

## DUAL LOYALTIES IN SAMUEL 20 AND ALLENBY'S ATTACK ON MICHMASH



Edmund Allenby, 1st Viscount Allenby (1861-1936)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaSHhjesX10>

Allenby entering the gates of Jerusalem Dec 11th 1917



## Michmash, Israel--Crucial Place in Ancient History

Near the town of Michmash (MIK-mas, or, MIK-mash), this pass is about 8 miles outside Jerusalem, in the region of the ancient tribe of Benjamin.

It was on one of the cliffs in the distance that Jonathan (son of King Saul) and his armor bearer climbed up and defeated a Philistine garrison, beginning an eventual greater victory over their forces (1 Samuel 14). One of the rocks is named Bozes (possibly, "slippery") and the other is Seneh ("Thorny").

In Isaiah 10:28 the prophet pictures the advance of Assyrian forces attacking Jerusalem, and said that they left their baggage at Michmash, expecting to retrieve it later. Their campaign, however, met with disaster (Isaiah 37:36).

When the Israelites returned from captivity under Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:27; Nehemiah 7:31) 122 men of the town of Michmash are mentioned.

Later, Jonathan Maccabaeus had his headquarters in Michmash.



The victorious General Allenby dismounted, enters Jerusalem on foot out of respect for the Holy City, December 11th 1917.

During World War I, British forces under the command of General Allenby were to face the Turks at the same location. One night, Major Vivian Gilbert of the British army was contemplating the situation against the Ottoman forces. He remembered a town by the name of Michmash written somewhere in the Bible. He found the verses, and discovered that there was supposedly a secret path around the town. Incredibly, he managed to find that secret path, and with the British forces using this path to outmaneuver the Ottomans, the British took the town.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Strange Occurrence at Michmash 1918**

We owe to Major Vivian Gilbert, a British army officer, this description of a truly remarkable occurrence. Writing in his reminiscences [Chichikov: The Romance of the Last Crusade] he says : 'In the First World War a brigade major in Allenby's army in Palestine was on one occasion searching his Bible with the light of a candle, looking for a certain name. His brigade had received orders to take a village that stood on a rocky prominence on the other side of a deep valley. It was called Michmash and the name seemed somehow familiar. Eventually he found it in 1 Sam. 13 and read there: 'And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.' It then went on to tell how Jonathan and his armour-bearer crossed over during the night 'to the Philistine's garrison' on the other side, and how they passed two sharp rocks: 'there was a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of other Seneh.' (1 Sam 14). They clambered up the cliff and overpowered the garrison, 'within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow'. The main body of the enemy awakened by the melee thought they were

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<sup>1</sup> The Romance of the Last Crusade, 1923, Major Vivian Gilbert, pages 183-6

surrounded by Saul's troops and 'melted away and they went on beating down one another.'

Thereupon Saul attacked with his whole force and beat the enemy. 'So the Lord saved Israel that day.'

The brigade major reflected that there must still be this narrow passage through the rocks, between the two spurs, and at the end of it the 'half acre of land.' He woke the commander and they read the passage through together once more. Patrols were sent out. They found the pass, which was thinly held by the Turks, and which led past two jagged rocks--obviously Bozez and Seneh. Up on top, beside Michmash, they could see by the light of the moon a small flat field. The brigadier altered his plan of attack. Instead of deploying the whole brigade he sent one company through the pass under cover of darkness. On Feb 18th 1918, The few Turks whom they met were overpowered without a sound, the cliffs were scaled, and shortly before daybreak the company had taken up a position on the 'half acre of land.'

The Turks woke up and took to their heels in disorder since they thought they were being surrounded by Allenby's army. They were all killed or taken prisoner.

'And so,' concludes Major Gilbert, 'after thousands of years British troops successfully copied the tactics of Saul and Jonathan.'<sup>2</sup>

The trick used by both Jonathan and Allenby allowed for major turning points in the repelling of the Philistines as well as the movement towards Jericho some 2000 thousand years later. On the morning of February 21, 1918, combined Allied forces of British troops and the Australian mounted cavalry capture the city of Jericho in Palestine after a three-day battle with Turkish troops.

