

Parashat Shelach

וַיִּדְבֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. שְׁלַח לְךָ אַנְשִׁים וַיֵּתְרוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי
נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל...

God said to Moses, "Send yourself men who will tour the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites..."

The portion of the Torah read this week opens with the story of the spies who were sent to spy out the land of Israel before the Jewish people entered it. These spies were the princes of each tribe.

לקוטי תורה, פרשת שלח

שער הפסוקים, פרשת שלח

והנה רז"ל אמרו בפסוק ויאמר להם יוסף מרגלים אתם, שרמוז להם, שהם יהיו מרגלים את ארץ ישראל. אבל יהושע נשיא אפרים בן יוסף עצמו, לא היה מרגל.

Sha'ar HaPesukim and Likutei Torah, parashat Shelach

Our sages said, commenting on the verse, "And Joseph said to them, 'You are spies...,'"² that Joseph was hinting to his brothers that they would be reincarnated and spy out the land of Israel, but that Joshua—the prince of the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, would not be a reincarnated spy.

The patriarch Jacob had twelve sons, each of which became the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. When Joseph told his brothers, "you are spies," he was in effect telling them that all eleven of them (including his brother Levi) would be reincarnated as the spies who spied out the land. The Arizal will explain how this worked, seeing that no spy was sent from the tribe of Levi.

וע"י הקדמה זו, יתבאר היטב ענין פרשה זו במה שנעיר בתחלה שינוי אחד שיש כאן, מפרשת במדבר סיני, כי שם כתיב ראשי אלפי ישראל הם. וכאן הוסיף בני, באמרו כלם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה.

הנה תמצא, שיש שנוי כאן לפרשת במדבר כי שם כתיב ראשי אלפי ישראל הם, וכאן כתיב ראשי בני ישראל הם,

וע"י הקדמה זו, יתבאר היטב ענין פרשה זו במה שנעיר בתחלה שינוי אחד שיש כאן, מפרשת במדבר סיני, כי שם כתיב ראשי אלפי ישראל הם. וכאן הוסיף בני, באמרו כלם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה.

Based on this, we will be able to understand this passage very well. Let us note first of all that when the Torah refers to the princes of Israel in an earlier passage,³ they are called "the heads of the thousands of Israel," whereas in this passage about the spies, they are called "the heads of the Israelites."⁴

1. Numbers 13:1-2.

2. Genesis 42:9.

3. Numbers 1:16.

4. Numbers 13:3.

אך הענין בהקדמת רו"ל כי מ"ש יוסף במצרים מרגלים אתם רמז להם על דבר זה כי אתם תהיו מגלים בכניסת הארץ אך יהושע למטה אפרים לא הי' ממרגלים, והנה הענין כי עתה בכניסת הארץ רצה הקב"ה להתעבר נפשות הי"ב שבטים באלו הי"ב נשיאים כדי לחזק אותם שלא יחטאו ועכ"ז לא הועיל כאשר נבאר

והענין, הוא, כי הנה בראותו יתברך שהיו מרגלים אלו עתידים לחטא, ומרע"ה היה ברצונו לשלחם, לכן בחר הרע במעוטו, לתקן קצתו. ולכן גזר הוא יתברך, שנשמות השבטים עצמם, אחי יוסף, הנקראים בני ישראל ממש, יתעברו בסוד העיבור באלו המרגלים, כדי שיעזרום קצת, ולא יחטאו לגמרי. ועכ"ז לא הועיל להם, וכמו שנתבאר בפסוק וילכו ויבאו אל משה וגו'.

The reason for this discrepancy is as follows: When G-d foresaw that these princes would sin and that Moses wished to send them, He devised a way to fortify them, minimize the evil they would do, and rectify it somewhat. He therefore decreed that the souls of the actual sons of Jacob, the brothers of Joseph, who were literally "the children of Israel," would be impregnated into the souls of these spies, so that their holiness would help them not to sin completely. Nevertheless, this did not help them.

Jacob was also known as "Israel," so the phrase "the children of Israel," while usually denoting the Jewish people as a whole, may also be literally understood to mean "the sons of Jacob."

"Impregnation" (Hebrew: *ibur*) is a specific type of reincarnation, in which the soul being reincarnated does not become the full and only soul of the body into which it is incarnated, but is rather "grafted" onto the soul already present in this body. The result is that the soul of the individual retains its intrinsic consciousness and identity, but these are augmented by the impregnated soul it "hosts."

