

My Friend and Mentor George Lasry OBM

ה וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד-יְהוָה,
בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב--עַל-פִּי יְהוָה.

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

ו וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִי בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב,
מִוֶּלֶת בֵּית פְּעוֹר; וְלֹא-יָדַע אִישׁ
אֶת-קְבֻרָתוֹ, עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

6 And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

ז וּמֹשֶׁה, בֶּן-מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים
שָׁנָה--בָּמָוֶתוֹ; לֹא-כָהָתָה עֵינָיו,
וְלֹא-נָס לַחָה.

7 And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

ח וַיִּבְכּוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-מֹשֶׁה
בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב, שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם;
וַיִּתְּמוּ, יְמֵי בְכֵי אַבְל מֹשֶׁה.

8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended.

ט וַיְהִי וַיִּשָּׂע בֶּן-נּוּן, מְלֵא רוּחַ
חָכְמָה--כִּי-סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדָיו,
עָלָיו; וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ, כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-
מֹשֶׁה.

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

י וְלֹא-קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל,
כְּמֹשֶׁה, אֲשֶׁר יָדָעוּ יְהוָה, פְּנִים
אֶל-פְּנִים.

10 And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face;

יא לְכֹל-הָאֹתוֹת וְהַמוֹפְתִים,
אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְהוָה, לַעֲשׂוֹת,
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם--לְפָרְעָה וְלְכֹל-
עַבְדָּיו, וְלְכֹל-אֶרְצוֹ.

11 in all the signs and the wonders,
which the LORD sent him to do in the
land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his
servants, and to all his land;

יב וְלְכֹל הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה, וְלְכֹל
הַמֹּרָא הַגָּדוֹל, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
מִשָּׁה, לְעֵינֵי כָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל. {ש}

12 and in all the mighty hand, and in all
the great terror, which Moses wrought
in the sight of all Israel. {P}

Moses wrote the last 8 verses of the Torah about his death?

“וַיָּמָת נָשָׂם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד-יְהוָה”

HOW COULD HE HAVE WRITTEN IT?

The Talmud (Bava Basra 15b) offers two answers. According to one opinion, Joshua wrote them. According to the other opinion, Moses himself wrote them using tears instead of ink. After Moses died, Joshua traced over the letters with ink.

Some explain the Talmud to mean that Moses wrote the last eight verses not with tears, but rather in a jumbled fashion. In Hebrew, the word for "tears" (dima) is spelled the same way as the word "jumbled" (dema). That is, Moses wrote the last eight verses with no spaces to differentiate between the end of one word and the

beginning of the next. It was left to Joshua to split up the words.

George of blessed memory

Wrote the last 8 verses of his life.

He wrote them in tears...

I write tonight in tears,,¹

Often we cried together....when learning....

I always knew what struck the deepest cord of his soul....when he was moved to cry reading a passage...

Tears bound us together in joy and learning,

And now I write this eulogy with the same tears.

For some Moshe did not realize what he was writing, it was a word soup, and took Joshua to rearrange them to make semantic sense...for Moshe to have written the words would have been unthinkable.

Others say he did write them...with tears...what does this mean? Were the tears invisible, only later to be filled with black ink by his disciple?

¹ For more on this see my essay which I read to George...

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5047de16e4b026a4c324cd81/t/508e1b85e4b044ecf46c47cc/1351490437587/The+Tears+of+Moses-+Reading+with+Rabbi+Nachman+and+the+Lost+Princess.pdf>

What are they achieving by suggesting the ink was invisible?

If we suggest he was already suffering from anticipatory grief and thereby writing while crying, why would the ruling by Maimonides be valid? (that the last 8 verses were not of the same kedusha as the rest of the Torah..) so we must suggest like the RITVA that there were written by Moshe, however... with tears as the ink.

(The Gaon of Vilna completely changes the semantic meaning of dema...to mean not tears but confusion. He wrote those words without understanding what they meant.)

For me Moshe (and George) was totally selfless and wrote those verses not out of self-pity, with tears as ink, rather...

As a teaching....by leaving the last 8 verses transparent he was instructing us in the deepest torah ever...

He was telling us that the Torah is only a road map... that we, each of us must live our lives on our own terms...that the transparency of ink must be filled in by Joshua and by all of us individually. We alone must

finish this text called the Torah, that the text of our lives is the living Torah, that we must fill in the ink ourselves, our biography.

And that just like Moshe himself who resisted until the very last moment we too must resist. His transparent tear filled words invite us to revolt!

*never go gently into the night
We must rage, rage against the dying of the light,,,²*

² Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

**George left me more than 8 verses...
He left me with a gap between us of eternity.
He left me with no mentor. No Moshe.
In *Torat Hanistar* he guided me for over 20 years
He taught me to see beyond Hassidut into the
mysteries,
He taught me one has to live these mysteries,
He taught me how to suffer,
He taught me things I can only write down with tears.**

I can only end by quoting W H Auden:

**Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.**

**Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public
doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.**

**He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,**

**My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.**

**The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.
For nothing now can ever come to any good.**