Commanded by British General Edmund Allenby, the Allied troops began the offensive on Tuesday, February 19, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Despite battling adverse weather conditions and a determined enemy in the Turks, the Allies were able to move nearly 20 miles toward Jericho in just three days.

On the morning of February 21, it was apparent that the Turkish line had been broken, and the Allied forces entered the holy city of Jericho without much resistance at just after 8 a.m. Upon realizing they had lost control of the city, Turkish troops chose to retreat rather than fight. During the three-day battle, Allied troops captured 46 Turkish prisoners.

The capture of Jericho proved to be an important strategic victory for the Allies, who now controlled some of the most important roads in the region, including the main road to the coast and the mountain highway leading to Jerusalem, and had reached the northern end of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth at 1,290 feet below sea level.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bible As History Second Revised Edition. Werner Keller, translated from the German by William Neil. Original edition Copyright 1965, Hodder and Stoughton. New revised edition, 1980, Stoddard and Stoughton. Published 1981, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York. Pp. 182-183.

The town of Michmash is known by its connection with the Philistine war of Saul and Jonathan. In 1 Samuel 13 'And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.' According to the Bible, King Saul's son Jonathan was able to beat the Philistines by finding a secret path around the town and flanking them, which caused panic throughout and a Philistine rout.

It tells how Jonathan and his armor-bearer crossed over during the night 'to the Philistines' garrison' on the other side, and how they passed two sharp rocks: 'there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh.' [1 Sam. 14] They clambered up the cliff and overpowered the garrison 'within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough.' The main body of the enemy awakened by the mêlée thought they were surrounded by Saul's troops and 'melted away and they went on beating down one another.' [ibid] A divinely sent earthquake, the effects of which were noted by Saul's watchmen, threw the Philistine camp into turmoil. By the time Saul and his men came on the scene, many of the Philistines had slaughtered one another in confusion and the rest had taken flight.



<http://preceptaustin.org/map%20of%20michmash%20battle.gif>

In reviewing the complexity of the relationship between Saul and Jonathan it appeared to me that Jonathan was adept at negotiating the treacherous depths of King Saul's darker side and in doing so was able to successfully maintain his relationship with his beloved David. This was seen in his uncanny military prowess. Rav Lichtenstein comments well as follows:

Dual loyalties permeates the relationships between King Saul, his son Jonathan and the future king David. In the very battle of Michmash, recorded in Samuel 14, Jonathan's daring escapade was not well received by the king. I will quote from Rav Moshe Lichtenstein below<sup>3</sup> who documents the triangle of loyalty well, in his attempt to understand why we read from this passage specifically each Sabbath before the new moon. I would like to suggest that the moralistic pietistic reasons given by Rav Lichtenstein do not do justice to the complexity of the prose he cites.

Behind the narrative we must engage the personalities of the characters and see their flaws as well as the drama of the triangular relationship between David, Jonathan and the King. There are power structures that need to be uncovered to expose the motivations and deep split in loyalties that inevitably plague royal households from the bible down to King Lear.

Once we have exposed these we need to then internalize these characters as potential players in the inner workings of our own psyches so that we can come to understand the complexity of our own souls. Finally we must engage in the very projection of these archetypal elements onto the divine so as to better understand the secret and mystical dimensions of the rabbinic mind.

