"Open my eyes so that I may see the **wonders** of Your Torah"

בס"ד

Wonders

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שַׁבָּת וַיְחִי ❁ י-יא טֵבֵת תשפ"ה



> *The two primordial sins from the time of Noah symbolize two opposing cultural poles which Abraham and his descendants must bridge.*

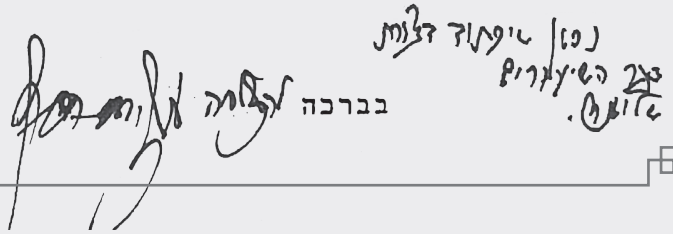
3 **The Flood and the Tower:** Transcending Liberalism and Conservatism

9 **Story:** Rebbe Moshe Biderman of Lelov: A Day For A Year

13 **Partzuf:** The Tribes of Israel

The Lubavitcher Rebbe to Rav Ginsburgh, Elul 5741

"…It would be proper to publish your classes in book form. With blessings for success…"



Wonders

An anthology from the shiurim and farbrengens
of Harav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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Wonders Staff
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Yoel Broderick, Typesetting

THE FLOOD AND THE TOWER:
TRANSCENDING LIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM

Now that we are wrapping up the Book of Genesis, let us look back to two of its earliest narratives and see the wisdom they hold for modern times. A foundational principle in Chasidic thought is that every teaching in the Torah contains a message relevant to every generation and place.

The Torah portion of Noah opens and closes with the tales of humanity's two greatest early transgressions. These two sinful generations are named after the punishments they received: the first generation, which corrupted its ways upon the earth and filled it with violence, is called the *Generation of the Flood*; the second, which built the Tower of Babel and sought to wage war against God, is known as the *Generation of the Dispersion*, so called because they were dispersed into many ethnic groups speaking different languages.

How are these two sins present in our own times, and what can we learn from the punishments they received?

THE GENERATION OF THE FLOOD: INDIVIDUALISM AND PERMISSIVENESS

The sin of the Generation of the Flood is described as follows:

> And the earth was corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth."[1]

The key words here are "corruption," "earth," "violence," and "flesh." The picture that emerges is of a generation so immersed in its material desires that it corrupted the very essence of its humanity. The sages expand on this, explaining that, in addition to the sin of theft, this generation was steeped in sexual immorality, even permitting acts of bestiality. This was, therefore, a generation of extreme licentiousness, dissolving all boundaries between man and fellow man and between mankind and subhuman nature.

If we trace the root of the sin of the Flood, we find it in extreme *individualism*. An absolute sanctification of personal desires gradually leads a person to sink into physical lusts, reaching the state where "there is none besides oneself." In this state, everyone else—from other humans to animals and even the natural world—is seen merely as an extension of the self, available for personal exploitation. This unchecked indulgence leads one to view others' property as their own, to violate moral boundaries and objectify others, and ultimately to descend into an animalistic existence consumed entirely by gratification of desires.

We do not need to look far to see that much of modern culture has already

1. Genesis 6:11-12.

embarked on a similar path. Now, as then, the root of the issue lies in the glorification of the individual. In the modern era, following the collapse of grand collectivist ideologies, the West sought to base all social, political, economic, and military enterprises on a single principle: personal liberty. Within the framework of modern liberalism, largely drawn from Romanticism, most individuals no longer live for a supra-human or supra-personal purpose but solely for themselves. Everything is geared toward expanding the personal sphere of freedom. Thus, the foundational concept of liberal morality discredits commandments or obligations—whether they be between man and God or between man and his fellow; instead, the discourse is about rights. Whether referred to as "natural rights" two centuries ago or "human rights" today, the modern person's starting point is not that they are *obligated* but that they are *entitled*. He or she are the epicenter of life, and everything revolves around them.

Personal liberty is of course not unlimited: it is checked by the liberty of others, which each individual is obligated to respect. Yet this duty is merely a *derivative* of the other person's right to personal freedom. Everything begins and ends with rights. In liberal morality, even altruism is ultimately a form of egotism.