וזה"ה, כלם אנשים ראשי בני ישראל המה, הם עצמם השבטים, הנקראים ראשי של בני ישראל ממש.

This is the mystical meaning of the verse: "They were all men, the heads of the children of Israel were they,"⁵ i.e., they themselves were the progenitors of the tribes, who were in fact the "heads" of the Jewish people.

The word "head" also may mean "beginning."

ולז"א הש"י ויתורו את ארץ כנען אשר אני נותן לבני ישראל בני ישראל ממש כי הם הי"ב שבטים להם אני נותן את הארץ עתה בסוד העיבור שנתעברו בסוד י"ב אלו לכן שינה כאן באמרו ראשי בני ישראל ולא אמר אלפי כי הלא אלו בני ישראל עצמן אותן הראשים שהם י"ב שבטים עצמן

גם זהו מ"ש, אשר אני נותן לבני ישראל בלשון הווה, נותן, כלומר, כי אלו האנשים אשר תשלח עתה לתור את הארץ, היא אותה אשר אני נותנה עתה לבני ישראל, הם השבטים, הנקראים בני ישראל, ההולכים שמה כנזכר, וע"י הליכה זו אני נותנה להם אם יזכו:

This is also the mystical meaning of the verse: "Send for yourself men who will spy out the land of Canaan that I am giving to the children of Israel." The verb "am giving" is in the present tense, meaning: "these men whom you are now sending to spy out the land that I am giving now to the children of Israel are themselves the progenitors of the tribes, who are called 'the sons of Israel.' I will give it to them in the merit of this expedition, if they deserve it."

5. Ibid. 13:3.

והנה הי"א שבטים, נתעברו בהם בי"א המרגלים, אבל
 אמנם לוי לא היה מרגל כי הלא לא צריך לוי חלק
 שבט לוי, שלא היה לו נחלה בארץ, לא הוצרך לשלוח
 ונחלה בא"י מרגלים.

Now, the eleven progenitors of the tribes besides Joseph were impregnated in the eleven spies. Since the tribe of Levi did not have any portion in the land, they did not need to send a spy.

The tribe of Levi was not meant to make their living by farming or pasturing the land; their "job" was to serve as priests and Levites in the Temple and teach the Torah to the rest of the people. They lived off their sacrificial dues in the Temple, and the various tithes and so forth the other tribes were required to give them of their produce. They lived in special cities that were set aside for them, which were surrounded by parks, but they possessed no agricultural territory. Thus, since they were not "interested" in the land *per se*, no representative of their tribe was sent to spy out the land.

אבל במקומו נתחלק שבטו של יוסף לשנים, מנשה, | והנה מצינו יוסף שנחלק לבי שבטים מנשה ואפרים
 ואפרים.

In its place, the tribe of Joseph was divided in two: Menasheh and Ephraim.

Menasheh and Ephraim were the two sons of Joseph. Before his death, Jacob made these two sons progenitors of tribes in order to keep the number of tribes twelve in the cases when the tribe of Levi would not be counted.

ואמנם במרגל של מנשה, נתעבר נשמת יוסף, ולכן |
 כתיב למטה יוסף למטה מנשה,

The soul of Joseph was impregnated into the spy of the tribe of Menasheh, it is therefore written: "Of the tribe of Joseph, of the tribe of Menasheh..."⁶

In listing the princes of the tribes who were sent as spies, the idiom used in each case is "Of the tribe of X, so and so." Here, the name of the tribe (Menasheh) is preceded by the phrase "of the tribe of Joseph." The tribe of Ephraim is mentioned *earlier*, so the phrase "of the tribe of Joseph" cannot be considered an introductory phrase that covers both tribes of Ephraim and Menasheh. This phenomenon, the Arizal tells us, therefore alludes to the fact that the soul of Joseph was impregnated specifically into the prince of Menasheh.

עם היות שבכל מקום אפרים קודם למנשה, ועכ"ז יחס |
 ליוסף עם מנשה, להורות מה שאמרנו.

Even though in all cases Ephraim takes precedent over Menasheh, Joseph was nonetheless associated with Menasheh, in order to indicate what we have said.

