

VAYESE 2 - THE LESSENING OF THE MOON AND TIKUN OF RAHEL

Our Sages have taught that the patriarchs and matriarchs had attained elevated states, whereby they fortified the spiritual channels of the highest of the four worlds. This means that their actions and general existence on earth was specifically focused on rectifying and acting as chariots for certain celestial aspects. 1 This concept is so apparent that the Rabbis even exchange their proper names with associated spiritual channels. For example, via the nighttime vigil of Tiqun Hasot - we correct certain female channels - hence the names Tiqun Rahel and Tiqun Leah. 2 It appears to me that Yaakov in the dream of the ladder - was not only informed of his own spiritual role above, but also of that of his future wife Rahel. While he was to fortify the central right male column known as tiferet- or coded as the spiritual Sun, his wife Rahel was to fortify and correct the female spiritual reservoir known as Malkhut or the Shehina - This latter passive force is coded by our Sages as the spiritual moon. Let us attempt to learn how Rahel accomplished her divine task.

SUN AND THE MOON

In the narrative of creation, we are taught that on the fourth day, God created two great lights; the greater to rule during the day and the smaller ma'or haqatan - to rule at night. 3 At this point it is important to note that our Sages teach that these luminaries are the spiritual sun (Tiferet) and the spiritual moon (Malkhut - Shehina). 4 The Talmud asks how it came to be that the spiritual moon diminished in size? - Transforming from a great luminary to a qatan -? This was a result of the jealousy of the moon, when "she" said - Can two kings utilize the same crown? God said to "her" (the female channel - Shehina) Go and diminish yourself. The Talmud relates that she was consoled in that the righteous (including King David) will also retain the same appellation of qatan - the smaller one. 5 We can learn from this narrative A. That inherent in creation is the Midah of jealousy B. The spiritual sun and moon are not harmonious until the moon can ascend to a rectified temporary position to receive from the sun and reflect the light upon creation C. This ascent can occur via her rectification of jealousy; Namely, not to rid oneself of this midah but rather to elevate it - to what the Sages teach as qin'at soferim - jealousy of another's scholarship or character traits to better oneself. 6 The Tiqun of mankind is dependent upon this rectification. The references in Tanakh and Hazal of the ascent of the moon is associated with the permanent ascent of the Shekhina - Divine Presence. This will allow her to unify with the male channel of the sun or Tiferet. When finally, the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun with both nourishing from the same crown. 7

THE MOON AND RAHEL

Yoseph relates his second dream to his father and brothers - namely that the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to him. 8 The Torah relates that Yaakov scolded him - "Do you want me and your mother and brothers to come and prostrate ourselves on the ground to you? 9 Who told Yaakov that he was associated with the spiritual sun and Rahel to the spiritual moon? Our Sages offer a comment that prior to his arrival at Lavan - Yaaqov had camped overnight in an open field because the sun set unexpectedly. The Midrash teaches that Yaaqov overheard the angels stating, "the sun has set the sun has set." When Yaaqov heard Yoseph's dream he asked, "who told him my name is (synonymous) with the sun?" 10 It is obvious that Yaaqov knew of his spiritual essence being associated with the sun - as well that of his wife Rahel's association with the moon. 11 In fact the Torah relates his love for her as Yaaqov understood their spiritual bond. She is referenced in the Torah narrative both as the daughter of Lavan or moon and as the daughter - the qetana related to the small luminary. 12

THE TIKUN OF JEALOUSY

The Talmud relates that Rahel had warned Yaaqov about her cunning father. They agree upon the signs to recognize her on the wedding night. 13 Nevertheless Rahel reveals the signs to her sister lest should be put to

shame. 14 Leah has a fourth child with the subsequent verse revealing that - "Rahel realized that she was not bearing any children to Yaaqov. She was jealous of her sister. "15 On this Jealousy - the Zohar and Midrash note that Rahel exhibited positive envy of qin'at soferim as she attributed her sister's good fortune to her piety. 16 R. B. Rosenblum cites the Saba of Kelm 17 who asks - what provokes the Midrash to advance a teaching that appears to oppose the simple Torah reading of plain jealousy? To this the Rabbi cites another Midrash 18 which teaches, that amongst our forefathers - it was only Rahel who was able to obtain God's promise that Israel will ultimately be restored to her land after exile. She pleaded and said that she had given her husband who loved and worked for her for seven years to her sister. And she was not jealous of her when Leah was given to Yaaqov on the night that should have been her own wedding celebration! Hence the Rabbi notes that it is only her who can temper God's "jealousy" that Israel had went after other forces in lieu of serving him! This is why Yaaqov buried her at Ephrat because he foresaw the exiles would pass there on their way to Babel. There - only Rahel can entreat God's mercy and temper his jealousy. 19

TIQUN HASOT

We are taught that each evening at halakhic midnight the channel associated with Rahel - (Shekhina) descends from her elevated status in Asilut to the world of Beri'ah. She gives nine aspects of herself called her tosefet 20 to the channel associated with her sister Le'ah in order for the latter to unite with the elevated status of Yisrael called Ze'ir Anpin in the secret of Tiqun Le'ah. 21 The Tiqun Rahel vigil reflects the diminution or lessening of the channel of Rahel as her nekudah hashorasheet descends to the world below remaining there until the light of the morning. 22 It is incumbent upon us at that time to join with the righteous who commensurate with this aspect of the Shehina - Rahel crying for her as she is thrust into exile. Subsequently, we are to rejoice in the elevated unity that is taking place instead between Le'ah with Yisrael (ZA). After reciting both components of Tiqun Hasot - it is proper to continue and join with the righteous - learning torah until the light of the morning to assist in progressively hoist the Shehina back into her proper position in Asilut. 23 We see here as well that Rahel temporarily shares nine aspects of herself in the secret of giving Le'ah each evening the simanim in order to unite with her spiritual husband from midnight onward.

OUR ROLE

The Talmud associates the rectification of the moon and the female spiritual reservoir called the Shekhina - with reciting the Birkat Halevana. "Whoever pronounces the blessing over the new moon in it's due time welcomes the Divine Presence." 24 Furthermore as taught above, reciting Tiqun Hasot represents an overt method to piously commensurate with the Shekhina. I think it behooves us at these times - namely when reciting Birkat Halevana and Tiqun Hasot to ponder the actions of our mother Rahel and resolve to temper our jealousy of others. We must convert this trait into one of qin'at soferim an elevated jealousy. In this way we will complete our share in the rectification, and in the words of the Prophet make the light of the moon as light of the sun or in the words of the Sages to rescue the Shekhina from exile. This will occur as the kingdom of Mashiah a descendent of David would be forever established as the moon. 25 What a new perspective we must have as we rise on the tips of our toes announcing in a clear voice - Long live David the King of Israel and greet each other with a Shalom Alekhem offering peace onto one another. 26

Shabbat Shalom

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