While modern liberalism may not yet have reached the point where "all flesh corrupted its way upon the earth," many indications suggest it may be headed in that direction. It is no coincidence that a central motif in Romantic culture is the vision of a "return to nature," calling on humanity to cast off all cultural conventions in favor of a life that is earthly and primal. Indeed, we see that, at least in literature and cinema, permissiveness continues to erode every taboo and red line intended to protect culture from degeneration and destruction.

The story of the Flood comes to warn us of the self-destructive end of this path. A general principle of Divine retribution is that it conducted "measure for measure": the punishment reflects the sin it addresses. The Flood that befell the Generation of the Flood was but a physical manifestation of the flood of desires in which they had already immersed themselves. We too are drowning in a flood of permissiveness, and the Torah advises us to rise early and build an ark within which we may endure it.

THE GENERATION OF DISPERSION: COLLECTIVISM AND CONSERVATISM

Thanks to Noah who under God's command built an ark to save himself, his family, and the animals, humanity was able to start anew. Indeed, the situation initially improved: "The whole earth was of one language and of unified words."[2] The destructive individualism of the Generation of the Flood had given way to a new era of solidarity, camaraderie, and collaboration. Yet, it wasn't long before another sinful generation emerged:

> And it came to pass, as they journeyed eastward, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." They used bricks for

2. Genesis 11:1.

stone, and slime they had for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth."[3]

This new sin, in many ways, was even worse than the previous one. Mankind is constructing a grand technological enterprise designed to glorify itself at the expense of the Creator, perhaps also to wage war against Him. Was the Flood all for naught? Perhaps not entirely. The construction of the tower demonstrates that the root of the previous generation's evil had indeed been eradicated: the builders had to live in harmony with one another, united as a collective, to construct their project. Indeed, their endeavor moved in the opposite direction of the Generation of the Flood—no longer downward toward earthliness, but upward toward the heavens; not backward toward primal instincts, but forward toward progress; not a return to nature, but an advance into civilization.

However, even this reverse trajectory carried a cultural and moral risk, which now came to light. This is revealed in the dissonant phrase that betrays a deeper corruption in the kingdom of Shinar: "Let us make a name *for ourselves*." The tower builders marshaled all the virtues that distinguished them from the Generation of the Flood—solidarity, discipline, scientific and technological advancement—only to amplify their sense of being the masters and rulers of the world. They attributed their strengths and resources solely to themselves, devoid of any recognition of the Divine truth that, "It is He who gives you strength to achieve success."[4]

This mindset reveals the type of solidarity and peace that set the Generation of the Dispersion apart from the Generation of the Flood, and why it's insufficient. According to the Torah, true peace arises from a person's willingness to humble themselves for the sake of God's honor, enabling them to relinquish their insistence on their own individuality and to recognize the unique qualities of others. Furthermore, faith in God serves as a reminder that all perspectives share a common source, and by tracing them to their roots, they can coexist harmoniously. Such peace does not require the erasure of individual distinctions. On the contrary, it affirms each person's uniqueness as essential to fulfilling their Divinely assigned role and aspires to integrate the truths of each perspective into a new, higher unity.

Peace without submission before God, however, demands no genuine self-diminishment. Instead, it demands an artificial suppression of individual identity, dulling its edges so that all identities may coexist superficially. If the Generation of the Flood sanctified the individual at the expense of the collective, the Generation of the Dispersion can be said to have sanctified the collective at the expense of the individual. Indeed, according to the Midrash, the people building the tower devalued individual life to the point where they mourned the loss of a brick more than the loss of a human being.

3. Ibid. vv. 2–4.

4. Deuteronomy 8:18.

In our times, the contemporary manifestation of the Generation of the Dispersion can be found in the counterpart of Romantic liberal culture—the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment emphasized progress, civilization, refinement, and advancement, all driven (explicitly or not) by a desire to glorify humanity and its abilities. Just as the Generation of the Dispersion emerged from Noah's descendants, so too the Enlightenment adopted a conservative ideology that sees its role as constructing a "Noah's Ark" to preserve cultural values and withstand the romantic flood of primal instincts. This aspiration is noble and lofty, but it is channeled toward a vision of an industrial, technological, and sterile world. The ultimate goal of this trajectory is the construction of a colossal global "Tower of Babel": a dense network of roads, interchanges, and skyscrapers blanketing the entire planet—a human-made Technosphere that arrogantly proclaims humanity as the creator and sustainer of the world. Similarly, the pluralistic peace model of the Enlightenment resembles that of the Generation of the Dispersion: it is an external peace based on "peace treaties" and artificial borders between opposing sides, without resolving their deeper animosities, let alone fostering genuine camaraderie. Private and national identities are blurred into a faceless collective void of intrinsic value.

