

שהתורה הוא פירוש שעשה וחיבר על אותו ספר

And so I have received that the world in its entirety is a" book that God, blessed be He, made, and the Torah is a commentary on that book"

Reb Tsadok Hakohen: Machshavot Charut

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כתיבה נאמנין אמריה. דבי רבי נתן אמרי: (במדבר כב) כי יר"ט הדרך לנגדי יראה ראתה נטתה.
דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא: (ויקרא כג) כרמ"ל כר מלא. רב אחא בר יעקב אמר: (מלכים א,ב) והוא
קללני קללה נמרצ"ת נוטריקון: נואף הוא, מואבי הוא, רוצח הוא, צורר הוא, תועבה הוא. רב
נחמן בר יצחק אמר: (בראשית מד) מה נדבר ומה נצטד"ק נכונים אנחנו, צדיקים אנחנו,
טהורים אנחנו, דכים אנחנו, קדושים אנחנו. משנה. הכותב שתי אותיות בשתי העלמות, אחת
שחרית ואחת בין הערבים רבן גמליאל מחייב, וחכמים פוטרין. גמרא. במאי קמיפלגי? רבן
גמליאל סבר: אין ידיעה לחצי שיעור, ורבנן סברי: יש ידיעה לחצי שיעור. הדרן עלך בונה

IF ONE WRITES ONE LETTER AS AN ABBREVIATION, R. JOSHUA B. BATHYRA
HOLDS HIM LIABLE, WHILST THE SAGES EXEMPT HIM. R. Johanan said in R. Jose b.
Zimra's name; How do we know [that] abbreviated forms [are recognized] by the Torah? Because it
is written, for' AB [the father of] Hamwn [a multitude of]3 nations have I made thee: a father [Ab]
of nations have I made thee; a chosen one [Bahur] among nations have I made thee. Hamwn
beloved [Habib] have I made thee among nations; a king [Melek] have I appointed thee for the
nations; distinguished have I made thee among the nations; faithful [Ne'eman] have I made thee to
the nations. R. Johanan on his own authority quoted. anoky [I — am the Lord thy God, etc.]. I [ana]
Myself [Nafshi] have written the Script [Kethibah Yehabith]

The Rabbis interpreted: Sweet speech [amirah Ne'imah], a writing, a gift [Kethibah Yehibah]. Others
state, anoky [interpreted] reversed is: Scripture was given [to man] [Yahibah Kethibah]. faithful are
its words [Ne'emanin amarah]. The School of R. Nathan quoted, Because thy way is perverse
[Yarat] before me:8 She [the ass] feared [Yare'ah], saw [Ra'athah], [and] turned aside [natethah].

The School of R. Ishmael taught: Karmel [fresh ears]:9 rounded [Kar] and full [Male]. R. Aha b.
Jacob quoted, and he cursed me with a curse that is grievous [Nimrezeth].10 This is an abbreviation:
he is an adulterer [No'ef], a Moabite, a murderer [Rozeah], an adversary [Zorer], an abomination
[To'ebah]. R. Nahman b. Isaac quoted, What shall we speak7 or how shall we clear ourselves
[Niztadak]:11 We are honest [Nekonim], we are righteous [Zaddikim], we are pure [Tehorim], we are
submissive can אנכי [Dakkim], we are holy [Kedoshim]. The very word be used as an abbreviation.
the very letters of Torah can thus be expanded to give new meanings. This unique word, the word
representing me or myself the very self- identity by which God Himself introduces Himself at the
beginning of the Decalogue in Exodus 21, this word, pregnant with personal identity becomes the
very subject of debate as to its expansive meaning. The meaning proposed by Rabbi Yochanan is
that the word is an abbreviation for the following dramatic meaning: "I [ana] .[Myself [Nafshi] have
written the Script [Kethibah Yehabith " אנא נפשי כתיבת יהבית " Another way of translating this

might be "I Myself am written into this text". This reading has been appropriated by the Hassidic Rebbes in their immanentist interpretation of the Bible. God Himself is literally "written into the text!" If the Torah is divine then the very literality and lettering of the Torah has inherent properties that reflect the divine origin. We need to explore these qualities since they might be mined for deeper meanings hidden within. What if we took in a hyper-literal fashion the above statement? God Himself is somehow written into the very text of Torah.

I think of a lover caressing a love note from her beloved. She devours every word he utters finding deeper and deeper expressions of love. She sees her beloved in the very words themselves even the letters. To further this idea, let us read a typical but daring reading by the Degel Machaneh Efraim, Reb Efraim of Sidelkow, a grandson of the founder of Hassidism The Baal Shem Tov. In his mediation on the parsha Ki Tissa on the words

טז והלחת מעשה אלהים המה והמכתב מכתב אלהים הוא חרות" Vehamiktav Miktav Elohim" "על הלחת: And the writing was the writing of the Lord; etched onto" (the tablets" (Exodus 32:16 "And we were taught (Talmud Eruvin 54a) "do not read "etched (charus)" rather free (cheirus)" "Now one could interpret this as follows: "It is known (Zohar Parsha Acharei Mos 73a) that "Torah, The Holy One and Israel are all one unity". Also the word אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר (from the first commandment אֲנִי can be expanded to) הוצאתי מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים (read the letters of the word as initials for four other words אֲנִי נֹטְרִיקוֹן: אֲנִי method known as notarikon) such as (I myself am written in it" (Talmud "נפשי כתיבת יהבית" Shabbat 105a).