No better place to engage such speculation than the very connection between the eternal Sabbath and its mythic overtones with the engagement of the intercalation between the solar and lunar calendars, a secret given to the rabbis<sup>4</sup> the "sod Ha'ibbur" The Calculated Hebrew Calendar has been attributed to a Nasi named Hillel II. One would have thought that the calculation established by Hillel II would be widely published and known in his day. Yet neither Hillel II nor even a discussion of the idea of supplanting witnesses with a calculated calendar is found in the Talmud Yerushalmi or the Talmud Bavli. The first mention of Hillel II is over seven hundred years after the fact. עד ימי הלל בר' יהודה בשנת תר"ע לשטרות, שמאותה שנה לא הקדימו ולא אחרו, אלא אחזו הסדר הזה. אשר היה בידם.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/haftara/01bhaftara.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Rambam and the Ramban disagreed as to who gave us authority to create a set calendar—according to halacha the right to determine years was given to an authorized beit din alone. And so says the Rambam in "Laws of Sanctifying the Moon," chapter 5, halacha B, "And this is halacha given to Moshe at Sinai, when there is no Sanhedrin one determines according to this calculation by which we calculate." The Ramban, in "Sefer Hamitzvo't" positive commandment 153, wrote "That Rabbi Hillel the Nasi determined the calculation of intercalation until Elijah should come" (and he was an authorized beit din).

. . . until the days of Hillel b. R. Yehuda in the year 670 of the Seleucid era (358/9 CE), from when they did not bring forth or postpone, but kept to this cycle which was at hand . . .<sup>5</sup>

**The very connection between the solar and lunar calendars became the purview and hierarchical authority of the rabbinate to decide on the festivals and calculation of years.**

In Kabbalah this relationship between the divine and Israel, sun and moon, between the calculations and the end times of the Messiah and the end of the long exile of Galut, take on greater importance. Israel's weakness in the Galut is because of Imma's aloofness from Zeir Anpin, a split within the divine itself, and from Malchut the Schechina and the people Israel. "Ibur" hints at the umbilical cord. "Sod Ha'Ibur" is about Imma renewing ties with Zeir Anpin, so that nourishment can flow to Zeir Anpin, and through Zeir Anpin also to Malchut.

The calculations as to when the New Moon falls within the solar calendar points us to the monthly flow of divine energy into the world and the pulsating spirituality that allows for presence and absence of the felt divine spirit that characterizes so much of our inner lives.

Let us then move from the literal biblical text through the wonderful exposition of Rav Lichtenstein to a deeper analysis of the dual loyalties mirrored in these characters and thus into our inner lives that mirror similar struggles as we approach the infinite as struggle to connect to the divine in a paradoxical manner.

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<sup>5</sup> A responsum of R. Hai Gaon (early eleventh century) cited by R. Avraham b. Hiyya.