The subsequent punishment of confusing their languages shatters the falsehood of the builders' forced collectivism, exposing the seventy faces of humanity that cannot be suppressed. It proclaims to the tower builders: "Your global state is a lie. Let us see you create globalization that does not silence humanity's diverse languages but truly unites them."

This message is as relevant today as it was then: if we wish to achieve globalization, establish world peace, and create a universal society, we must resist the superficial pluralism of "post-nationalism." This solution does not unite nations but instead accepts their separation and loosely strings them together with the thin thread of a lowest common denominator. A true union of nations and cultures must strive to unite them not through their lowest common denominator but through their highest, by recognizing each nation's unique manifestation of a shared Divine origin. To do so, we cannot settle for either a multiplicity of languages and perspectives, nor attempt to impose a shallow universal worldview. Rather, our goal must be to extract the unique truth from each language and culture and anchor it within the framework of God's word—the Torah.

The vision of rectifying the Generation of the Dispersion is hidden in the words of the prophet Zephaniah: "For then I will turn to the peoples a clear language, that they may all call upon the Name of God, to serve Him with one consent."[5] Here too, there is a unification of peoples, but this time not to "make ourselves a name" but to call upon His name, and not to wage war against Him but to serve Him.

WHICH SIN IS WORSE?

The sins of the Generation of the Flood and the Generation of the Dispersion

5. Zephaniah 3:9.

are opposites: the former succumbed to individual desires, leading to societal disintegration, while the latter acted in unity and collective loyalty, but used this solidarity to rebel against God. The former violated the covenant between humans, and the latter violated the covenant between humanity and God. Which of these sins is graver?

The sages pose this question and answer as follows:

> Which is more severe: the sin of the Generation of the Flood or the Generation of the Dispersion? The former did not act against the Essential, while the latter acted against the Essential to wage war with Him. Yet, the former were utterly destroyed, while the latter were not wiped out! The reason is that the Generation of the Flood were thieves, and there was discord among them, so they were destroyed. But the Generation of the Dispersion displayed love and friendship among themselves, as it is said, "one language and unified words." From here, we learn that strife is hateful, and peace is great.[6]

Strife, it turns out, is worse than denying God. For this reason, the conflicted Generation of the Flood was deemed irredeemable and perished, while the peaceful Generation of the Dispersion was granted a second chance despite their rebellion.

The Generation of the Dispersion represents a transitional stage between the utter licentiousness of the Generation of the Flood and the establishment of firm, complete faith, which begins with the following generation and the figure of Abraham. By leaving his land, birthplace, and father's house, Abraham continued the upward trajectory of transcending nature, yet he cleansed himself of the arrogance of the Generation of the Dispersion. By obeying the command *Lech Lecha* ("Go for yourself"), Abraham journeyed not to make a name for himself but precisely the opposite—to call upon the Name of God.[7] Indeed, in the "city and tower" of the Generation of the Dispersion, one can see a distorted draft of Jerusalem (the city of true peace) and the Temple (referred to as a tower of strength[8]), which Abraham began to establish on sacred foundations.

A COMPOSITE RECTIFICATION

If we seek to draw a lesson for our generation from this comparison, it seems to suggest the following conclusion. Both cultures—Romanticism and Enlightenment, individual liberalism and collective conservatism—are flawed and lacking. However, if we are to assess which of the two is more destructive, and conversely, which offers greater potential for positive growth, it emerges that conservatism is the lesser of two evils. Individual liberalism, by dissolving the very fabric of society, marches—like the Generation of the Flood—toward collapse and ruin. Conservatism, on the other hand, despite being in some ways worse, at least maintains an external framework of stability that has greater longevity. This approach is far from perfect but provides a foundation for the faith-based leap

6. *Rashi* on Genesis 11:9.

7. Genesis 12:8.

8. Proverbs 18:10.

initiated by Abraham.

However, the lesson derived from comparing these generations is even more nuanced. The fact that the Generation of the Dispersion erased individuality implies that its rectification requires adopting something from the individualism of the Generation of the Flood! In other words, a complete rectification of both sins demands a synthesis: integrating the primal and creative energy of the Generation of the Flood into the stable social framework of the Generation of the Dispersion.

