

Parashat Vayigash

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יַעֲקֹב כַּמָּה יָמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֶּיךָ. וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל פַּרְעֹה יָמֵי שְׁנֵי מְגֹרֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה מֵעַט וְרַעִים הָיוּ יָמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי וְלֹא הִשִּׁיגוּ אֶת יָמֵי שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי אֲבֹתַי בְּיָמֵי מְגֹרֵיהֶם.

*Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old are you?" Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my journey [on earth] are one hundred and thirty years; the [quality of the] days of the years of my life have been few and evil, and they cannot compare to the days of the years of my fathers' lives in the days of their journeys [on earth]."*¹

שער הפסוקים

צריך להבין, מה ענין קריאתו אותם מעט ורעים.

Sha'ar HaPesukim

Why did Jacob call the days of his life "few and evil"?

והענין הוא, דע, כי אדה"ר נתגלגל בג' אבות, ולכן נקראים אבות, על שם האב הראשון שהוא אדה"ר.

To answer: Know that Adam was reincarnated in the patriarchs, and that is why they are called "the fathers," after Adam, who was the first father.

Adam was the father of all humanity, and the patriarchs were the fathers of the Jewish people, the line of humanity selected to fulfill G-d's intentions in creation. For this purpose, they were endowed with the spiritual capacities necessary to fulfill this purpose; their creation as a people can therefore be compared to the creation of humanity as a whole, and their progenitors to humanity's progenitor.

ונתבאר בספר התיקונים, בתיקון ס"ט וע', כי נפשו של אדם נתגלגלה באברהם. ורוחו, ביצחק. ונשמתו, ביעקב.

It is explained in the *Zohar*² that Adam's *nefesh* was reincarnated into Abraham, his *ruach* into Isaac, and his *neshamah* into Jacob.

As will soon be explained, the patriarchs rectified the collapse of spiritual consciousness Adam precipitated by his sin. In so doing, they had to reconstruct Divine consciousness from the bottom up. Thus, Abraham began with the lowest level of the soul, the *nefesh*, which is the animating, vital force in the body; Isaac continued with the *ruach*, the emotional life force; and Jacob continued with the *neshamah*, the intellectual life force.

גם נתבאר בר"מ, בפרשת קדושים, כי אברהם תקן עון ע"ז. ויצחק תקן עון ש"ד. ויעקב, תקן עון ג"ע.

It is also explained in the *Zohar*³ that Abraham rectified the sin of idolatry, Isaac the sin of murder, and Jacob the sin of sexual licentiousness.

1. Genesis 47:8-9.

2. *Tikunei Zohar* 69 and 70.

3. 3:111b, in *Ra'aya Mehemna*.

These are the three cardinal sins, which the Torah instructs us to give up our lives for rather than transgress. (If we are given the choice between being killed or committing sins other than these three, we should commit them, unless it is a case of a ruler or government trying to snuff out Judaism altogether, in which case we must give up our lives rather than committing *any* sin forbidden by the Torah.)

Adam, in a certain sense, transgressed all three of these cardinal prohibitions in committing the primordial sin.⁴ Transgressing G-d's command was denying him; this was akin to idolatry. Inasmuch as this sin brought death upon the whole human race, it was akin to murder. By committing the sin, he plunged the souls of all humanity into the realm of evil; this is akin to adultery—or sexual licentiousness in general—which misdirects reproductive seed or creativity into realms where they are not meant to be.

Abraham rectified the sin of idolatry by smashing his father's idols and promulgating monotheism in the world. Isaac rectified the sin of murder by submitting himself to be killed by his father. Jacob rectified the sin of sexual licentiousness by working for fourteen years for his wives Rachel and Leah, thereby redeeming their souls from the realm of evil into which they had been cast by Adam's sin.

גם נתבאר בספר התיקונים, כי כשירד יעקב למצרים, אז נכנסה בו נשמת אדה"ר:

It is also explained in the *Zohar*⁵ that when Jacob descended to Egypt, it was only then that Adam's soul was reincarnated in him.

והנה אדה"ר, חטא בהשחתת זרעו, באותם ק"ל שנה הראשונים, כנז"ל בפסוק לכו אל יוסף אשר יאמר לכם תעשו.

Now, Adam sinned by wasting his seed during the first 130 years of his life, as we have explained.

After the sin, Adam separated from Eve for 130 years. Although this was an act of penitence for his sin, it backfired, because during this time he succumbed to sexual fantasies and had seminal emissions, which the forces of evil used to propagate demons.