When Jacob split Joseph into two tribes, he made a point of giving Ephraim precedent of Menasheh, even though Menasheh was the firstborn.

נשאר יהושע מרגל שבט אפרים, בלי עיבור נשמת |
 שום שבט, ולכן נתיירא משה לשלחו, פן יחטא. ואז,
 ויקרא משה להושע בן נון יהושע,

Thus, Joshua was left as the spy of the tribe of Ephraim, without the impregnation of a progenitor of any tribe. Moses was therefore afraid to send him, lest he sin.

6. Ibid. 13:11.

Therefore, Moses “called Hoshea bin Nun, Joshua.”

Joshua’s given name was Hoshea, but Moses changed it to Joshua at this time. In Hebrew the sole difference between the consonantal spelling of these two names is the addition of the letter *yud* to Hoshea, giving *Yehoshua*.

כמיש זײל שהתפלל עליו, יײה יושיעך מעצת
מרגלים:

He did this, as our sages say, praying for him: “May G-d spare you from the scheme of the spies.”⁷

The name Hoshea means “salvation.” The addition of the letter *yud* to the name Hoshea makes the word begin with the two-letter Name of G-d, *Kah* (*yud-hei*). The name Joshua may thus be interpreted to mean “May G-d save.”

ולכן הוצרך שלוי עצמן יתגלגל בא' מאלו, ואמנם
בראות משה דבר זה ראה בדעתו להיות יהושע תלמידו
שלא יכשל בדבר ולכן התפלל עליו ואז נתעבר בו
נשמת לוי וזײס ויקרא משה כו' לכן תמצא כי במטה
מנשה כתיב למטה יוסף ובמטה אפרים לא כתיב למטה
יוסף כי בגלגול לוי היה אך גלגול יוסף היה במנשה

וסוד קריאת שם זה החדש הוא, כי המשיך עליו נשמת
לוי בן יעקב, שלא היה שום מרגל משבטו כנזכר,
וזה היה עײי משה שהוא משבט לוי, ואליו היה ראוי
ללכת בשליחות זה, מרגל של שבט לוי, ושלה במקומו
את יהושע תלמידו תמורתו, החשוב כמו בן שלו ממש
כנודע, ונשמת לוי, שהיתה צריכה להתעבר במשה
נתעברה אז ביהושע:

The mystical meaning of calling him this new name is that Moses thereby drew into Joshua the soul of Levi, the son of Jacob, whose soul had not been impregnated into the prince of his tribe, as we mentioned. It was specifically Moses who was able to do this, for he, as the head of the tribe of Levi, should have gone on this mission and been the spy for the tribe of Levi. Instead, he sent Joshua, his student in his place, for one’s student is considered the same as his son, as is known. Thus, the soul of Levi, which should have been impregnated into Moses, became impregnated into Joshua.

ובזה תבין אמרו שלח לך אנשים ואחײכ למטה אבותיו
תשלחו

ובזה יתבארו שינוי הכתובים, כי תחלה אמר שלח לך
בלשון יחיד, ואחײכ אמר בלשון רבים, למטה אבותיו
תשלחו,

We can now better understand a difference in expression that occurs in this passage: First, G-d says: “Send for yourself,” addressing Moses in the singular. Later in the same verse, He says: “send one man from each of their ancestral tribes,” addressing him in the plural.

In English there is no difference between the singular and plural imperative or single and plural second-person future. (In archaic English, there is “send you” and “send ye,” and “you will send” and “ye will send,” but there is no such distinction in modern English). But in Hebrew, the first “send” in this verse is in the singular (*shelach*), while the second “send” (*tishlachu*) is in the plural.

עוד מלת לך, שהיא מיותרת.

Furthermore, the expression “for yourself” seems to be superfluous.

7. *Sotah* 34b.

אך הענין כי כל הייא שבטים היו בשליחות ישראל וזהו תשלחו לשון רבים אך נגד יהושע שהוא גלגול לוי שהוא משבטו של משה שלחו משה בעצמו במקומו כי משה משבט לוי היה וזהו שלח לך ל' יחיד גם אמר לך במקומך ר"ל בעבור שבט לוי שלא שלחו מרגל ובמקום משה הלך יהושע בעבורו,

אבל רמז בזה אל הנזכר, כי תחלה הזכיר ענין השליח הגדול מכולם, והוא משבט לוי, שהוא משה ואמר לו שלח לך, כלומר, כיון שאינך הולך, אי"כ שלח לך במקומך ותמורתך איש אחד. וכנגד שאר השבטים, אמר למטה אבותיו תשלחו לשון רבים

In truth, however, these inconsistencies allude to what we have said. G-d at first was referring to the greatest of all the emissaries, that of the tribe of Levi, i.e., Moses. He said to him: "Send for yourself," i.e., since you yourself are not going, send someone else in your place. In reference to the rest of the tribes, however, G-d addressed Moses in the plural.

