

Parashat Vayeira

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי ה' בְּאֵלֶינִי מִמְרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פְּתַח הָאֶהָל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם.

*"And G-d appeared to him [i.e., Abraham] in the plains of Mam-Re, as he was sitting at the opening of the tent in the heat of the day."*¹

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת וירא

"וירא אליו" "יהויה" "באלוני ממרא", ר"ת איו"ב "יהויה" "באלוני ממרא", ר"ת יב"ם. לרמוז שאחז"ל שאיוב בן יבמה היה,

Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Vayeira

The initials of the words "and G-d appeared to him in the plains of" spell "Job" (Iyov). The initials of the words "G-d...in the plains of Mam-Re" spell the word for "levirate" (yavam). This alludes to the statement of our sages that Job was the offspring of a leviratic marriage.²

"And G-d appeared to him in the plains of": vayeira eilav y-k-v-k be-eilonei. The initials of these words are *vav-alef-yud-beit*.

Iyov: alef-yud-vav-beit.

"G-d...in the plains of Mam-Re": y-k-v-k be-eilonei mamrei. The initials of these words are *yud-beit-mem*.

Yavam: yud-beit-mem.

ובאברהם נאמר ואתה תבא אל אבותיך בשלום, ומה בשורה היא זאת, אלא שבישרו שתרח אביו שהיה עובד ע"ז עשה תשובה, כמ"ש חז"ל.

Now, G-d had previously told Abraham: "But you will come to your fathers in peace."³ What sort of tiding was this? Rather, as our sages state, G-d hereby informed him that Terah, his father, who was then an idol-worshipper, would repent.⁴

The expression "come to your fathers in peace" means that when the individual dies, his soul will repose in paradise with those of his forebears'. Since Terah was an idol-worshipper, what sort of reassurance was G-d offering Abraham here? We must therefore conclude that G-d was telling Abraham that Terah would repent and that his soul would rest in paradise.

כחום היום, לרמוז למ"ש חז"ל שהוציא חמה מנרתקה, והיא גיהנם.

The words "in the heat of the day" allude to the statement of our sages that on that day G-d removed the sun from its sheath,⁵ this being the equivalent of

1. Genesis 18:1.

2. *Zohar* 2:33a, in the glosses of Rabbi Chaim Vital #3.

3. Genesis 15:15.

4. *Bereishit Rabbah* 30:4; Rashi on Genesis 15:15.

5. *Bava Metzia* 86b.

Purgatory.

Abraham at all times sought guests to host. Since this incident occurred shortly after his circumcision, G-d wished to let Abraham rest, so He made it extra hot so that people would refrain from traveling and no one would be on the road for Abraham to invite into his tent. The sun is envisioned as being encompassed by a sheath that protects the world from its rays. One aspect of the purification process of Purgatory is unbearable heat.

ואברהם יושב פתח האהל, שהוא פתחה של גיהנם, עתה שהוא מהול, וכל מי שחתום בברית קדש ולא טמא בריתו, אינו מניחו ליכנס שם.

Abraham “was sitting at the opening of the tent,” referring to our sages’ statement that he sits at the entrance of Purgatory and keeps whoever is circumcised and sealed with the holy covenant and has not blemished it from entering.⁶

Abraham was the first Jew to be circumcised, and the covenant of circumcision is known to this day as “the covenant of Abraham.” Thus, whoever fulfills the commandment of being circumcised and guards the purity of his sexuality merits Abraham’s protection. Allegorically, this simply means that guarding sexual purity is sufficient merit to be spared the ordeal of Purgatory even if one has sinned in other ways that would have otherwise required that he undergo the purging process.

והוא גרם שתרה אביו יחזור בגלגול, וכשחזר ירד למדריגת נקבה ובא ביבמה,

Now, this caused Terah be reincarnated. When he returned, he descended as a woman and married according to leviratic law.

I.e., this woman married the brother of her deceased, childless husband. In such a case, the first child of this union is considered the child of the deceased man.

Although Terah repented of his sin of idolatry before he died, he evidently had to be reincarnated in order to right his sexual sins. He thus descended as a woman – presumably to experience female consciousness and thereby realize the seriousness of having “used” women. As a woman, s/he suffered being childless and losing her husband. S/he then had to marry the deceased husband’s brother.

The key to the rectification of Terah’s sexual sins was the sexual purity and idealism of his son, Abraham. The fact that Abraham (re-)introduced the idea of sexual integrity into the world allowed Terah’s soul to be set straight.

ואח”כ בא באיוב, שהיה בן יבמה כנז”ל.

The result of this union was Job.

והיה בימי יצחק, ולא נחה דעתו עליו מכל רעיו שדברו עמו, עד שפגע ביצחק שהוא אליהו בן ברכאל הבווי, שכן נקרא אליהו. בן ברכאל, שברכו אל. ממשפחת רם, שהוא מאברהם.

Job thus lived in the generation of Isaac. He was not comforted by the words of any of his three friend who came to console him. He was only comforted when he met Isaac, who is called in the book of Job Elihu ben Berachel the Buzite.⁷ Isaac was called Elihu ben Berachel (literally, “Elihu the son of he whom G-d has blessed”)

6. *Eiruvin* 19a.

7. *Job* 32:2.

for G-d blessed him. Elihu ben Berachel was “from the family of Ram,” meaning Abraham.

Job, like Isaac, was a grandson of Terah. He lived in “the land of Utz,” and Utz was the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother.

After G-d inflicted suffering upon Job, his three friends came to console him. But Job was not consoled by their words, since they each tried to convince him that he had done something to deserve this suffering. Only the younger Elihu was able to console Job.

Abraham’s original name was Abram (*Avram*), meaning “the father of Ram.”

וע"כ אמר על כן אמאס וניחמתי על עפר ואפר, שהוא רומז לאברהם, שאמר ואנכי עפר ואפר, עתה על ידו נחמתי והיה לי נחמה.

This why Job said, “I therefore detest my words and am comforted over dust and ashes.”⁸ This alludes to Abraham, who said, “I am dust and ashes.”⁹ Job said, in effect: “Now, because of him, I am comforted.”

Having passed his test, Job completes the rectification of the soul of Terah, initiated by the spiritual accomplishments of Abraham.

ולזה נקרא שמו איו"ב, ר"ל, אביו של אברהם שהיה עפר ואפר לפני קונו, עתה בא בגלגול,

This is why his name was Job (*Iyov*), for he was the father of Abraham—who considered himself dust and ashes before his Maker—reincarnated.

The letters that make up the word *Iyov* (*alef-yud-vav-beit*) may be rearranged to spell “his father” (*aviv*, *alef-beit-yud-vav*).

וזוהו איו"ב אותיות ויבא:

This is also alluded to in the fact that “Job” (*Iyov*) permutes to spell “and he came” (*vayavo*).

Vayavo: *vav-yud-beit-alef*.

וגם נרמז בפ' ויראו העם "את "יהויה" ויאמינו "ביהויה", ר"ת איו"ב.

Job is also alluded to in the verse describing the reaction of the Jewish people to the splitting of the sea: “And the people revered G-d, and they believed in G-d and in His servant Moses.”¹⁰ The initials of the words for “...G-d and they believed in G-d...” spell “Job” (*Iyov*).

“...G-d and they believed in G-d...”: *et y-k-v-k vaya'aminu be-y-k-v-k*; initials *alef-yud-vav-beit*.

ובזה נבין ענין איו"ב שנרמז בקריעת ים סוף,

We can now understand why Job’s name is alluded to in the description of the splitting of the sea.

8. Ibid. 42:6.

9. Genesis 18:27.

10. Exodus 14:31.

Since Job apparently did not figure at all in this incident.

וגם למה מסרו הקב"ה ביד סמא"ל,

And also we can now understand why G-d delivered him into the hands of Samel.