והשחתת הזרע נקרא רע, כמשי"ה ויהי ער בכור יהודה רע.

Wasting seed is described in Scripture as "evil," as in the verse, "And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was *evil* in the eyes of G-d."⁶

He was called "evil" because he wasted his seed.⁷

וכתיב וכל יצר מחשבות לבו רק רע כל היום.

It is also written, "And the imagination of his heart's thoughts are only *evil*, the whole day."⁸

This verse describes the state of humanity before G-d sent the flood. The generation of the flood was guilty, among other things, of sexual licentiousness.⁹

4. *Megaleh Amukot* 144.

5. *Tikunei Zohar* 2.

6. Genesis 38:7.

7. Rashi *ad loc.*

8. Genesis 6:5.

9. See Genesis 6:1-4; Rashi on Genesis 6:11, 12, 13, 7:4.

וכתיב אוי לרשע רע.

It is also written, “Woe to the wicked, the evil one.”¹⁰

In the *Zohar*,¹¹ this verse is interpreted to refer to someone who does not procreate, that is, does not utilize his sexuality properly.

ויעקב בא לתקן עון גי'ע, שהוא השחתת הזרע, הניתן בלייליית ונעמייה, הנקרא עריות כנודע.

As we said, Jacob set out to rectify the sin of sexual licentiousness, i.e., wasting seed and giving it over to Lilith and Na'amah, who are termed “nakedness,” as is known.

As we have seen previously, these are the archetypal female demons, i.e., the power of evil to receive life force from the realm of holiness. This feminine evil takes the vital force of wasted seminal emissions and impregnates itself with it, producing demons, or forces of evil, i.e., anti-Divine consciousness.

The idiom for “sexual licentiousness” (*gilui arayot*) is literally “uncovering the nakedness” of a forbidden sexual partner.

ולכן עברו עליו ק"ל שנה הראשונים, ביסורין ובגלות כנודע.

His first 130 years therefore passed in suffering and exile, as is known.

Until he came to Egypt, Jacob's life was a long series of troubles. As Rashi lists them:¹² the trouble of Laban [who deceived him and tried to steal from him], the trouble with Esau [who tried to kill him], the trouble with Rachel [his favorite wife, who died in childbirth], the trouble with Dinah [who was raped by Shechem], the trouble with Joseph [his favorite son, who was sold and who he thought was dead], the trouble with Simeon [who was detained in Egypt], the trouble with Benjamin [who Joseph demanded be brought to Egypt].

וזשייה, מעט ורעים, שלשים ומאת שנה, ר"ל, כי בהיותם רעים ביסורין, נתקן עון ק"ל שנה, בהשחתת הזרע דאדם, הנקרא רע. וכשנשלמו, אז נכנסה בו נשמת אדה"ר, כי כבר תקן אותם,

This is the meaning of “few and evil, one hundred thirty years.” Since they were evil due to the suffering he endured, Adam's sin of wasting seed for 130 years—termed “evil”—was rectified. When these years were completed, the soul of Adam entered him, for Jacob had by then rectified these years.

ואז כתיב ויחי יעקב בארץ מצרים שבע עשרה שנה, כי כבר נכנסה בו נשמת חיים דאדה"ר, וזהו ויחי יעקב,

It is then written, “And Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years.”¹³ For at that point the living *neshamah* of Adam entered him. This is alluded to by the words “And Jacob lived.”

These words imply that Jacob received a new influx of life force, which, as we have seen, was the rectified soul of Adam.

ונמשך שיעור זה י"ז שנה, כמנין טו"ב, להורות כי בק"ל שנים ראשונים נתקן הרע, ובי"ז שנים אחרונים היה

10. Isaiah 3:11.

11. *Zohar Chadash, Midrash Rut, Piriah veRiviah.*

12. On Genesis 43:14.

13. Genesis 47:28.

טוב בלי רע,

This lasted for seventeen years, this being the numerical value of the word for “good” (*tov*), indicating that the first 130 years were spent rectifying the evil, whereas the last 17 years were good, without evil.

Tov: tet-vav-beit = 9 + 6 + 2 = 17. These years were the good years of Jacob’s life, for he was reunited with Joseph and lived comfortably with his family, all of whom were loyal to Judaism.

לכן ירד למצרים, כי שם היו מתגלגלים ניצוצות השחתת הורע, כנו"ל בפסוק לכו אל יוסף אשר יאמר לכם תעשו.

And this is why Jacob descended to Egypt, for it was there that all the soul-sparks that Adam wasted during those 130 years were reincarnated, as we have explained elsewhere.