In sending out the other spies, Moses was acting on behalf and as the representative of the whole Jewish people. He is therefore referred to in the plural.

ואז שלח ליהושע במקומו, והמשיך בו נשמת לוי כנזכר:

Moses then sent Joshua in his place and drew into him the soul of Levi, as we said.

אמנם כאשר הרעו מעשיהם ובאו בכוונה רעה אז נסתלקו מהם אותן העיבורים כדרך הנהוג בזה כנודע כי אפי' נשמת אדם עצמן מסתלק בעת שחוטא.

והנה בלכתם לתור את הארץ, לקחו עצה רעה בעצמם, להוציא דבה על הארץ, ולכך נסתלקו מהם נשמות של השבטים המתעברות מהם כנז"ל. כנודע, כי הנשמה המתחבר בגלגול עם האדם, אינה מסתלקת משם עד יום המיתה. אבל הנכנסת בסוד עיבור, מסתלקת ממנו, כאשר האדם חוטא, ואומרת סורו נא מעל אהלי האנשים הרשעים האלה. ולא די זה, אלא אפילו נשמת האדם עצמו, מסתלקת בעת שחוטא, בסוד הרשעים בחייהם קרויים מתים, ולכן נסתלקו מהם:

Now, when the spies scouted out the land, they plotted an evil scheme, that is, to denigrate the land. Therefore, the souls of the progenitors of the tribes that had been impregnated into them departed from them. As is known, a soul that attaches itself to a person via reincarnation (*gilgul*) does not depart from him until he dies,⁸ but one that enters into a person via impregnation withdraws from him when he sins. It says: "withdraw now from above the tents of these wicked people!"⁹ As a matter of fact, even an individual's own soul withdraws from him when he sins. This is the mystical meaning of our sages' statement that "the wicked even in their lifetime are called 'dead.'"¹⁰

וז"ס וילכו ויבאו אל משה ואל אהרן, וכבר ואמר וישבו מתור הארץ, אם כן איך חוזר להזכיר ההליכה, אהר ששבו, והיל"ל ויבאו אל משה,

וישבו מתור הארץ, אם כן איך חוזר להזכיר ההליכה, אהר ששבו, והיל"ל ויבאו אל משה,

This is alluded to in the verse: "And they went and they came to Moses and

8. *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, beginning of introduction 5.

9. Numbers 16:26.

10. *Berachot* 18b.

Aaron."¹¹ The words "and they went" seem to refer to the spies' expedition into the land of Israel. **But we have already been told in the preceding verse that "they returned from scouting out the land," so why does the narrative mention again their going, now that they have already come back? The verse should have simply stated: "And they came to Moses."**

אבל הענין הוא, כי וילכו חוזר אל הסתלקות הנשמות
ההם. ומלת ויבאו, חוזר אל המרגלים עצמם, כי
כשבאו אל משה, כבר נסתלקו מהם עיבור הנשמות
ההם. | אמנם מ"ש ויכלו חוזר על נשמות השבטים שהלכו להם
ונסתלקו בחטאם ואז ויבאו אל משה וכו'.

The answer is that the phrase "and they went" refers to the departure of those impregnated souls, and the next phrase "and they came" refers again to the spies themselves. When they came to Moses, the impregnated souls had already departed from them.

אמנם יהושע וכלב, חיו מן האנשים ההם. והנה מלת
חיו אינה מתיישבת, |

These spies were then punished and died, **but, we are told, "Joshua and Caleb lived from these men."**¹² Now, the word "remained alive" does not seem to be appropriate here.

"Lived" would imply that they "lived off" the other people or something like that, but the simple meaning of the verse is simply that they survived them.