Samel is an angel identified with the Accuser in the heavenly court, i.e., with Satan. The beginning of the book of Job describes how "G-d said to Satan: 'Did you notice My servant Job? There is no one like him on earth; a wholesome and upright man, who fears G-d and shuns evil.' Satan answered G-d, 'Is it for no reason that Job fears G-d? Have You not set a protective wall about him, about his household, and about everything he owns from all around? ... Send forth Your hand and touch everything that is his, and see if he does not blaspheme You to Your face!' So G-d said to Satan, 'Everything that is his is hereby in your hand....'"¹¹

ומה שפיי חז"ל משל לרועה שהיה מעביר צאנו על שפת הנהר וכו', וראוי להבין, כי בשלמא במשל שארז"ל לזאב וכו', ודאי שהזאב בתיש אחד יתפייס, שאין רצונו לאכול כל העדר, אבל בנמשל שהוא סמא"ל, היה מקטרג על ששים רבוא לבד מנשים וטף, ואומר הללו עובדי ע"ז והללו עובדי ע"ז, אי"כ איך יתפייס באיוב לבדו.

The parable our sages use to explain this is as follows: A shepherd once was tending his flock next to a river. A wolf attacked the flock, and the shepherd threw it a lamb to divert its attention from the rest of the flock.¹² Now, in the parable, the wolf would certainly be satisfied with one sheep, for he has no desire to eat the whole flock! But in the analogous case, Samel was accusing the entire Jewish people, saying "these are idol-worshippers and those are idol-worshippers!" How, then, would he be satisfied just to receive permission to inflict suffering upon Job?

When the Jews were crossing the split sea on their way out of Egypt, at a certain point they had not reached the other side and the Egyptians had entered the sea in their pursuit. At that point, we are told, the heavenly accuser protested to G-d, saying, "Both these and those are idol-worshippers. Why are You planning to save these and drown those?" G-d thereupon "threw Satan a bone," i.e., suggested that he inflict suffering upon Job. This diverted his attention from the Jewish people, who proceeded to cross over to dry land unimpeded, leaving G-d to overturn the sea on the Egyptians.

ועוד, מפני מה נתן הקב"ה איוב כופר על ישראל, וכי משוא פנים יש בדבר, שטוביא חטא וזיגוד מינגד:

Furthermore: why did G-d use Job to ransom Israel? This seems biased, to say the least. "If Tuvia sinned, should Zigud be punished?"¹³

ולהבין זה, נחקור הקירה אחרת,

To understand this, we must explore another matter first.

והיא שראינו במעמד בין הבתרים אמר הקב"ה לאברהם כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם וכו',

We have seen that at "the covenant between the parts," G-d said to Abraham, "...your seed will be sojourners in a land not theirs. They will serve them, and

11. Job 1:8-11.

12. Y. Sotah 5.

13. Pesachim 113b.

they will oppress them for four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation that they will serve, and in the end they will leave with great wealth. You, however, will come to your forebears in peace; you shall be buried in good old age. The fourth generation will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite will not be full until then.”¹⁴

In this covenant, G-d promises Abraham the land of Israel in exchange for his children going into exile. It is called “the covenant between the parts” since it was “endorsed” by Abraham and G-d (represented by a pillar of fire) passing in between the severed halves of several animals. The idea expressed was: “just as these halves are not complete without each other, so are the two of us not complete without the pact that binds us together.”

למה הפסיק הענין, ואמר ודור רביעי ישובו הנה וכו', ואתה תבא אל אבותך בשלום וכו'.

Why, in this passage, does G-d interrupt the description of what is to befall Abraham’s descendants with the statement that Abraham will come to his forebears in peace?

ועוד, מה היא בשורה זאת, אחר שעדיין אביו עובד ע"ז ומוכר צלמים, ומטעה בהם את כל העולם.

Furthermore, as we said above, what sort of tiding is this, seeing that Terah was still serving idols, selling them, and through them causing everyone to err?

אמנם דע, כי החכמה היא מבררת הכל, ועיקר הברור תלוי בה,

Know, then, that *chochmah* is what clarifies everything, and the elevation of the sparks of holiness that fell from *Tohu* depends chiefly upon it.

The key to differentiating between good and evil—and knowing how to release the kernel of good within evil in order to liberate it—is *chochmah*, or insight. The purer one’s insight, the clearer one will be able to recognize what is good and what is evil, and purity of insight is dependent upon the purity and force of one’s intentions.

והוא משל על האומן שמכה בפטיש על הברזל ויוצאים ממנו ניצוצות לחוץ, וכשהאומן הוא בקי, מקבץ כל אותם הניצוצות שיצאו ומחזירם לכמות שהם,

By way of analogy: when a blacksmith strikes his hammer on a piece of iron, sparks fly forth from it. If the blacksmith is an expert, he collects these sparks and returns them to their original state.

Apparently this refers to the slivers of iron that break off the larger piece. The skilled blacksmith knows how to “recycle” these splinters and use them.

וזהו מחלוקת רז"ל אם מברכין על הגובלות, שמי שאומר אין מברכין, לפי שסובר שאחר שיצאו הניצוצות ואחזו בהם החיצונים, אין מברכין עליהם,

This is the essence of the sages’ dispute over whether or not a blessing is to be pronounced over unripe fruit.¹⁵ He who contends that we do not recite a blessing

14. Genesis 15:13-16.

15. *Berachot* 40b.

over them feels that once they have fallen off the tree and the forces of evil have appropriated them they are not suitable for a blessing.

As long as unripe fruit remains on the tree, it can ripen and become edible. Thus, it potentially can be eaten and thereby elevated into the service of G-d (assuming the person eating the fruit uses the energy and “lift” he gets from eating it for holy purposes). Once the unripe fruit falls (or is picked), however, it has lost its chance to ever become fit for food; it has thus fallen into the realm of evil, and can only become useful again through the roundabout way of decomposing and turning into fertilizer for the next generation of crops.

והאומר שמברכים, הוא לפי שמאחר שיצאו מהקדושה, עכ"ז קדושתם בהם עומדת וכולם חוזרים לשרשם, וחושב מחשבות לבלתי ידח ממנו נדח, ולזה ראוי לברך עליהם:

He who contends that we *do* recite a blessing when we eat them feels that since they issued from the realm of holiness, they still possess some holiness and may therefore be returned to their source. As it is written: “He plans out schemes, so that no one be banished from him.”¹⁶ They are therefore suitable for a blessing.

ובזה תבין כשאמר הקב"ה לאברהם כי גר יהיה זרעך וכו', ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול, אמר אברהם, איך אפשר להיות דבר כזה, אחר שתרח שהוא שורש הכל נתקלקל כ"כ ויצא לחוץ, איך יתקן ויתקנו אחרים. לזה אמר לו השי"ת ואתה תבא אל אבותיך בשלום, ובישרו שיחזור אביו בתשובה.

Thus you will understand that when G-d told Abraham that “your seed will be sojourners...and in the end they will leave with great wealth,” Abraham asked how this could be, inasmuch as Terah—the progenitor of the clan—was so depraved? How could he be rectified and rectify others? G-d therefore told him that “you will come to your forebears in peace,” telling him that Terah would repent.

וז"ש ודור רביעי ישובו הנה, בי לא שלם עון האמורי עד הנה, פ"י כי איוב היה ביניהם, ועדיין לא היה שלם, לזה נקרא אח"כ איש תם, שכבר תם ונשלם,

This is also why G-d told him, “the fourth generation will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite will not be full until then.” I.e., Job was amongst them, but was not yet rectified. Afterwards, when he passed his test and was rectified, he is called “a ‘finished’ man” (*ish tam*).¹⁷

Although this phrase refers to Job before he was tested, we are told that after his suffering G-d restored to Job all his previous wealth and happiness. Presumably this means that he did not suffer spiritually either, and remained as “finished” as he was to begin with, if not more so. Or perhaps just by being born, Job signified the completion of the rectification of Terah, who, as we said before, had been reincarnated as Job’s mother.