"This implies that God as it were, Himself, His very soul (nefesh) kivyachol (metaphorically speaking) is located inside the Torah (text) and since He is written in therein His essence, then perform all the dark side and evil is nullified. ...

והמכתב מכתב אלהים הוא And this is also the meaning of " the writing is the writing of the Lord, for God is the author אֲנִי נֹטְרִיקוֹן of the Torah as the talmud suggested I am written into the text" therefore "etched" into the 'יהבית' stone, meaning "freedom" from the dark side and kelippot."

In this remarkable pericope the Degel, Reb Efraim the grandson of the founder of Hassidism the Baal Shem Tov suggests a radically new way on interpreting the midrashic-aggadic passage from the Talmud.

Weaving three texts together:

1. Using the citation from the Talmud Eruvin, punning on the word 'charus' to 'cheirus', meaning "etched" to "freedom", he builds on the notion of freedom meaning freedom from evil and the dark forces in the universe. Thus Torah, the Tablets of the Law and the observance thereof provide one a place of safety and freedom from those dark forces that inhabit one's psyche.

2. The Zoharic teaching that God, the Torah and the corporate ecclesia of Israel are all one unity, in a very real sense. Thus the equivalence of the Torah and God, one being finite and text or tablet and the other being the Infinite One, presupposes the mystical notion of tzimtzum or divine contraction, hiding or enclothing in the real finite world by the Infinite One. This idea of hitlabshut or incarnation is not something rational but allow for the close interpenetration of the three components of the triad.

3. The other citation of the aggadah from Talmud Shabbat 105a makes use of the method of notarikon by opening up new meanings in holy revealed words of Torah by splitting them apart and using each letter of the word to signify yet another word. Here the very first word of the Decalogue, that word that actually introduces the Divine to His people, is fractured (sic) i.e it comes to signify much more than merely a pronoun. "אֲנִי", the subject of all subjects, God Himself, is midrashically now expanded into 4 new words that gives us an inkling as to how to access that I-ness the אֲנִי. In fact the first word represented by the aleph of אֲנִי is אָנָא meaning I in aramaic or ani in Hebrew.

These three units are carefully woven together to suggest that freedom is obtained by access to the Divine, and that is accomplished only via the text, not merely its content rather also the very materiality of Torah-Tablets. Reb Efraim is teaching us that our approach to the very addictions and paroxysms of our inner lives and needs, the darker side of ourselves the deceits, the lies and betrayals, the little yezer hara we have buried deep inside becomes intractable without help from above. Access to the infinite can take place through the gift of Torah, not so much in the sense of a rule book (though that too) following the do's and don't's, rather the claim that God, Israel and the Torah are united, allowing us the opportunity to seek divine help in overcoming the darker forces within us by accessing Him directly for He Himself and His essence are buried within the very textuality of the Torah. We need merely to unearth His presence in the text. This gives us a completely new insight into the verse Exodus 32:16

טז וְהַלְחֹת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הָמָּה וְהַמְּכַתֵּב מְכַתֵּב אֱלֹהִים הוּא חָרוּת עַל־הַלֵּךְ

"The tablets were the work of God, and the writing the writing of the Lord, etched into the tablets"

Reb Efraim is telling us that the tablets and the writing were the handiwork of God, but God is infinite so the tablets were somehow incarnated with the Divine Presence as was the writing. The implication of this claim via the midrashim he quoted is to suggest that God is written into the text and that by my participation in that text I make myself available to the Divine Presence which immediately takes care of the kelippot and darker forces by the very presence of the Lord.

This is a healing text for me since it makes no assumptions about the need for mastery of the text, in fact the very splitting of words (notarikon) is a device to expand meanings inherent in the text. What makes this a sacred text-this Torah, is the claim that there is something Divine incarnated within it, something mystical, a sense that when reading or studying, one is in the presence of the Divine. Not only that but Reb Efraim teaches us that it has magical properties, to heal broken souls, who are steeped in the dark side or addictions or yezer hara. It has properties to fix independently of the moral worth of the individual participating. all that is required is the belief in the text, the Torah. Reb Efraim has in classic midrashic style posed a question to the text namely why the repetition of the words for the verse could have gotten away with **וְהַמְּכַתֵּב מְכַתֵּב** only one mention.

His daring theological response seems to be that the very participation in the text allows for a sense of refuge in the Lord since we may surrender our need to fight the darker forces and allow Him to take care of us. The text then becomes this place of refuge. This is very much a healing text! The text becomes a meta text inasmuch as it provides a mythic space for the meeting between the human and the divine. Less a discursive set of formulae and laws, rules and instructions, it is more like the logos or the memra acting as a hypostasis for the paradoxical interaction of two dramatic actors.

Torah as meeting ground and refuge is a new idea in this Hassidic Master. Reb Zadok some 100 years later follows through by insisting, in the name of his Rebbe the Ishzbitzer, that the way we apprehend the physical world is the opposite of the Torah perspective. God actually created the world as a book! You and I and all humanity become characters in this book which remain undecipherable until the revelation of the Torah which becomes the commentary on that book! The Torah deciphers the meaning of the world book so that in order to understand ourselves, our spiritual architecture we look into the Torah to make sense of the world and ourselves. The two bold interpretations allow us to not only make sense of ourselves through the characters in the Torah but allow us the refuge of meeting the divine in this text.