Indeed, this seems to be exactly what Abraham achieved: by rebelling against the idolatrous conventions of the culture in which he was raised, Abraham established a new form of individualism—one that did not externalize base desires but instead expressed the loftiest faith. Thus, the preference for conservatism applies only on the external level; on a deeper level, one must also draw from Romanticism, refining and elevating its energies.

In the language of Kabbalah and Chassidut, the Generation of the Flood and Romanticism correspond to the World of Chaos, while the Generation of the Dispersion and Enlightenment correspond to the World of Rectification (*Tikkun*).

The World of Tikkun is characterized by "abundant vessels and limited light." It excels in constructing external foundations and frameworks, but the inner content that fills these frameworks is sparse and shallow. This corresponds to Enlightenment, which excels at organizing and building society but dulls the power of individuals.

The World of Chaos, by contrast, is defined as a realm with "abundant light and limited vessels"—it is rich with immense and abundant inner content but lacks developed structure. This deficiency leads to a"shattering of the vessels," a disintegration of the framework that is too weak to support its inner abundance. This corresponds to Romanticism, which is characterized by vast creativity and emotion but, lacking binding structure, channels these energies into primal and ultimately destructive avenues.

The proper integration of these two worlds is described in Chasidut as "placing the lights of Chaos within the vessels of *Tikkun* by first, relinquishing the blinding intensity of the World of Chaos in favor of the more stable World of *Tikkun* (choosing the conservative framework), and then reintroducing the lights of Chaos, transforming them into the life force that animates the vessels of *Tikkun* (revitalizing Romantic energy and embedding it within this framework).

This synthesis—melding the boundless creativity and intensity of Romanticism with the enduring stability of Enlightenment—provides a model for creating a balanced and thriving society, one that honors both the individual and the collective, the natural and the transcendent, and, ultimately, God's unity. Abraham's path exemplifies this rectification, and it is our task to follow it.

STORY

REBBE MOSHE BIDERMAN OF LELOV:

A Day For A Year

Rabbi Moshe Biderman of Lelov was born in 5537 (1777) to his father Rabbi Dovid of Lelov, a disciple of the Seer of Lublin. He was a student of Rabbi Yeshayah of Przedbórz, and in his second marriage, he wed Rivkah Rachel, the daughter of the Holy Yid of Peshischa. The tzaddikim of his generation greatly revered him and spoke of him in extraordinary terms. The Ruzhiner, for example, said that in all his days, he had never seen a man with a broken heart like Rabbi Moshe. From 5603 (1843) until 5610 (1850), he served as the rabbi in the town of Przedbórz, but all his days he aspired to make aliyah to the Land of Israel and expressed his intent to hasten the redemption. At the end of 5610 (1850), he finally decided to make aliyah, bade farewell to the great chasidic leaders in Poland, and arrived in the Land in the month of Cheshvan 5611 (1850) together with a large part of his family. After a few days, he fell ill and shortly thereafter passed away, only seventy-four days after arriving in the Land, on the 13th of Tevet. He was buried on the Mount of Olives, near the tomb of the prophet Zechariah.

On the eve of *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan* 5611 (1850), Rabbi Moshe of Lelov's ship anchored off the coast of Acco. With joy and gladness, Rabbi Moshele descended onto the holy soil of the Land of Israel, with his entourage and family following. He turned to those around him and said in a meaningful tone: "A day for a year, a day for a year!" No one knew the meaning of these words. No one imagined that the Rebbe would live only seventy-four more days in the Land, corresponding to the number of years of his life, and that this was what he meant when he declared while still abroad: "Days will speak!"

From Acco, the Rebbe and his entourage traveled to the holy city of Tzfat, where he was received with royal honor. Many people came to behold the radiance of his countenance, and *chasidim* and community leaders implored him to settle in their city. In those days, Tzfat was a city full of scholars and writers. Even Rabbi Shmuel Heller, the distinguished rabbi of Tzfat, offered him his own rabbinical seat but the Rebbe refused to even hear of it: He replied, "For God has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation," and so do I! He preferred to dwell in Jerusalem, near the Western Wall, with his desire to bring the Mashiach.