וסוף סוף גוי היה, והקליפה אומרת זה משלנו הוא, והיה מגין עליהם.

Nonetheless, Job was a non-Jew, and the “shells” claimed him as their own and his merit protected them.

For all his perfection, Job was not part of the line of Abraham (being descended from his brother

16. 2 Samuel 14:14.

17. Job 1:1.

Nahor, as we said above), and thus was not a link in the chain of the primogenesis of the Jewish people. We are told that when the spies entered the land of Israel, they found the inhabitants mourning over Job's passing, since his merit protected them.¹⁸

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וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי ה' בְּאֵלְנֵי מַמְרָא.

*And G-d appeared to [Abraham] in the plains of Mam-Re.*¹⁹

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">ליקוטי תורה, פרשת וירא</p> <p>בהיות שכל מה שאנו צריכין לתקן בעה"ז היא לבחי' זוי"ג כי אין לנו פרנסה ושפע כ"א מהם שהם אבינו ואמנו</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">ספר הלקוטים, פרשת וירא</p> <p>כי כל מה שאנו צריכים לתקן בזה העולם, אינו כי אם לעשות זוי"ג. כי אין לנו פרנסה ושפע ונשמה אלא מהם שהם אבינו ואמנו,</p>
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Sefer HaLikutim and Likutei Torah, parashat Vayeira

All that we are required to rectify in this world is only for the purpose of causing *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* to couple. For we receive the means of livelihood, Divine beneficence, and children only from them, who are our spiritual father and mother.

G-d has set up the creational order such that He channels our needs into the physical world via the spiritual world. The latter must therefore be functioning properly in order for the channels of Divine blessing to flow properly. In this context, the Divine blessings are the "offspring" of the union of the spiritual male and female antecedents of our own souls.

<p>כמו שפירש רשב"י ע"ה על פסוק ישמח אביך ואמך, אביך דא קודשא בריך הוא, ואמך דא כנסת ישראל,</p>	<p>כמ"ש רשב"י ע"פ ישמח אביך ואמך דא קב"ה כו</p>
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Thus Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai interpreted the verse, "Your father and mother will rejoice"²⁰ to mean that "your father" is the Holy One, blessed be He and "your mother" is the Community of Israel.²¹

These are appellations of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, respectively.

<p>ע"כ אנו צריכים לתקן עמהם הזוי"ג של או"א, כדי שירדו להם המוחין להזדווג, ואז ירד להם שפע ומזון ונשמות וכל הצורך.</p>	<p>ע"כ אנו צריכים לתקן עמהם הזוי"ג דאו"א כדי שירדו להם מוחים להזדווג ואז ירד מהם שפע ונשמות וכל הצורך.</p>
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Nonetheless, we are also required to rectify, together with them, the coupling of *Abba* and *Ima*, so that intellect descend from them to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* that will enable the latter to couple. Then, as we said, Divine beneficence, food, and children and all other needs will descend into the material world from them.

In order for *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* – the Divine emotional attributes and their means of expression – to couple fruitfully, they must possess mature, adult intellect. Otherwise their union will be subject to

18. Rashi on Numbers 14:9.

19. Genesis 18:1.

20. Proverbs 23:25.

21. *Zohar* 3:55a, 61b, 119a, 156a, 240b; *Berachot* 35b.

what we might call the vagaries of immaturity, i.e., of undeveloped emotions whose self-orientation will prevent them from interacting smoothly with each other. This maturity they receive from their “parents,” *Abba* and *Ima*, i.e., from the Divine intellect proper. But in order for *Abba* and *Ima* to transfer intellectual consciousness and perspective to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, they themselves must couple properly.

ויש לשאול על מ"ש רו"ל שאין הקב"ה נכנס בירושלם | ויש להקשות על רו"ל שאמרו אין הקב"ה נכנס
של מעלה עד שיכנס בירושלם של מטה, | לירושלים של מעלה עד שיכנסו לירושלים של מטה

We must therefore question what our sages, of blessed memory, said, namely, that “The Holy One, blessed be He, will not enter the upper Jerusalem until He will enter the lower Jerusalem.”²²

G-d “entering” Jerusalem is an appellation for the coupling of the male and female principles, alluded to by “the Holy One” and Jerusalem, respectively. More precisely, Jerusalem is the “home” into which the male principle enters in order to couple with the awaiting female principle. In its plain meaning, this statement refers to the spiritual antecedent of Jerusalem and the physical Jerusalem, but in its mystical meaning, it implies that *Abba* and *Ima* do not couple unless *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* do so first.

וזה אי אפשר, כי למעלה נקראו רעים דלא איתפרשן | ובמ"א אמרו כי או"א תרין רעין דלא מתפרשין לעלא
לעלמין, ולמטה נקראו דודים דלא מזדוגין תדיר אלא | ולתתא נקרא דודים דלא מזדוגין תדיר אלא לזמנין
לזמנין ידיעין, | ידיעין

This cannot be, for those above (*Abba* and *Ima*) are called “the companions that never separate,”²³ as opposed to those below (*Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*) who are called “lovers,” who do not couple constantly but only on known occasions.

ולמה שפירש שנקראו רעים דלא מתפרשן אי אפשר, | ולמה שפרשו שנקראו רעים ג"כ א"א שהרי בפי"א אמרו
שהרי אמר בזהר בפירוש שעל פסוק (דברים כ"ב א') | ע"פ שלה תשלח ב' תירוכין שכינתא עילאה ושכינתא
שלח תשלח את האם, תרין תרוכין, שכינתא עילאה, | תתאה ושכינתא תתאה.

Why, indeed, are *Abba* and *Ima* called “companions that never separate?” It is stated in the *Zohar*²⁴ in reference to the verse, “you shall send away, send away the mother,”²⁵ that this implies two divorces, that of the supernal *Shechinah* and that of the lower *Shechinah*.

The supernal *Shechinah* (Divine presence) is *Ima* and the lower *Shechinah* is *Nukva*.

וזה נרמז בפי"א את האם, את, שרומז על אימא תתאה, | וזה נרמז בפי"א שלח תשלח את האם א"ת אמא תתאה
שכוללים האותיות כלם מאלף ועד תי, | שכוללי אותיות מאי עד תי

This is alluded to more explicitly in the words “the mother” (*et ha-eim*): The direct particle (*et*) alludes to the lower “mother,” which encompasses all the letters of the alphabet, from *alef* to *tav*.

In Hebrew, the direct object (here, “the mother”) is usually preceded by an untranslated particle,

22. *Ta'anit* 5a.

23. *Zohar* 3:4a.

24. *Tikunei Zohar*, introduction 1b, 21b.

25. Deuteronomy 22:1.

et, spelled *alef-tav*. Inasmuch as *malchut* (*Nukva*) is the means of expression, i.e., thought, speech, and action, it encompasses the entire language of expression. These are the “letters” of thought, the letters of speech, and the “letters” of action.

Nukva is the lower “mother,” the source of the world below it.

האם, אימא עילאה. | האם אמא עילאה

The word “mother” itself refers to the supernal “mother” (*Ima*).

It thus appears that there is a situation in which *Ima* is “divorced” from *Abba*. How then, can the *Zohar* insist that their union is continuous?

