listing 49 curses the Torah details the reason for the restoration of Israel. First - Hashem declares - I will remember the Berit with Yaakov. Our Sages have called out the odd locution of the name יעקב spelled here curiously with an extra ו' - They have suggested that it represents a portion of the collateral taken by יעקב from אליהו to insure that the latter will herald in the redemption. We will expound on this strange idea as we assert that the study of torah is the essential interface between exile/curses and redemption.

WHAT DOES YAAKOV HAVE TO RETURN TO ELIYAHU TO BRING REDEMPTION

When the Torah teaches that ה' will remember the covenant of Yaakov - it is apparent that it is a reference to our commitment to Torah. We know that יעקב represents the spiritual celestial channel of תורה - As we learn from פרקי אבות - that upon three pillars the world stands - and the one associated with יעקב is the pillar of Torah. The Midrashim teach that already in his mother's womb he was aroused at each passing of the bet hamidrash. He spent 14 years in the academy of שם ועבר - He is personified by the Torah as יושב אהלים - dwelling in the tents of Torah. R. Bahya points out that the restoration of Israel from the prolonged exile in foreign lands begins with the name יעקב spelled with an extra ו' - Admittedly it is something quite unusual - including here - it is only found five times in the entire Bible. This corresponds to five other places where the name Eliya normally spelled אליהו is spelled without a final ו'. Rashi notes that this alludes to a guarantee as collateral that the prophet will make an appearance on earth announcing the advent of redemption. R. Bahya writes that this particular letter ו' is used as it represents Yaakov's association with the spiritual channel of תורה found in the YHVH. The question remains what is the Torah hinting in that Yaakov is in possession of 5 times the letter ו' which is numerically 6 - Surely it must represent something that only אליהו can really appreciate. I believe we can relate this to the final explanation of the opening words ואם בחקותי תלכו on the opening words of the parasha. He cites a narrative from the Talmud (BM 85) where one of the scholars was given a sign by Eliyahu in how to recognize the spiritual throne of R. Hiya because the latter did not require after his passing - Angels to lift his chair to the celestial regions. His chair ascended unassisted. The reason R. Hiya merited this was his unequalled vigor in studying Torah and teaching it. The word תלכו - alludes to this energetic approach - the Talmud elaborates that in order for the Torah not to be forgotten - R. Hiya would go and sow flax. He would create nets from the flax and trap deer - feeding the meat to the orphans and preparing scrolls of parchment with their skin. He would write the five חומשים and go to the village to teach each of five children a humash. He would then teach six other children a different one of the six orders of the Mishna by heart. He would return teaching תורה to one another and משנה to one another. Making sure the Torah was not forgotten. It is possible that from this narrative we can properly understand our assertion. It is אליהו who recognizes the greatness of חייא in bringing back the

Torah that had been forgotten. Or in terms of אליהו the collateral they are required to return to him - The Talmud is particular when it details that R. Hiya wrote and taught the five חומשים and the six orders of Mishna. Surely a hint of the five חומשים that we are required to energetically study to bring forth the redemptive qualities of אליהו -

ELIYAHU AND YAAKOV - PETITION ON MOS'E SHABBAT

Our Rabbi's teach that one of the primary reasons for the custom to sing about אליהו הנביא מוצאי or at a minimum at סעודה רביעית is to arouse the redemption. While שבת represents something similar עמקין - the weekday represents the "mud" of this world. The transition period is Mose' Shabbat when we attempt to pray for the redemption. While it is obvious that we should include a recall of Eliyahu as he is the one who heralds in the משיח - It might appear strange that we interpose and project the song that לא תירא עבדי יעקב - not fear - We recall to our forefather that he need not fear! I believe that this is our promise to return the collateral back to אליהו - This can be done through our commitment to the energetic Torah study as advanced by ר' חייא - it included the חמשה and ששה סדרי משנה - The Rabbi's teach that סעודה רביעית is unique in that it feeds the bone - That physical עולם that will remain and assist us during the תחית המתים - This עולם represents the interface between the world as we know it today and the future world after redemption. The city where Yaakov rested and arose ממשנתו literally from his sleep or allegorically from his study of משנה was called בית אל - fascinating - the Torah also calls it עולם being identical with the bone nourished during סעודה רביעית - Again the bone - the city associated with the patriarch of Torah - is what needs to be fed to interface between worlds. No doubt the relationship between the bone and city is to remind us of the integral role that יעקב plays in established the celestial pillar of Torah. Through a commitment to Torah as taught by Eliyahu of רבי חייא - we can "return" the collateral and await the immediate redemption.

ELIYAHU AND THE RABBIS

The Sages of the Talmud and even some later Rabbi's and pious men endowed with a mystical frame of mind often established a spiritual communion with אליהו - They even recognized his superiority in Torah - As the Talmud often ends an inconclusive narrative with the word תיקו - of which the Rabbi's have accepted this to be an acrostic for תשבי יענה קושיות ותירוצים - His association with Torah is essential - as he "takes back" the collateral or the Torah of Israel. He can then confirm all of this to our Father in Heaven. In a Tannaic Agadah taught in the Talmud (BER 3) R. Yose confirms that אליהו once told him that when Israel enter the בתי מדרשות and בתי כנסיות - It causes להקב"ה to exclaim "Woe to the father who exiled his children" - If we proceed on this holy path of Torah - then will be revealed the final גאולה of אליהו that will be sent by God before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Shabbat Shalom

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