**"David and Jonathan," by Rembrandt. Jonathan is the figure in the turban.**



## I Samuel 14

14

- 1 וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹנָתָן בֶּרֶשָׁאוֹל אֶל־הַנְּעֹר נִשְׂא כָּלִיו לָכֶּה וְנַעֲבֹרָה אֶל־מִצֵּב פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֲשֶׁר מַעֲבָר הֵלָז וּלְאָבִיו לֹא הָגִיד:
- 2 וְשָׁאוֹל יוֹשֵׁב בַּקֶּצֶה הַגְּבֻעָה תַּחַת הַרְמוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּמִגְרֹון וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ כָּשַׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ:
- 3 וְאַתִּיָּה בֶרֶשָׁאוֹל אֲחִי אֵיכָבֹד וְ בֶרֶשָׁאוֹל בְּרֵעִי כֹהֵן וְיְהוָה בְּשֵׁלוֹ נִשְׂא אֶפֶד וְהָעָם לֹא יָדַע כִּי הֵלֵךְ יוֹנָתָן:
- 4 וּבֵין הַמַּעֲבָרוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶשׁ יוֹנָתָן לַעֲבֹר עַל־מִצֵּב פְּלִשְׁתִּים שׁוֹהֲסֵלַע מִהַעֲבָר מִזֶּה וְשׁוֹהֲסֵלַע מִהַעֲבָר מִזֶּה וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד בּוֹצֵץ וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד סָנָה:
- 5 הַשּׁוֹן הָאֶחָד מִצֹּק מִצְפּוֹן מִן הַמִּצֵּב וְהָאֶחָד מִנְּגֹב מִן הַמִּצֵּב:
- 6 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן אֶל־הַנְּעֹר וְנִשְׂא כָּלִיו לָכֶּה וְנַעֲבֹרָה אֶל־מִצֵּב הָעֲרֵלִים הָאֵלֶּה אוֹלֵי יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לָנוּ כִּי אֵין לַיהוָה מַעֲצוֹר לְהוֹשִׁיעַ בָּרַב אִוּ בַּמַּעֲט:
- 7 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ נִשְׂא כָּלִיו עֲשֶׂה כְּלֹאֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְּךָ נָטָה לְךָ הַנְּנִי עִמָּךְ כְּלִבְּךָ:
- 8 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן הִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ עֹבְרִים אֶל־הָאֲנָשִׁים וְנִגְלִינוּ אֲלֵיהֶם:
- 9 אִם־כֹּה יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ דְמוּ עַד־הַגִּיעֵנוּ אֲלֵיכֶם וְעַמְדָנוּ תַּחְתֵּינוּ וְלֹא נַעֲלֶה אֲלֵיהֶם:
- 10 וְאִם־כֹּה יֹאמְרוּ עָלֵינוּ וְעֵלֵנוּ כִּי־נִתְּנָם יְהוָה בְּיַדְנוּ וְזָה־לָנוּ הָאוֹת:
- 11 וַיִּגְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶל־מִצֵּב פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיֹּאמְרוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים הִנֵּה עֹבְרִים יִצְאִים מִן־הַחָרִים אֲשֶׁר הַתַּחֲבָאוֹשִׁם:
- 12 וַיַּעֲנֵוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּצֵּבָה אֶת־יוֹנָתָן וְאֶת־נִשְׂא כָּלִיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ עָלֵינוּ וְנִדְיָעָה אֶתְכֶם דָּבָר וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹנָתָן אֶל־נִשְׂא כָּלִיו עֲלֶה אַחֲרַי כִּי־נִתְּנָם יְהוָה בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל:
- 13 וַיַּעַל יוֹנָתָן עַל־יָדָיו וְעַל־רַגְלָיו וְנִשְׂא כָּלִיו אַחֲרָיו וַיִּפְּלוּ לִפְנֵי יוֹנָתָן וְנִשְׂא כָּלִיו מִמוֹתֵת אַחֲרָיו:
- 14 וַתְּהִי הַמִּכָּה הַרְאשֻׁנָה אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה יוֹנָתָן וְנִשְׂא כָּלִיו כַּעֲשָׂרִים אִישׁ כַּבַּחֲצֵי מַעֲנָה צֶמֶד שְׂדֵה:
- 15 וַתְּהִי חֲרֹדָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה בַּשְּׂדֵה וּבְכָל־הָעָם הַמִּצֵּב וְהַמִּשְׁחִית חֲרָדוּ גַם־הֵמָּה וַתִּרְגַּז הָאָרֶץ וַתְּהִי לַחֲרָדַת אֱלֹהִים:
- 16 וַיִּרְאוּ הַצִּפִּים לְשָׁאוֹל בַּגְּבֻעַת בְּנִימֹן וְהִנֵּה הַהַמּוֹן נִמוֹג וַיִּלָּךְ וְהַלֵּם:
- 17 וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוֹל לָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ פִּקְדוֹנָא וּרְאוּ מִי הֵלֵךְ מֵעַמָּנוּ וַיִּפְקְדוּ וְהִנֵּה אֵין יוֹנָתָן וְנִשְׂא כָּלִיו:
- 18 וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוֹל לְאַתִּיָּה הַגִּישָׁה אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־הָיָה אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
- 19 וַיְהִי עַד דָּבָר שָׁאוֹל אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְהַהַמּוֹן אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּלָּךְ הַלּוֹךְ וַרֵב וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוֹל אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֶסֶף יָדְךָ:
- 20 וַיִּזְעַק שָׁאוֹל וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־הַמְּלַחְמָה וְהִנֵּה הָיְתָה חֲרַב אִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ מִהוֹמָה גְדוּלָה מְאֹד:
- 21 וְהָעֹבְרִים הָיוּ לְפְלִשְׁתִּים כְּאֶתְמוֹל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָלוּ עִמָּם בַּמַּחֲנֶה סָבִיב וְגַם־הֵמָּה לְהִיּוֹת עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עַם־שָׁאוֹל וַיּוֹנָתָן:
- 22 וְכָל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמִּתְחַבְּאִים בְּהַר־אֶפְרַיִם שָׁמְעוּ כִּי־נָסוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּדְבְּקוּ גַם־הֵמָּה אַחֲרֵיהֶם בַּמְּלַחְמָה:
- 23 וַיּוֹשַׁע יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַמְּלַחְמָה עָבְרָה אֶת־בַּיִת אֲוֹן:

*Quite surprisingly, reading the haftara of "Machar Chodesh" (I Shemu'el 20:18-42) on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh when Rosh Chodesh falls out on Sunday is by talmudic law (Megila 31a, bottom), and not merely a late custom. As will be pointed out many times over the course of this series, this serves as additional proof that the haftarot function not only to explain the Torah reading and expand our understanding of the weekly portion, for this haftara is not connected to the parasha in any way. So too, it cannot be argued that the reading of "Machar Chodesh" constitutes a fulfillment of the law of "which you shall proclaim to be holy gatherings (mikra kodesh)" (Vayikra 23:2) and an expression of the special sanctity of the day, as may be said about the haftarot read on the holidays, for the day before Rosh Chodesh certainly does not have any special sanctity. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the essence of the haftara is to guide man as he proceeds through the cycle of life with words of the prophets that are relevant to his condition. One of these crossroads is Erev Rosh Chodesh, when man stands on the doorstep of a new period, and he is afforded the opportunity to open a new page and reorganize his life in light of the changing circumstances ushered in by the new month. As we shall see at the end of our discussion, part of the lesson of this prophecy relates precisely to this point. Thus, the haftara bears special significance for a person about to arrive at a new juncture in the yearly cycle in the light of which he lives his life.*

*Were we to summarize our haftara in a few words, we might say that our haftara focuses on an examination of human relationships based upon trust and loyalty that come up against obstacles that threaten their very existence and undermine the mutual commitment upon which they are founded, but in the end fidelity overcomes the personal, egoistic approach to life. This assertion is plainly evident, emerging from the text already on a first and superficial reading of the chapter. Concealed beneath the surface, however, there are deeper levels of relationships that provide the story with its dramatic intensity, and require more profound analysis.*

*The primary axis around which the human drama revolves is the tripartite relationship that includes David, Yehonatan and Sha'ul. Of course, we all know the end of the story regarding the love between David and Yehonatan, and how for Chazal their relationship serves as an example of love that is not dependent upon anything else. We tend, therefore, to read the entire story through those glasses, it being clear to us that David and Yehonatan will join together to form a coalition against Sha'ul, who is frustrated by the fact that his son has joined forces with his rival and fails to understand Yehonatan's appreciation and esteem for David. By no means, however, does this seem to be self-evident from the beginning, nor does it appear to be known to the players themselves during real time. Let us then not approach the opening point of the story with what we know at the end, and ignore thereby the tensions and fears that accompany the various characters along the way.*

*Let us open with the relationship between Yehonatan and Sha'ul. On the one hand, Yehonatan is the son and designated successor of his father, as Sha'ul himself testifies in our haftara. Their relationship, however, is not so simple, and we must remember that in the background lies the story of the battle of Michmash and the honeycomb,*