<p>פירוש, שיש שני מיני זווגים, אחד חצון ואחד פנימי, החיצון אינו חסר לעולם, ואינו צריך שום התעוררות, והוא לקיום העולמות כלם, כמ”ש רז”ל במס’ נדה יפה לאשה יפה לולד יפה לחלב,</p>	<p>ופי’ הדבר שיש ב’ מיני זיווגים א’ פנימי וא’ חיצון החיצון אינו חסר לעולם ואין צריך שום התעוררות והוא לקיום העולמות כולם כמ”ש ז”ל יפה לאשה יפה לולד יפה לחלב</p>
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The answer is that there are two types of coupling, one external and one internal. The external one is never lacking and requires no arousal from below, and exists in order to sustain all the worlds. As our sages state, “marital relations are good for the woman, good for the embryo, and good for the milk.”²⁶

The external, superficial coupling of *Abba* and *Ima* is indeed continuous, and supplies all reality with the minimal life-force it requires in order to continue to exist.

The statement of the sages reads: “During the first three months of pregnancy, marital relations are harmful to the woman and to the embryo; during the middle three months, they are harmful for the woman but good for the embryo; during the final three months, they are good for the woman and good for the embryo.” Presumably, the Arizal is referring to the final trimester, when the woman is most visibly a mother.

<p>והשני הוא להוציא נשמות חדשות בעולם, ועל זה הזווג נשבע הקב”ה שלא יכנס וכו’, עד שיכנס בירושלם של מטה.</p>	<p>והב’ להוציא בריאות חדשות בעולם ע”י הזיווג וזה נשבע וכו’ עד שיכנסו בירושלים של מטה</p>
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The second is for the sake of issuing new souls into the world. It is with reference to this coupling that “The Holy One, blessed be He swears that He will not enter the upper Jerusalem until He enters the lower Jerusalem.”

“New souls” means both literally new souls that will invest physical bodies, and all new spiritual revelations of Divine consciousness.

<p>פירוש עד שיהיו מוכנים זוי”ג להכניס בהם מוחין וא”א לומר עד שיכנסו ממש כי מה שהם מזדווגים הוא להמשיך הנשמה מאו”א ואם או”א עדיין לא המשיכו אצלם היאך תרד אל זוי”ג כי כן דרך המשכתן זוי”ג הם ממשיכין מאו”א ואו”א מא”א וא”א מלמעלה</p>	<p>ופי’ הדבר, עד שיהיו זוי”ג מזומנים להכנס, כי אי אפשר לומר עד שיכנסו ממש, כי מה שהם מזדווגים הוא להמשיך נשמות מאו”א, ואם או”א לא ימשיכו אצלם היאך תרד לזוי”ג, כי דרך המשכת הנשמות הוא כזה, זוי”ג ממשיכים מאו”א, ואו”א מאריך, ואריך מעתיק, עד סוף כל המדריגות, כי גבוה מעל גבוה שומר.</p>
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The meaning is that He will not enter the higher Jerusalem until *Z’eir Anpin* and

26. *Nidah* 31a.

Nukva are ready to enter. The meaning cannot be to really enter, for the purpose of their coupling, i.e., that of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, is to elicit new souls from *Abba* and *Ima*, and if *Abba* and *Ima* to do not elicit mature mentality for themselves, how can it descend from them to *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*? The order followed in the transmission of new souls is as follows: *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* elicit them from *Abba* and *Ima*; *Abba* and *Ima* elicit them from *Arich Anpin*; and *Arich Anpin* elicits them from *Atik Yomin*, and so on, to the end of all levels, for "the higher one is presided over by a higher one yet, and there are yet higher ones above them."²⁷

וזהו פ"י מ"ש עד שיכנס, כלומר שיהיו מוכנים | לזה מוכרה לפרש עד שיכנס שיהיו מוכנים לכנס ליכנס.

Therefore, the words "until He enters..." mean "until they are ready to enter."

נמצא, כי עיקר מה שאנו עושים, הוא לתקן ולזווג | נמצא כי עיקר מה שאנו צריכין לתקן ולזווג הוא זו"ן ועיקר הזיווג הוא המתקת הגבורות לזווגם עם החסדים, שהוא זווג הגבורה עם החסדים: | שיהי' זיווג הגבורות עם החסדים

From all this, it follows that our main task is to rectify *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* and cause them to couple, and that the principle coupling consists of the sweetening of the states of *gevurah* of *Nukva* by coupling them with the states of *chesed*, i.e., the coupling of *gevurah* with the states of *chesed*.

As we explain elsewhere, *gevurah* (judgment) is predominant in the feminine archetype, while *chesed* (inclusiveness) predominates in the male archetype.

ודע כי גבורות הנקבה, הם אותיות מנצפ"ך, שהם | וגבורות הנקבה הוא מנצפ"ך בגי' פ"ר.

Know that the states of *gevurah* within the feminine archetype are embodied in the final letters *mem-nun-tzadik-pei-chaf*, whose combined numerical value is 280.

These five letters possess final forms, which indicate the stopping of the flow of meaning in the word.

$mem-nun-tzadik-pei-chaf = 40 + 50 + 90 + 80 + 20 = 280$.

ובזה תבין סוד עמוק, והוא כי מי שנתן עצה לאברהם | לימול, היה ממרא שהוא סוד הגבורות, שעולה כמנין פ"ר ע"ה, שעולים ע"ה ממרא

With this you will be able to understand a deep secret. Namely, the one who gave Abraham the advice to circumcise himself was Mam-Re, who personified the states of *gevurah*. For the numerical value of his name is 280 plus the *kolel*.

When G-d commanded Abraham to circumcise himself, he consulted with Einar, Eshkol, and Mam-Re. Einar said, "You will make yourself a cripple. The relatives of the kings you killed will come and

27. Ecclesiastes 5:7.

kill you.” (Another opinion: Einar told him, “You’re already 99 years old; why subject yourself to this pain?”) Eshkol said, “You are old; if you cut yourself you will bleed to death.” (Another opinion: Eshkol said, “Why arouse the wrath of your enemies [who oppose doing anything that promotes Divine consciousness]?”) Mam-Re said, “Your G-d stood by you in the fiery furnace, in the famine, in your war against the kings, and if He asks you to circumcise yourself you won’t listen?”²⁸

Mam-Re: mem-mem-reish-alef = 40 + 40 + 200 + 1 = 281.

שהם הגבורות, אשר מבקשים הזווג והמיתוק. | שהם גבורות המבקשות המתוק והזיווג

280 signifies, as we saw, the states of *gevurah*, which seek to couple and thereby be sweetened.

ובהיות אברהם ערל אי אפשר להזדווג, כי החסד עילאה כשמתגלה בפום אמה, כשמגיע לערלה מסתלק,	ובהיות אברהם ערל אי אפשר להזדווג, כי החסד המתגלה בפום אמה כשמגיע לערלה מסתלק לזה נתן
לזה נתן לו עצה שימול.	לו ממרא עצה שימול

As long as Abraham was uncircumcised, he could not couple, for the supernal *chesed* that is revealed in the mouth of *Ima* withdraws when it reaches the foreskin. Mam-Re therefore advised him to circumcise himself.

The mouth of *Ima* signifies *malchut* of *Ima*, the expression of the intellect as it passes from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin*. If the *chesed* issuing from *Ima* to *Z'eir Anpin* encounters a foreskin, a blockage, in the *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, it recedes back into *Ima*. *Z'eir Anpin* is thus left without the full mentality of *Ima*, and cannot properly couple with *Nukva*.

והוא, כי ג' רעים היו לאברהם, והם ענר אשכול וממרא. ענר הם הגבורות של זעיר, והם שייך כמנין	והוא שי שלשה רעים היו לאברהם ענר אשכול וממרא ענר ג' שייך דנים שבתית,
ענר.	ענר ג' שייך דנים שבתית,

As we know, Abraham had three friends: Einar, Eshkol, and Mam-Re. Einar personified the states of *gevurah* within *Z'eir Anpin*, which number 320, this being the numerical value of *Einar*.