As Shabbat ended, the Rebbe bid farewell to all the people of Tzfat and their dignitaries, and after a brief visit to Tiberias, the caravan continued to Jerusalem. All the pleas of the family members who asked the Rebbe to rest and recover a bit from the journey's toil, to wait a few more days, were to no avail. He urged

them to hasten the journey, even though the hardships of the long trip had taken their toll and weakened him. Tired and weary, he made his way to Jerusalem, riding on a mule. However, when the caravan reached the mountains of Jerusalem, he was completely refreshed, and he prepared for the entrance to the Holy City. Rabbi Moshele repeatedly promised his entourage that upon his arrival in Jerusalem, the redemption would come. He would perform wonders with the Seer of Lublin's Kiddush goblet, raise his voice like a *shofar*, and hasten the end. But the Satan's deed succeeded, and before they could enter the gates of Jerusalem, while standing at Jaffa Gate at the entrance to the Old City, the Seer's cup fell to the ground and shattered...

When the Rebbe appeared at the gates of Jerusalem, all the city's scholars came out to greet him, led by the genius brothers Rabbi Nachum of Shadik and Rabbi Yaakov Leib of the Levi family. The family rented him a modest apartment, and all who sought God came to bask in the shadow of his holiness. His followers now eagerly awaited the Rebbe's imminent visit to the Western Wall, at the foot of the Temple Mount.

However, the generation was not worthy. Rabbi Moshele was so tired from the journey that he was unable to go to the Western Wall on the day of his arrival in Jerusalem, as he had longed to do all along. He then planned to reach the Western Wall after resting for several days, but he had already fallen ill on the first day of his arrival. The Rebbe was greatly distressed by this, and one day he turned to his family members and asked to reach the Wall at any cost.

He instructed his holy sons to carry him on his bed to the Wall. They left the house for the alley that led to the Western Wall. But at that moment, a hail of rocks rained down on them, hurled by the Arab residents of the alley upon seeing the elderly Rebbe lying on the bed. The rocks increased moment by moment, and the danger to the Rebbe's life was tangible. With no choice, they turned back. The Rebbe never reached the Wall...

On that same bitter day, Rebbe Moshele departed this world. Full of sorrow and dejection over the exile of the Divine Presence that he was prevented from raising from the dust, and over his effort-filled journey that had come to naught, Rabbi Moshele bid farewell to his sons and disciples. He promised them that he would stand by his descendants and all who support them at all times, and also that in case of a drought, if they wait until his yahrzeit—rains of blessing would fall. When he finished speaking, the angels of heaven overcame the mighty ones of earth, and he passed on. Rabbi Moshele ascended in a storm to heaven.

The tzaddik's declaration "a day for a year, a day for a year"[1] echoes the punishment of the spies who rejected the Promised Land. In both cases, one day in the Land is equivalent to a year outside it, but here Rabbi Moshe was like Moses, the leader and sender of the spies, coming to rectify the sin of the spies with his great longing and ascent to the Land. Indeed, his soul connection to Moses was particularly strong. It is said that Rabbi Moshe Eliakim Beria of Kozhnitz declared: "Whoever wants to recognize the image of the Faithful Shepherd (Moses) should look at the radiant countenance of Rabbi Moshele."

The principle of "a day for a year" appears elsewhere in the Bible, in the time of the prophet Ezekiel, who lay on his side for forty days.[2] Here too it was to rectify the sins of the People of Israel. Interestingly, "a day for a year" (**יוֹם לַשָּׁנָה**) has the same gematria as "truth" (**אֱמֶת**), and Ezekiel (**יְחֶזְקֵאל**) has the same gematria as Joseph (**יוֹסֵף**). These concepts are closely linked, as it is said of Moses (the first to prophesy about "a day for a year"), "Moses is true, and his Torah is true." Joseph represents the Divine attribute of foundation, whose inner essence is truth—the Almighty's seal. This connection was also expressed in actual deed, when "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him,"[3] essentially adopting the inner quality of Joseph's attribute.

Although the prophet Ezekiel dwelled outside the Land of Israel, one can certainly say, based on Rabbi Moshe's own words, that the years of a great tzaddik are equivalent to days lived in the Land of Israel. Once, Rabbi Moshe of Lelov heard the words of the Holy Jew of Peshischa, who said that success, which is an abundance that comes through natural means, is possible even outside the Land. In contrast, blessing is an abundance above the natural order, and it belongs specifically to the Land of Israel, as the verse states: "May God bless you from Zion." To this, the *tzaddik* responded, "One who sanctifies himself from above and below—even the space around his body—for him, blessing can occur even outside the Land of Israel, for this too is an aspect of the Land of Israel."