*described at length several chapters earlier (I Shemu'el 14).[1] It should be remembered that Yehonatan went out alone to conquer the Philistine post and thus he brought about a great salvation, but Sha'ul's response was particularly chilly and not at all gracious.*

*If we stop for a moment and consider the incident and the relationship between Sha'ul and Yehonatan revealed thereby, we see the many parallels between it and the battle between David and Golyat, and Sha'ul's response to it. In both cases, Israel is under great pressure from the Philistines. The security situation is very difficult, and it is accompanied by a sense of defeat and submission on the part of the nation. Under these difficult circumstances, two individuals take it upon themselves to fight the Philistines[2] in a one-man battle, heavily laden with symbolism, while waiving more commonly-accepted military means. Both David and Yehonatan emphasize the spiritual component of their respective battles, and cast their trust upon God that He will save Israel. The battle is decided neither by hidden military factors nor by sophisticated psychological warfare, but by faith and trust in the God of Israel who is not stopped from saving His people with only a few men or many.*

*In the wake of the great salvation enjoyed by Israel in the aftermath of David and Yehonatan's acts of self-sacrifice, Sha'ul displays little joy. His reactions reveal a not insignificant amount of jealousy and frustration with the fact that these young men took the initiative and emerged victorious by the power of their faith, whereas his own actions reflect fear and hesitation. These feelings are certainly explicit in the case of David, and play a prominent role in our haftara, but it seems to me that they also break through between the lines in Sha'ul's response in the case of Yehonatan. In contrast, the nation expresses its appreciation and esteem toward these two warriors, stating these feelings in a clear and open manner, which only deepens the divide and intensifies the tension between the king and David and Yehonatan.*

*In light of this, let us try to understand Yehonatan, who finds himself in the middle between Sha'ul and David. On the one hand, he is Sha'ul's son, with all the emotional involvement and shared destiny that binds them. As a result, Sha'ul hangs his hopes for the future upon him, consults with him, and makes use of him in the administration of his kingdom. On the other hand, Yehonatan's soul is bound to the soul of David, as Scripture states (18:1-2): "The soul of Yehonatan was knit with the soul of David, and Yehonatan loved him as his own soul... Then Yehonatan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." In light of the parallels that we saw above, we can understand the foundation of this love, namely, emotional closeness based on common values, a shared world outlook and very similar personalities. That which is common to the two stories did not come into the world by chance, but is rather the result of a similar attitude toward life and like personalities. It is easy to understand why Yehonatan, who lives in the royal court among people who are very different from him (as we can see from his mode of action in that battle; he lives a solitary life, and therefore acts on his own), would rejoice when he discovers a friend who is close to him and his world in every fiber of his soul.*

*Second, in light of the parallels that we saw above, we can well understand Yehonatan's ability to understand David's situation. When the verse informs us that "Sha'ul spoke to Yehonatan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Yehonatan the son of Sha'ul delighted much in David" (19:1), let us try to imagine what went through Yehonatan's mind. Do not thoughts and memories of those fateful moments when Sha'ul had wanted to kill him rise up in his mind? Does not his flashback to that awful moment when Sha'ul had determined that "God should do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Yonatan" (14:44) cause him to quiver, to understand David's situation to the depths of existential dread and to identify with him?*

*We see then that Yehonatan finds himself in an exceedingly difficult situation of double loyalty. On the one hand, he is committed to his father and identifies with him as a son with his father. Despite the tensions between Sha'ul and Yehonatan, we dare not make light of the intensity of the emotional connection between father and his first-born son, who is also his right-hand man, nor forget the description of their relationship offered by David himself: "Sha'ul and Yehonatan were loved and dear in their lives, and in their death they were not divided" (II Shemu'el 1:23). On the other hand, Yehonatan enters into a covenant with David based on exceedingly deep love – and let us keep in mind that a covenant means that the two parties join together to form a single entity despite the fact that on the outside they are perceived as two different parties – and feels committed to him based on an understanding of his situation and the threat that hovers over him.*