Einar: ayin-nun-reish = 70 + 50 + 200 = 320.

אשכול יסוד פי" כי יסוד נקרא שדי"י ומוריד החסדים שהוא תוך אהיה דאמא (עולה נ"ד) ובריבוע עולה	אשכול יסוד פי"י, ומוריד החסדים שהם בתוך אהייה של אימא, שריבוע אהייה עולה ד"ם כמו
מ"ד, שדי"י ומ"ד עולה אשכול ע"ה	שידעת, אי"כ שדי"י וד"ם עולה בג"י אשכול.

Eshkol personified *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is associated with the Name *Shakai* and causes the states of *chesed* within the Name *Ekyeh*, which is associated with *Ima*, to descend. This is indicated by the fact that the numerical value of the regression of *Ekyeh* is 44, as you know, and thus the combined numerical value of this regression and the Name *Shakai* is the same as that of *Eshkol* plus the *kolel*.

28. *Bereishit Rabbah* 42:8; *Midrash Tanchuma, Vayeira* 3. The opinions in parentheses are those of *Bereishit Rabbah*. According to Chizkuni, Abraham did not “consult” with his three friends, for he intended to fulfill G-d’s command unhesitatingly. He merely wished to test their reaction to what he was about to do and found that only Mam-Re had the proper attitude. According to *Da’at Zekeinim* (by the authors of the *Tosefot*), Abraham asked his friends whether or not to circumcise himself publicly or privately, or how to convince his servants to circumcise themselves also. According to the Maharal of Prague (*Gur Aryeh*), Abraham consulted with his friends in order to demonstrate that even if they counseled him against fulfilling G-d’s command he would do it anyway, and to demonstrate that he was fulfilling G-d’s command with full awareness of what he was doing, not impetuously.

Eshkol: $alef-shin-kaf-vav-lamed = 1 + 300 + 20 + 6 + 30 = 357$.

Ekyeh is spelled *alef-hei-vav-hei*. Its regression is:

$$\begin{aligned} &alef\ alef-hei\ alef-hei-vav\ alef-hei-vav-hei \\ &= 1 + (1 + 5) + (1 + 5 + 10) + (1 + 5 + 10 + 5) \\ &= 4(1) + 3(5) + 2(10) + 1(5) \\ &= 4 + 15 + 20 + 5 \\ &= 44. \end{aligned}$$

Shakai: $shin-dalet-yud = 300 + 4 + 10 = 314$.

$$44 + 314 = 358.$$

Eshkol thus signifies the effect of the Name *Shakai* [*yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin*] on the Name *Ekyeh* [*Ima*].

וזהו הזון ומפרנס לכל, | וזה הזון ומפנס לכל

This is the meaning of the Name *Shakai* as the one “who sustains and provides for all.”

The Name *Shakai*, as we shall see, is explained in various ways. Here, it is taken to mean “who suffices,” “whose Divine power suffices to sustain all reality.”²⁹

(It could be that the phrase “who sustains and provides for all” alludes to the name *Eshkol*, the last syllable of which, *kol*, means “all.”)

ולזה נקרא שדי והוא הבחינה חיצונה שביסוד שהוא זווג חיצון המזווג זון את הכל ר"ל כמו שיש לאמא ב' זיווגים	ולזה נק' שדי, שהיא הבחינה החיצונה של סוד, שהוא זווג חיצון המזווג זון את הכל, כמו שבארנו באימא. שכמו שיש לאימא שני מיני זווגים, כך יש לזו"ן שני מיני זווגים,
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This is why *yesod* is called *Shakai*, for it is the external dimension of *yesod*, which participates in the external coupling, which causes everything else to couple and provides for everything, as we explained regarding *Ima*. Meaning: just as *Ima* participates in two types of coupling, so do *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* participate in two types of coupling.

Just as with *Abba* and *Ima*, the external, superficial coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* channels the basic life-force necessary to keep the world functioning.

והם גבורה שבחסד שכן פירשו רז"ל שדי שאמר לעולמו די אחר שנתן מדה וגבול הוא כח הגבורה שהחסדים מתפשטים לאין תכלית,	והם הגבורות של יסוד, כמ"ש רז"ל שדי שאמר לעולמו די. והוא נותן כח ומדה בגבורות, לפי שהחסדים מתפשטים לאין תכלית:
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These are the states of *gevurah* within *yesod*. As our sages explained, the Name *Shakai* means that G-d is the one who said “enough” to His world.³⁰ This Name gives strength and the ability to limit to the states of *gevurah*, for the unhindered states of *chesed* extend without limit.

29. See Rashi on Genesis 17:1.

30. *Chagigah* 12a.

If the attribute of *chesed* had operated unchecked during creation, the world would have gone on being created infinitely. The attribute of *gevurah*, powered by the Name *Shakai*, limited and reigned in the attribute of *chesed*.

Thus, the Name *Shakai* describes G-d as simultaneously being powerful enough to provide infinitely, and powerful enough to limit the inherent nature of creation to extend without limit.

ועוד אמר שדי שודד המערכות, והוא ע"י הגבורות. | ועוד פ"י שהוא שודד המערכה וזה א"א כ"א ע"י הגבורה

They also said that the Name *Shakai* means that G-d overrides the natural order.³¹ This is also done through the states of *gevurah*.

G-d is the only one with the power and ability to override the natural order He established.

Thus, we see that all three explanations of the Name *Shakai* reflect its association with the states of *gevurah* within *yesod*.

Thus, Einar and Eshkol respectively personify the *gevurah*-states within *Z'eir Anpin* as a whole and within *yesod* of *Z'eir Anpin* in particular. Neither of these *gevurah*-states are sweetened by the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. Only the *gevurah*-states of *Nukva* itself are so affected.

ואלו השנים שהם ענר ואשכול, אינם מתמתקים ע"י | ואלו השנים שהם ענר ואשכול שאינם נמתקות ע"י הזווג. לזה לא נתנו עצה לימול, כי אין להם בזה | הזווג לא נתנו לו עצה על המילה כי אין להם תועלת מזה, תועלת,

These two, i.e., Einar and Eshkol, are not sweetened by coupling. They therefore did not advise Abraham to circumcise himself, for they would gain nothing by it.

אבל ממרא שעיקר המתקתו ע"י הזווג. נתן לו עצה. | אבל ממרא שעיקר המתקתו ע"י זווג וכשהוא ערל כי כל עוד שהיה ערל, היה מסתלק ממנו החסד. ולא | החסד מסתלק לכך הוא נתן לו עצה על המילה היה מתמתק, ולכן נתן לו עצה לימול.

But Mam-Re, whose main sweetening occurs through coupling, did advise Abraham to circumcise himself. For as long as Abraham was uncircumcised, *chesed* withdrew from him and he, i.e., Mam-Re, could not be sweetened. He therefore advised him to circumcise himself.

וז"ש וירא אליו ה'. לומר, שעתה שנתגלה החסד | וז"ש וירא אליו ר"ל שעתה ע"י שמל עצמו נתגלה בפומא דאמא, בסיבת המילה שמל, נתגלה לו השכינה | החסד בפומא דאמא לז"א וירא אליו נתגלה השם אליו לקבל החסדים. | לקבל ה"ח

This is the meaning of "And G-d appeared to him..." i.e., now that *chesed* has been revealed in the mouth of *Ima*, because Abraham circumcised himself, the *Shechinah* appeared to him, in order to receive these states of *chesed*.

Nukva prepared to receive the states of *chesed* that would sweeten her inherent *gevurah*.