Either way, it emerges that the Land of Israel is the source of all blessing above nature. One can therefore suggest a new intention to have during the Priestly Blessing: when the priests begin with the word "May [God] bless you" (יְבָרֶכְךָ), one should have in mind the verse, "may God bless you from Zion" (יְבָרֶכְךָ יי-הוה מִצִּיּוֹן), to merit reaching the Land of Israel.

Remarkably, the blessing of the Land was once again intertwined for Rabbi Moshe with matters of "a day for a year."

The chasid Reb Yedidya from Kshonz (Książ, Poland) would travel to the Gutter Yid [the Tzaddik] of Neustadt, the son of the *Maor VaShemesh*, while his wife would travel to Rabbi Moshe of Lelov. Occasionally, when she visited the Rebbe,

she would ask him to bless her with a son, for she already had five daughters. Even though she once heard from his holy mouth that he couldn't help with this, she continued to implore him, with strong faith in tzaddikim.

On one occasion, the Rebbe acquiesced, agreeing to bless her on one condition: that she give him a sum sufficient for a journey to the Land of Israel, and that she gives this large sum with her husband, Reb Yedidya's, consent. She was overjoyed, but said: "Holy Rebbe, I'm afraid, for it is well known that children who come through miraculous means are often not entirely well...." The Rebbe replied that the child would be perfectly fine, and the woman traveled home and asked her husband about giving the redemption money.

When her husband heard, he replied that he needed to consult with his Rebbe, the Guter Yid. The man immediately traveled to Neustadt and told his Rebbe about Rabbi Moshe of Lelov's words and the sum of money he was asking for. The Rebbe answered: "I agree that you should give Rabbi Moshe of Lelov the money, but on the absolute condition that the child will live a long life." The husband returned home, conveyed the words of the tzaddik from Neustadt to his wife, and asked her to speak with Rabbi Moshe of Lelov. The woman did so, and Rabbi Moshe of Lelov replied that he promises her that for each and every day that he, the Rebbe, would be in Jerusalem, the child would live a full year. He then added that he himself would come to their town of Kshonz to pray there.

When he came to the town, he prayed with such great intensity that the townspeople thought the walls of the house were shaking. After the prayer, he called Reb Yedidya and his wife, honored them with whiskey and cake, and wished them: Mazal Tov! He then added that it had been difficult work in this matter and with God's help he had succeeded. From there, Reb Yedidya traveled to his Rebbe, the Guter Yid, and told him the whole story. The Guter Yid responded: "It is true that I know the holy Rabbi of Lelov, but I didn't know the great extent of his power in holiness!" The Guter Yid also honored him with whiskey and cake and blessed him with Mazal Tov.

Their son, the learned and wealthy Rabbi Yeshaya Kshonzer of blessed memory, was born. Indeed, he lived fifty-five years, for Rebbe Moshele was in the Holy Land seventy-four days, and in the holy city of Jerusalem he lived fifty-five days.