***It seems then that the drama at the focus of "Machar Chodesh" is Yehonatan's need to come to an unequivocal decision and choose one of these two loyalties over the other. Until now, he has tried to maintain both and he believed that he was capable of doing so. And indeed, he was at first successful and was not compelled to decide. However, as David clarifies the situation to him at the beginning of chapter 20, it is no longer possible to continue with this policy, and Yehonatan can no longer escape coming to a painful decision.<sup>6</sup>***

Rav Lichtenstein then goes on to suggest that beyond the literal connection of the feast in Samuel being on Rosh Chodesh the story is about confronting the future and aligning it with divine providence:

*Obviously, the clear and simple connection is that the chapter describes a Rosh Chodesh celebration, and the story revolves around a Rosh Chodesh feast. However, if we seek a more profound connection, in addition to the manifest connection, it seems that a certain point should be emphasized, namely, the ability to confront the future. Sha'ul and his house stand before an unexpected situation that endangers the*

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<sup>6</sup> Truth be told, Yehonatan's sister Mikhal who had married David faced a similar dilemma when Sha'ul wished to arrest David in his house and she decided in favor of her husband, and in this sense the story of Yehonatan constitutes a direct continuation of the previous chapter. There is, however, no comparing a friend to a wife, nor is there any similarity between the heir-apparent to the throne who allies himself with a rival who constitutes a potential threat to his own succession to the crown, and the daughter of the king, who neither herself nor her husband has any pretensions to rule. Thus, the story in our chapter is at an entirely different level than that in the previous chapter.

*continuity of his rule and mixes up all his cards. Sha'ul sees his sons as continuing his kingship and establishing a dynasty that will last for years. This, however, is not the way providence views the matter, whether because of Sha'ul's sins or because of the ancient promise that "the staff shall not depart from Yehuda" that gave the monarchy to the kings of the tribe of Yehuda. Either way, the house of Sha'ul must choose between (1) accepting the new reality, accommodating themselves to it and acting within its framework, or (2) trying to oppose it. On this matter, Sha'ul and Yehonatan part company. Sha'ul tries to entrench himself in the previous reality and is unprepared to display flexibility and recognize the changes that have occurred, whereas Yehonatan understands that the course of the kingdom of Israel has changed and that the situation that his father is hoping for will not return, and therefore he must accept the new reality, recognize it and act accordingly. Therefore, while Sha'ul fights a desperate and hopeless battle against David, Yehonatan allies himself with David, declares his recognition of David's monarchy and seeks a path to operate within its framework.*

***The declaration of "Machar Chodesh" informs us that a new period, or at least the possibility of change and a new reality, is about to arrive. While it is certainly possible that the incoming month will simply repeat the fixed cycle of appearance and disappearance of previous months, one must nevertheless consider the possibility that the new month will herald a new period and a situation different from the past. The presentation of the two characters of father and son - the one who remains fixed in his ideas and fights a battle to the bitter end to preserve the past which is slowly disappearing, while the other looks out to the future with a trusting eye without worrying about his adjustment to it and its ramifications – comes to prepare us for the future that is coming upon us. And this is not necessarily when the day is already Rosh Chodesh. On the contrary, if tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh, then now is the time to prepare for it and be ready to confront and adjust oneself to the new reality.***

I would like to suggest that the connection between the new moon approaching and the Sabbath reading has more to do with the complexity of the characters involved in the drama and the mythic structures of Sabbath and new Moon.

The Sabbath represents the eternal revolutions of the earth around the sun and is represented in our mystical literature as the divine in its eternal qualities. The moon having no light of its own, represents the people Israel or humanity, ever waxing and waning and dependent fully upon the light of the sun.