31. See Ramban on Genesis 17:1.

ובמה נתגלה באילוני ממרא פי אילון הוא תוקף ור"ל | ובמה נתגלה באילוני ממרא פי אילון הוא תוקף ור"ל
 שנתגלה אליו בתוקף הגבורה, שהם ממר"א שעולים | שנתגלה אליו בתוקף הגבורה, שהם ממר"א שעולים
 כמ"ש להמתיק הדינין ע"י הזיווג. | כמ"ש להמתיק הדינין ע"י הזיווג.

And how did the Shechinah appear to him? "...in the plains of..." meaning "in the strength of": G-d revealed Himself to Abraham in the strength of the states of *gevurah*, which are alluded to by the word "...Mam-Re," whose numerical value is 280, as we explained. The states of *gevurah* revealed themselves to Abraham in order to be sweetened by the coupling of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*.

3

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' זַעֲקַת סְדוֹם וְעִמּוֹרָה כִּי רַבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כְבֹדָה מְאֹד.

And G-d said, "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very heavy."³²

This *parashah* includes the story of how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.³³

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת וירא

ענין סיפור סדום ועמורה והיות אלו הני מלאכים מיי"כאל לבשר את אברהם בלידת שרה, וגברי"אל להפך את סדום, ורפ"אל למלט את לוט, וכל אחד בא בשליחותו, ובזמן אחד נתקבצו שלשתם, וטעם היות הכל בזמן אחד ולא נפרדים זה אחר זה.

Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Vayeira

We will now explain the mystical explanation of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. We will also explain why the three angels—Michael, who announced to Abraham that Sarah was going to have a child; Gabriel, who overturned Sodom; and Raphael, who rescued Lot³⁴—each of whom came to fulfill a separate mission, all came together at once instead of one after the other.

Inasmuch as each of these angels had a separate mission, it would seem that there is no reason why they all visited Abraham at once.

להיות, כי כן היה צריך,

They did so because it was necessary.

The angel Michael's mission (to announce to Abraham that he was going to father Isaac) was similar to the missions of Gabriel and Raphael (to destroy Sodom and save Lot), as we will see. Therefore, these two missions had to occur at the same time.

Gabriel's and Raphael's missions are combined into one for this exposition because destroying Sodom was also part of rescuing Lot, as will be explained.

First, the Arizal discusses Michael's mission.

כי כמו שרצה הקב"ה להוציא זרע קדש, ונשמות ישראל שהיו גנוזות קודם שנברא העולם ועד עתה, היו האלפים

32. Genesis 18:20.

33. Genesis 18:20-19:29.

34. Rashi on Genesis 18:2.

שנה של תהו, והיה בונה עולמות ומחריבן,

G-d wanted to bring forth the holy seed, the souls of Israel that had been stored away from before Creation until this point. There were two thousand years of *Tohu*, during which G-d was creating worlds and destroying them.

Humanity in general was originally intended to fulfill the role that, after Adam's sin, was reserved for the Jewish people. Thus, the souls that G-d originally intended to send to the world in its first years had to be held back until a proper spiritual setting could be created for them. This setting was the Jewish people.

The sages state that "The world spans six thousand years [before the messianic millennium]. [The first] two thousand years of *Tohu* ["chaos," "disorder"], two thousand years of Torah, and two thousand years of the days of the Messiah."³⁵

The year 2000 AM³⁶ (1761 BCE) coincides with Abraham's 52nd year, so roughly speaking, Abraham marked the transition from the period of *Tohu* to the period of Torah, or *Tikun* (since the rectification of reality can occur only through the Torah). Although the Torah was not actually given until 448 years after this, the sages state that the forefathers kept the entire Torah before it was given, and the creation of the Jewish people that began with Abraham was the preparation for the giving of the Torah. Thus, the period of Torah can justifiably be considered to have begun with Abraham.

The year 4000 AM (240 CE) is relatively close to the death of Rabbi Yehudah Nesiah (230-235 CE), the grandson of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi (recorder of the Mishnah) and the last effective leader of the Sanhedrin. "Although the Sanhedrin [and the position of Nasi] did not disappear altogether, it ceased being the center of Torah for the whole of Jewry, since it lacked the leadership of a Nasi who was a great sage in his own right. And so it was that the leading sages dispersed, each one establishing his own *beis midrash* that stood side by side with the Sanhedrin. But all these became diminished in standing and authority when compared to the newly arising Torah center that was being established in Babylonia."³⁷ Many of the inhabitants of the Land of Israel left at this point.³⁸ Thus, this year may be considered to mark the point when the emphasis in Judaism shifted from learning Torah toward yearning for the redemption from exile, in other words, for the messianic era.

The sages also state that before the creation of the world, G-d was "creating worlds and destroying them."³⁹ In Kabbalah, this is understood to refer to the fact that there were numerous "proto-worlds" preceding the creation of the world of *Atzilut*, the ideal, rectified world (of which the subsequent worlds, including the physical universe we live in, are just an imperfect reflections). Although necessary stages in the progression toward the ideal world of *Atzilut*, these worlds were "scrapped" in terms of being used as the ideal archetype for reality. The main "proto-world" or imperfect precursor of *Atzilut* was the world of *Tohu*.

There is thus a thematic connection between the Kabbalistic world of *Tohu* and the notion of the "two thousand years of *Tohu*" that preceded Abraham, and in fact, the two thousand years of *Tohu* are a manifestation in this physical world of the world of *Tohu* in the spiritual dimension. In other words, the course of history in our physical world mirrors the spiritual course of "history" (in quotes because this "history" occurs outside the creation of time) in the development of the spiritual worlds.

35. *Yalkut Shimoni*, Isaiah 393; *Ibid.* Hosea 522, etc.

36. *Anno Mundi*, i.e., since Creation.

37. Z. Yavetz, *Toldot Yisrael*, vol. 6, p. 276, translated and quoted in Meir Holder, *History of the Jewish People: From Yavneh to Pumbedisa* (Artscroll, 1986), pp. 111-112.

38. Holder, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

39. *Kohelet Rabbah* 3:14.

ויולד פלוני לפלוני וימת ויולד וכו', והחריבן במי המבול, וחזר ושתלן בנה עד זמן דור הפלגה, כי הגוים הרוב נחרבו ונתפרדו כל פועלי און, ובזה נבלה עולם התהו, עד שחזר ובנאו באברהם.

This is alluded to in the Torah's account of how **various people fathered children and died, and then their children fathered children and died, and so on.**⁴⁰ **Then He wiped them all out in the flood, and replanted them through Noah until He began again in the generation of the Dispersion, when the nations were destroyed and all the evildoers were dispersed. In this way the world of *Tohu* was wiped out, remaining so until Abraham rebuilt it as the world of *Tikun*.**

זו"ס מ"ש אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם, באברהם.

This is the mystical meaning of our sages statement that in the verse, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,"⁴¹ the word for "when they were created" is a permutation of the word for "through Abraham."⁴²

"When they were created" (*behibaram*): *beit-hei-beit-reish-alef-mem*.

"Through Abraham" (*be-Avraham*): *beit-alef-beit-reish-hei-mem*.

The fact that the word for "when they were created" can be permuted to the word for "through Abraham" implies that the creation of the world was in a sense dependent on Abraham, or his merit.

ואם ע"י הברית נתקיים העולם, שנאמר אם לא בריתי יומם, שהוא אברהם, אפי' שיש בו פסולת, שהוא ישמעאל ועשו, שנאמר כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע קדש,

Through the covenant with Abraham, the world of *Tikun* endures—as it is written, "Were it not for My covenant *by day*,"⁴³ referring to Abraham—despite the presence of impurities, i.e., Ishmael and Esau, as it is written, "For through Isaac it will be called for you seed,"⁴⁴ i.e., holy seed.