PARTZUF

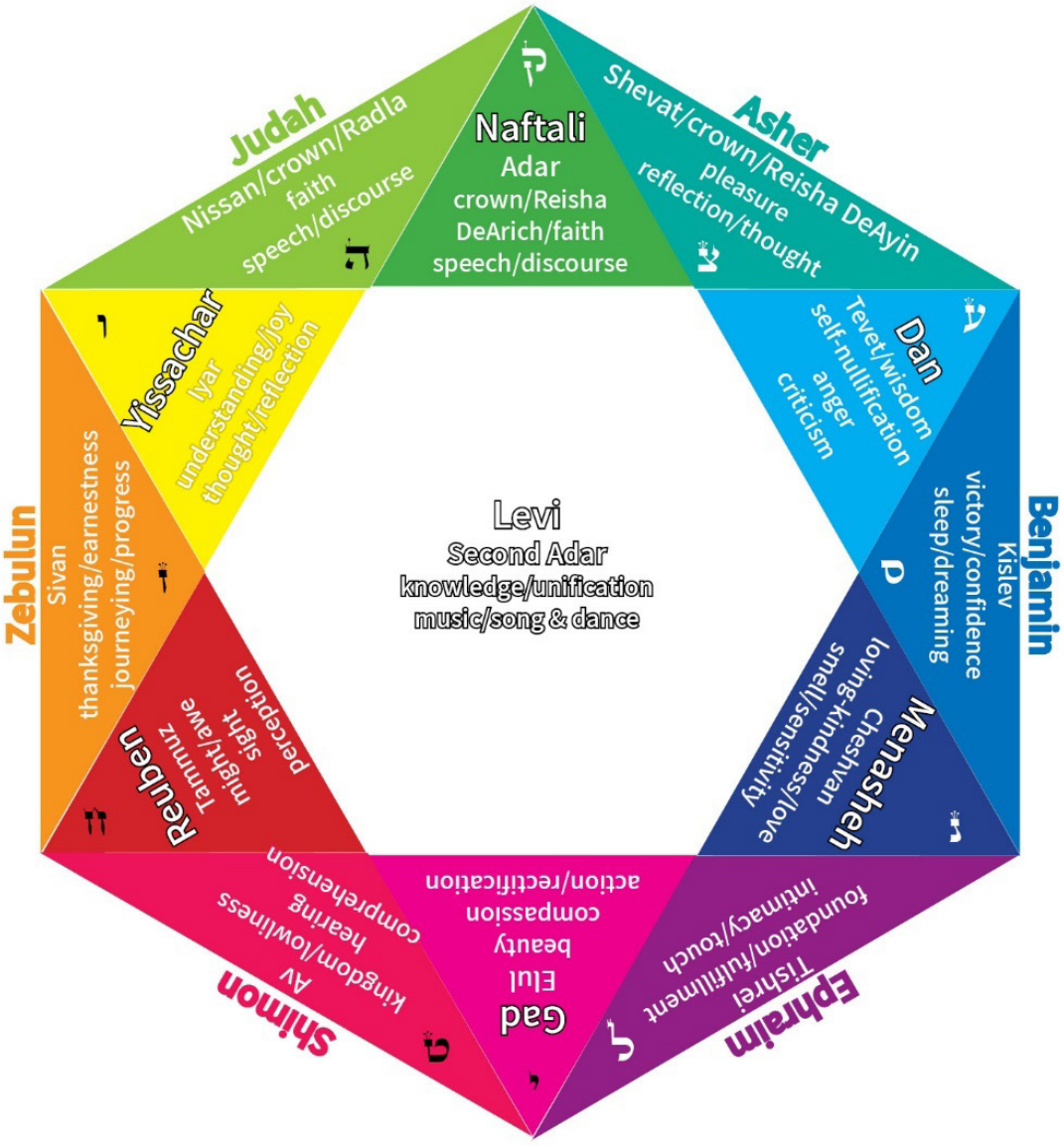
THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

The Book of Genesis, like the entire Torah, ends with blessings given by the leader of the generation to the Tribes of Israel. In parashat Vayechi it is the patriarch Jacob who blesses them and in parashat Berachah it is Moses.[4] There is some confusion regarding how to count the Tribes of Israel. Are there twelve or thirteen? Are Ephraim and Menasheh considered distinct tribes, or are they both part of Joseph?

We find several orders of the Tribes in the Torah. The one we are going to focus on is the one presented by the Arizal, Rabbi Isaac Luria—the order of the offerings brought by the kings of each of the Tribes when the Tabernacle was inaugurated. This is also the order of the Tribes encampment around the Tabernacle. It is markedly different from the order of birth of the sons of Jacob, and from the order of Jacob's blessings given in parashat Vayechi (as well as the order of Moses' blessings).

The most important and revealing correspondence the Arizal draws in his study is between the Tribes and the months of the year, beginning with Nissan. In Sefer Yetzirah, each of the months is associated with a particular mazal (constellation) in the Zodiac, one of the 12 "simple" letters in Hebrew, a "sense" in the psyche, and a controlling organ in the body. By adding the correspondence between the Tribes and the months of the year, the Arizal provides us with one of the richest partzufim in all of Torah. To the Arizal's correspondence, we will add the sefirot. At first thought, this may seem impossible, since there are 12 months and 12 Tribes, but only 10 *sefirot* (or 11 if we count both knowledge and crown). Nonetheless, there is a well-founded tradition that identifies three distinct elements in the crown—the most complex of all the *sefirot*—known as heads.[5] When we add these three heads in the crown to the 10 sefirot (including knowledge), we have 13 powers of the soul, 10 which are conscious and 3 that are super-conscious. 13 is 12 plus 1, hinting to the intercalated month (*chodesh ha'ibur*) added to the Hebrew calendar 7 times every 19 years. The 13th month corresponds to the tribe of Levi, as we shall see.