The choice of haftara then represents the complexity of relating the eternal infinite perfection of the divine to the mortal finite and flawed creation. Across this infinite chasm we call the *chalal hapanui* the "vacated space"<sup>7</sup> the Sabbath reading points us to the flawed characters of Saul and the trickster Jonathan and the web of relationships in the triangle with David the future king of Israel. For it is precisely in these webs of intrigue that the chosen davidic dynasty comes about and even the future messiah.

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<sup>7</sup> see my notes on Likutei Mehoran Torah 64 elsewhere for full exposition of the tzimtzum etc.

In the trickster we see a familiar archetype.

The Trickster, Jung says, is an aspect of the shadow archetype, at least in its negative traits. The trickster, obviously, deceives, often playfully, sometimes painfully. A very sexual archetype, it has the ability to change genders and play havoc with the hyper-rational personality and community. Examples of the trickster are Satan, Loki, and, in Native American mythology, the coyote, the raven, and the Winnebago trickster. The vampire is, in fact, a kind of trickster, "able to change into many shapes, among them bats, wolves, spiders, butterflies, fog, or even a bit of straw".<sup>8</sup>

Jung's archetypes are often confused with being symbolic figures, but that is not quite an accurate description. Archetypes are rather closer to being a social tendency that has its foundation in the biological construct of humanity; this tendency then goes on to influence the formation of symbolic representations. The archetypes function at the psychological level of the unconscious but not in the Freudian sense. Jung had a theory known as the "collective unconscious" that is shared by the entire human race, regardless of race, ethnicity or even geographical boundaries.

The Trickster archetype is a rebel who refuses to conform to societal expectations. But he is not a rebel without a cause; the Trickster's resistance to conformity is based on challenging authority, not on simplistic adornments; he will not be seen sporting tattoos or piercings or corporate T-shirts flashing slogans. In fact, the Trickster may very well appear to be inconsequential on the outside. The most famous literary representation of the Trickster is the Fool in William Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*.<sup>9</sup> Although referred to as *Lear's Fool*, this character actually is endowed with great wisdom. In fact, it takes a fair amount of intellectual engagement to penetrate to his wisdom which is tied up in a succession of riddles, puns, and puzzles. The Fool stands in direct contrast to the trappings of authority with which *Lear the King* has been imbued yet ultimately he is viewed as the wisest character in the play.

It is precisely this idea of trickster as rebel that moved my reading of Sam. 14 and the attack in the battle of Michmash. The relationship between the archetypal symbols of sun and moon are reflected in the unequal power structures between male and female. Sun and male and moon as female symbols in myth represent mother and father archetypes.

Symbols of the mother are seen in abstractions such as the goal of redemption, objects arousing devotion or awe, such as sea, moon, woods; and items representing fertility, such as a garden. The magical protection this archetype implies is similar to that of the mandala figure. The mother archetype has two aspects: she is both loving and terrible.

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<sup>8</sup> (see "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure" in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. 2nd ed. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969. Vol. 9, part i, of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, pp. 255-272.

<sup>9</sup> In my thesis "Imaging/Imagining the Divine", I discuss *Lear* as a model for understanding the divine in Rabbinic Midrash (Brandeis 2000).

Positively, the mother archetype has been associated with solicitude, wisdom, sympathy, spiritual exaltation, helpful instincts, growth and fertility; the negative or evil side of the mother archetype is associated with secrets, darkness, the world of the dead, seduction and poison. Sun (fire and sky are closely related) is associated creative energy, natural law, consciousness (thinking, enlightenment, wisdom, spiritual vision) and the father principle.

The trickster has to negotiate between these two extremes and uses his wiles to subvert the power structures of sun and moon, mother and father. In his use of his gifts he is able to negotiate that delicate space between the infinite and the finite.

The character of Jonathan is then an archetype that represents the very need to balance the inner spiritual powers of masculine eternal spirit and feminine earthy mortal life.

In Jonathan and his reincarnation Allenby (sic!) the enemy within us all requires the use of trickery at times in the guise of the holy fool to seduce the power structures of faith and practice, the hierarchical spirituality that becomes overpowering and claustrophobic.