The sages point out that in the verse, "And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day,"⁴⁵ the day is preceded by the definite article, which is not the case with the preceding five days of creation. This, they say, is to connect the sixth day of creation with the day on which the Torah was given, the sixth day of Sivan, 2448. The work of creation (completed on the sixth day) is dependent on the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people. Without this acceptance, the world's existence is unnecessary, or pointless, and therefore until the Torah was given the world's existence was unstable and precarious.⁴⁶ This is indicated in the verse, "Were it not for My covenant by day and by night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth," meaning, were it not for the observance of the Torah by the Jewish people day and night, G-d would have no purpose for the world and its laws of nature.

Here, "by day" is taken to refer to Abraham, since the world was plunged in spiritual darkness until

40. Genesis 5.

41. Genesis 2:4.

42. *Bereishit Rabbah* 12:9.

43. Jeremiah 33:25.

44. Genesis 21:12.

45. Genesis 1:31.

46. Rashi *ad loc.*, etc.

Abraham, and “Abraham began to shine light.”⁴⁷

The covenant G-d made with Abraham was that he would make him the progenitor of the Jewish people and that they would inherit the Land of Israel as the ideal setting for accomplishing their mission, to be a “light to the nations” and disseminate Divine consciousness through reality, making the world into G-d’s home.

The verse “for through Isaac it will be called for you seed” is understood to mean that Abraham’s true seed, the genetic line of the Jewish people, is passed on only through Isaac, and not through Abraham’s other sons, Ishmael and the sons of Keturah.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the word for “through Isaac” in this verse can also mean “in Isaac,” and this is taken to indicate that only part of Isaac’s seed will transmit the genetic line of the Jewish people. Thus, only Jacob plays this role, and not Esau, Isaac’s other son.⁴⁹

ואז באברהם מצא כל זרע ישראל, והנשמות שהיו קודם בריאת העולם נמצאו בו, כי עד שם היה העולם של התהו בלי ברית, ולכן לא נתקיימו כי אם בברית שבאברהם, ואז באברהם בראם, והבן;

Then, in Abraham, G-d found a vessel for all the seed of Israel, and the souls that existed before the world was created existed in him. For until then, the world was in the order of *Tohu*, without the covenant. That is why the world only was able to endure through the covenant of Abraham. This is the mystical meaning of the idea that G-d “created them” “through Abraham.” Understand this.

ובהיות שכאן נתבשר ביצחק, וזרע ישראל כולם נמצאו בו, כדכתיב כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע וכו', ג"כ רצה הקב"ה שנשמתו של משיח שהיתה ג"כ גנוזה קודם בריאת העולם, שנאמר ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים, זה רוחו של משיח, ותוצאותיו מקדם,

At this point, Abraham was informed that he would have Isaac, and that the seed of Israel would all exist in him, as it is written, “for through Isaac it will be called for you seed.” Since this was the case, G-d also wanted the soul of the Messiah to appear and be manifest. The soul of the Messiah was also stored away before the world was created, as it is said, “and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the water.”⁵⁰ Our sages said that this refers to the spirit of the Messiah.⁵¹ It existed even before this.

Since the purpose of the Jewish people—to make the world into G-d’s ultimate home—will be accomplished fully only through the Messiah, the descent of the souls of the Jewish people at this point in history had to be accompanied by the descent of the soul of the Messiah. Otherwise, the Jewish people would lack the sense of direction and purpose necessary for them to accomplish what they were meant to accomplish.

The fact that the “spirit of the Messiah” was “hovering over the waters” at the outset of creation indicates that the world was created for the end to which the Messiah will bring it—that the Messiah is a necessary ingredient in Creation, without which it cannot exist.

The name of the Messiah is listed as one of the seven things that preceded the creation of the world.⁵²

47. *Shemot Rabbah* 15:26.

48. Genesis 25:1-6.

49. Rashi on Genesis 28:15.

50. Genesis 1:2.

51. *Bereishit Rabbah* 8:1.

52. *Tana d'vei Eliahu Rabbah* 31; cf. *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4.

(The other six are the Torah, *teshuvaah*, Purgatory [*Gehinom*], the Garden of Eden [the abode of the soul in the afterlife], the Throne of Glory, and the Temple. All these are related to the process of achieving the purpose of Creation.)

רצה עתה ג"כ הקב"ה שיראה וימצא, כי היתה אבודה בסדום, שנאמר (תהלים פ"ט) מצאתי דוד עבדי, וארז"ל שמצאו בסדום בלוט בן אחי אברהם,

It had been "lost" in Sodom, as it is written, "I have found David, My servant,"⁵³ and our sages said that this means that G-d found the seed of David's soul in Sodom, in the person of Lot, Abraham's nephew.

Lot fathered (through incest with his daughter) Moab,⁵⁴ who became the progenitor of the nation of Moab. Ruth, the ancestress of King David, was a Moabite.⁵⁵ King David, of course, was the ancestor of the Messiah. Thus, the soul of the Messiah was latent in Lot, who had chosen to live in Sodom.⁵⁶

א"כ מוכרח היה שיבואו שלשתן בזמן אחד, אחד למצא לישראל באברהם, ואחד להפוך את סדום, כדי שיצא משם לוט כדי להתחבא במערה, ושם זימן לו יין ויצא משם דוד, משיח אלהי יעקב, לזה באו שלשתן בזמן אחד, והבן.

It was therefore necessary that all three angels come at the same time: One came to find the souls of Israel in Abraham. One came to overthrow Sodom, so that Lot could be extricated from there by the third and leave there and hide in the cave where G-d had wine waiting for him so David, the progenitor of the Messiah of the G-d of Jacob,⁵⁷ could be eventually be born. Therefore the three came at the same time. Understand this.

Until this point in his life, Lot only had daughters, all of whom were already mature by this time. Therefore, it is unlikely that he would have had sons had he remained in Sodom and not have had incestuous relations with his daughters. Therefore, the incest had to be arranged so he could father the nation that would carry the soul of the Messiah latent within him. Furthermore, the society of Sodom was so degenerate that it presumably could not have "hosted" the soul of the Messiah; therefore, G-d had to extricate it from there.

Lot's daughters, thinking that G-d had destroyed humanity again, gave their father wine to drink in order that he repopulate the world through them. The sages say that G-d arranged for there to be wine in the cave where they fled in order for Lot to father the two nations of Ammon and Moab.⁵⁸

ועוד, כמו שמאברהם יצא יצחק, כן יצא מלוט

Furthermore, just as Isaac issued from Abraham, the Messiah, the future Isaac issued from Lot, as follows:

יצחק ק"ץ ח"י, דהיינו המשיח, בסוד (תלים כ"א ה') חיים שאל ממך, ובסוד דוד מלך ישראל חי וקיים.

The name *Isaac* (*Yitzchak*) can be seen as the combination of the words for "the end of the live one," referring to the Messiah. This is the mystical meaning of the

53. Psalms 89:21.

54. Genesis 19:30-37.

55. Ruth 1:1-4, 4:13-17.

56. Genesis 13:11-12.

57. par. 2 Samuel 23:1.

58. Rashi on Genesis 19:33.

verse, “He asked of You life...,”⁵⁹ and of the phrase “David, King of Israel, lives and endures.”⁶⁰

Yitzchak: yud-tzadik-chet-kuf.

“The end of the live one” (*keitz chai*): *kuf-tzadik chet-yud.*

“The live one” refers to the *sefirah* of *yesod*, inasmuch as the male reproductive organ has “dead” (flaccid) and “live” (erect) states. The end of the “live one” refers to the crown (glans) of the organ. As this is the point where the drive of self-actualization is realized, it refers also the Messiah, the one who actualizes the Divine purpose of creation. The verse and phrase quoted both indicate the connection between “life” and the Messiah.

As we will see presently, this explains why Abraham had to be circumcised to father Isaac.

The Arizal now discusses how Abraham merited fathering the Jewish people.