Let us first present a unique way to picture our partzuf. The division of 13 into 12 and 1 is beautifully reflected in the figure of the *Magen David* (Star of David), which geometrically is composed of 12 triangles surrounding a central hexagon. The 12 triangles correspond to the 12 Tribes and the hexagon to the Tribe of Levi.



JUDAH AND THE MONTH OF NISSAN

Judah is the king among the Tribes. Of the king, the sages say, "When the king speaks, he can uproot a mountain" (אֲמַר מַלְכָּא, עֲקַר טוּרָא). A leader in the language of the sages is called a דַּבַּר, a speaker. Nissan is about the celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. It is the first month of the year: "This month shall be for you the first of the months." The reason that the leader has so much power in his words is because of his faith, the inner experience associated with the highest head in the crown—the power of the soul of Nissan and Judah—the *Radla*, meaning "the unknowable head."

The letter associated with Judah and the month of Nissan is *hei* (ה), the phonetic source for all 22 letters of the *alef-beit*.

The sages teach us that "with the letter hei God created this world." As it says in the beginning of the second account of Creation, "When they were created" (בְּהִבָּרְאָם) and this word is written in a manner that it means "with [the letter] *hei*, they were created." Just as a human king speaks and leads, God spoke and created. It is not surprising therefore that the sense of the soul of Judah and Nissan is speech.

It is explained that the worst kind of incarceration is one that takes away a person's freedom of speech. With the Exodus from Egypt, we were free to express ourselves. In fact, it is a commandment to speak and retell the story of the Exodus on the eve of the 15th of Nissan. The text of the *Haggadah* begins with the letter *hei*, "This [*hei*] is the bread of poverty" (הָא לַחְמָא עַנְיָא). On the 14th of Nissan, we are commanded to sacrifice the Paschal lamb, the Zodiac sign of the month of Nissan. The redemption from Egypt (the existential state of "confinement," the inability to truly express oneself–"all exiles are referred to as Egypt") symbolizes freedom of speech.

Sefer Yetzirah states that the organ controlling all of this is the right foot. Just as leadership depends on speech, it depends on one's gait, particularly on the right foot, which represents active confidence in God (and hence, in oneself). Speaking words of Torah while walking inspires new insights into the secrets of the Torah. For this reason, we find that many of the secrets of the holy Zohar were revealed in the context of "walking on the way."

YISSACHAR AND THE MONTH OF IYAR

Yissachar is the scholarly Tribe. The Sanhedrin were predominantly from Yissachar, who are known as masters of the secret of the Jewish calendar: "knowers of understanding the times." The Tribe of Yissachar are naturally contemplative, and they served as advisors to their brethren, particularly to the king.

Though there are no special holidays in Iyar, the entire month is part of the Counting of the Omer, the time of year when we are called upon to use our understanding of Torah to tame and heal our animal soul, our lower self, symbolized by the Zodiac sign of this month, Taurus, the bull. In the Torah, the month is known as Ziv, which literally means "radiance," symbolizing the light of Torah acting on the animal soul. Iyar is the month of (natural) healing: "I am God your Healer" (אֲנִי יְ-הוה רֹפְאֶךָ).

(for the continuation of this article, see either www.inner.org, or our Patreon page, www.patreon.com/galeinai).

Notes

1 Numbers 14:34.

2 Ezekiel 4:6.

3 Exodus 13:19.

4 This parallel between Jacob and Moses is one of the reasons prompting the Zohar to note that "Jacob on the exterior, Moses on the interior," meaning that Moses serves as a soul of sorts animating the life and work of Jacob. Likewise, the blessings at the end of Genesis are relatively external in comparison to the blessings offered by Moses at the end of the entire Torah.

5 For an in-depth discussion of the sources and considerations involved in this expansion of the sefirotic tree, see our Hebrew volume, שיעורים בסוד ה' ליראיו, vol. 3, pp. 295 and ff.

6 Elsewhere we discuss a series of numbers called *Magen David* numbers defined by the equation: ✡n = 12△n ⊥ 1, where ✡n is the nth *Magen David* number, and △n is the sum of integers from 1 to n.

7 Exodus 12:2.

8 Genesis 2:4.

9 1 Chronicles 12:33.

10 Exodus 15:26.


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