שהוא בהיות שנוולד יצהק בזמן שאברהם ושרה זקנים, ובאו ביומין קדמאין,

This occurred because Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah were old, and had entered the primordial days.⁶¹

The verse “And Abraham was old, having come into days” occurs after Sarah died, when Isaac was already 37. Nonetheless, the Torah stresses how Abraham and Sarah were (already) old when Isaac was born.

The *Zohar* interprets the phrase “having come into days” to mean “into the primordial days that always renew [a person] like the eagle,”⁶² alluding to the verse, “[G-d] renews your youth like an eagle.”⁶³ The “primordial days” are the six lower *sefirot* of *Atik Yomin* (corresponding to the six *days* of creation). Since *Atik Yomin* corresponds to delight, the source of life, an influx from this level renews a person’s youth. Indeed, after this verse and the ensuing story of Isaac’s marriage to Rebecca, the Torah recounts how Abraham married again and fathered eight more sons.

וביצחק נקרא לו זרע ישראל, וישראל היו מקדם במחשבה, שנאמר בראשית ברא אלהים, בשביל ישראל שנקרא ראשית (ירמיה ב' ג'), וקדש ישראל לה' ראשית

As we said, **the seed of Israel was transmitted through Isaac, and the souls of Israel pre-existed in G-d’s thought, as it is written, “In the beginning, G-d created...,”** and the sages said that this means **“for the sake of Israel, who are called ‘the beginning,’ as it is written, ‘Israel is holy to G-d; they are the beginning of His produce.’”**⁶⁴

The word for “in the beginning” can also mean “by means of [that which is called] ‘the beginning.’” The Jewish people is one of the entities referred to as “the beginning,” as indicated by the verse from Jeremiah. Thus, “In the beginning G-d created heaven and earth” can be interpreted to mean, “For the sake of the Jewish people, G-d created heaven and earth.”

The point emphasized here is the fact that the Jewish people are termed “the beginning” indicates

59. Psalms 21:5.

60. Liturgy for the sanctification of the new moon.

61. par. Genesis 24:1.

62. *Zohar* 3:170b.

63. Psalms 103:5.

64. Jeremiah 2:3.

that they precede the creation of the world. Thus, the sages say that “the thought of Israel preceded everything.”⁶⁵

תבואת ה', שהיא בינה, וישראל עלו במחשבה,

“His produce” refers to *binah*, whereas Israel ascended in thought.

Meaning that they originate in the highest aspect of thought, *chochmah*, which precedes *binah*.

לכן לא יצאו מאברהם, עד היותו זקן זה שקנה חכמה.

They therefore did not issue from Abraham until he was old (*zaken*). This is alluded to by the fact that our sages say that the word *zaken* is a *notrikon* for the words “**the one who has acquired wisdom.**”⁶⁶

A *notrikon* is a word formed by the principle consonants of a word or series of words.

“The one who has acquired wisdom”: *zeh she-kanah chochmah*. The bolded letters spell *zaken* (*zayin-kuf-nun*).

והראיה, כי כשהוליד לישמעאל, היה בן פ"ו שנה בתוקף הגבורות,

The proof of this is that when Abraham fathered Ishmael, he was 86 years old, in the prime of his years of strength (*gevurah*).

The sages say: “When a person is eighty years old, he acquires *gevurah*,”⁶⁷ based on the verse, “The days of our lives are seventy years, or by means of *gevurah*, eighty years.”⁶⁸

At this age, Abraham was thus more connected to *gevurah*, the left side, than to *chochmah*, the right side. He was not yet “old.”

ולא נימול,

He was not circumcised when he fathered Ishmael.

This was because Ishmael was not “the end of the living one,” the consummation of Abraham’s drive to self-perpetuate and impregnate reality with his Divine mission. Therefore, the glans of the reproductive organ did not have to be exposed.

ובהולדת יצחק היה בן מאה שנה ושרה בת תשעים שנה, ונרמזו ביצחק.

When Isaac was born, Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old. This is alluded to in the name *Isaac* (*Yitzchak*).

Yitzchak: *yud-tzadik-chet-kuf*. The numerical value of *tzadik* is 90 and the numerical value of *kuf* is 100. The allusions in the other two letters of the this name are as follows:

והחי לרמוז לחי ימי המילה, והי לרמוז ליי של חייה, שכך היה שמה קודם החטא. ואזור החטא נקראת חוה, ונבנה הצלע של אדם שהיא חוה. ובהבנות זה הצלע, נעשות עיזר וזריע של קיימא, להוליד זרע קודש, כי קדש ישראל להי.

65. *Bereishit Rabbah* 1:4.

66. *Sifra*, *Kedoshim* 7.

67. *Avot* 5:21.

68. *Psalms* 90:10.

The *chet* alludes to the eight days from birth to circumcision. The *yud* alludes to the *yud* in the name *Chayah*, for that was Eve's (*Chavah*'s) name before the primordial sin; only after the sin was she called *Chavah*. Eve was built out of Adam's side, and when this side was built into Eve, Adam's helpmate (*eizer*) and enduring seed (*zera*) came into being, to produce holy seed, for "Israel is holy to G-d."

Before the sin of partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Eve is not referred to in the Torah by her name, only as "the woman" or "his wife," etc. Only after the sin does Adam name her *Chavah*, or Eve. This alludes to the tradition that she had a different name before the sin.

Before Eve was made out of Adam's side, they were connected to each other back to back. They could not couple in this state; only when Eve was separated from Adam could they face each other, engage in marital relations, and produce offspring.

The words for "helpmate" and "seed" are permutations of each other. *Eizer*: *ayin-zayin-reish*; *zera*: *zayin-reish-ayin*. This indicates that the "help" that the female gives the male is the possibility to produce offspring.

The *yud* in Isaac's name thus refers to the original woman, who was formed into Adam's wife so they could bear children. As we saw above, these children were intended to be the bearers of the messianic mission that was later given to the Jewish people.

ועוד לרמוז להולדת אברהם ליצחק בהיותו בן מאה שנה לא פחות ולא יותר, נרמז ממלת אברהם, אותיות ב"ר מא"ה, כי בן מאה יוליד בר, דהיינו יצחק.

The birth of Isaac to Abraham when the latter was exactly 100 years old is also alluded to in the name Abraham (*Avraham*) itself: it may be read as a combination of the two words for "a son at one hundred years old" (*bar meiah*), for at the age of 100 (*meiah*) he fathered a son (*bar*), i.e., Isaac.

Avraham: *alef-beit-reish-hei-mem*.

Bar meiah: *beit-reish mem-alef-hei*.

וזהו בהבראם, דהיינו באברהם. ובהיותו זקן, עלה למקום ישראל שבמחשבה.

This is the meaning of the sages' statement that "when they were created" is a permutation of "Abraham," and that when he was old he ascended to the level of Israel in G-d's thought.

ומא"ה, הוא מלוי שם ע"ב דיו"דין שהוא באבא, דהיינו במחשבה דילה.

And the numerical value of the word for "100" (*meiah*) is equal to the combined numerical value of the letters used to spell out of the 72-Name, spelled out with *yud*'s, which signifies *Abba*, i.e., in G-d's thought.

The 72-Name:

Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-yud-vav hei-yud.

The letters used to spell out the Name *Havayah* here are:

vav-dalet yud yud-vav yud = 6 + 4 + 10 + 10 + 6 + 10 = 46.

Meiah: *mem-alef-hei* = 40 + 1 + 5 = 46.

As we have seen, the four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* (72, 63, 45, 52) correspond to the four letters of the Name and the four basic *partzufim*. Specifically, the 72-Name corresponds to the *yud* and *Abba*, the *partzuf* of *chochmah*. Here we have an additional indication that the fact that Abraham fathered Isaac at the age of 100 was because only then did he achieve the level of Divine *chochmah* necessary for this.