והענין הוא, כי אלו השנים לא נסתלקו מהם העיבורים
שלהם, שהם, יהודה בכלב, ולוי ביהושע. |

The reason why it is nonetheless used is to indicate that in the case of these two, their impregnated souls did not depart from them. These were the souls of Judah in Caleb and Levi in Joshua.

Since Joshua and Caleb did not participate in the sin of the spies (i.e., did not denigrate the land of Israel and discourage the people from entering it, there was no reason for their impregnated souls to depart from them.

והיה בהם חיות נוסף בעת ההיא, וז"ש חיו, ולא אמר
נשארו חיים. |

They therefore possessed an extra measure of life force. Thus, the expression "lived" is used in reference to them, rather than "survived."

אבל השאר מתו תכף בביאתם אל משה, בהסתלקות
העיבורים מהם, בסוד הרשעים בחייהם קרויים מתים:
ובזה יתורץ אומר, מן האנשים ההם, שהם דברים
מיותרים. אבל רמז אל הנזכר, כי אלו נסתלקו
עיבוריהם, ואלו נשארו בהם, וחיו ממש: |

11. Numbers 13:26.

12. Ibid. 14:38.

The other spies, however, “died” as soon as they came to Moses, inasmuch as their impregnated souls departed from them, for “the wicked even in their lifetime are considered dead,” as above. This is why the narrative contrasts Joshua and Caleb with them, saying “from these men,” which appears superfluous.

גם זהו ענין אומרו, ועבדי כלב עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו. פיי, כי שאר המרגלים, היתה רוח אחרת של השבטים מתעברים בהם. אבל לא מלאו אחרי, ונסתלקו.

This is also alluded to in the verse: “And My servant Caleb, since there was a different spirit with him.”¹³ This refers to the fact that in the other spies there was a different spirit of the impregnated souls of the progenitors of the tribes in them. They did not “remain loyal to Me,” and therefore departed from their respective descendents.

The phrase “remained loyal to Me” is from the verse just quoted describing Caleb, and literally means “fulfilled after Me.” The Arizal is thus saying that the impregnated souls of the sons of Jacob did not complete the task for which they were impregnated. This was not their fault, of course, so no blame is intended to be imputed to them.

אבל זה, מתחלה היתה רוח אחרת של עיבור יהודה עמו, ולא חטא, ולכן וימלא אחרי, והשלים באחרונה כבראשונה:

With regard to Caleb, however, there was from the outset a different spirit of the impregnated soul of Judah with him, and he therefore did not sin. He therefore “remained loyal to Me” and stayed as loyal at the end as he was at the beginning.

והטעם לאלו השנים היה, כי ליהושע הועילה תפלת משה, וקריאתו שם הזה בקבע, לא ינתק ממנו. ולכלב הועילה תפלה, שנשתטח על קברי האבות בחברון, ולא חטא במחשבה רעה.

The reason these two—Joshua and Caleb—had a “different spirit” with them was because in the case of Joshua, Moses’ prayer was effective, as was his permanent name-change. Caleb’s own prayer was effective, for we are taught that he prostrated himself in prayer on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He therefore did not sin with regard to the other spies’ evil scheme.

וכבר נתבאר ענין גלגול כלב בן יפנה, בפרשת חיי שרה, בפסוק בא ברוך ה', שהוא גלגול אליעזר עבד אברהם,

We have elsewhere¹⁴ explained that Caleb was a reincarnation of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham.

13. Ibid. 14:24.

14. *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 36.

This would add significance to the fact that he went to pray at the graves of the forefathers.

כי לכך זכה שנקרא בסוד ברוך בא ברוך ה' ולא נסתלק ממנו עיבור יהודי גם יהושע לא נסתלק ממנו עיבור לוי ולז"א ויהושע ב"ג וכלב ב"י חיו מן האנשים ההם כו' כי אומרו מן האנשים ההם מיותר אך הכוונה כי שאר אנשים ההם מתו אפי' בהליכתן לתור הארץ שנסתקו מהם עיבור השבטים כנ"ל על וילכו ויבאו אך אלו חיו מן האנשים ר"ל שממש חיו שלא נסתלקו מהם עיבור השבטים, גם לז"א ועבדי כלב עקב הית' רוח אחרת פ"י כי ניתוסף בו עיבור נשמת יהודה ולא אירע לו כמו האחרים כי אעפ"י שנתעברו בהם נסתלקו ולא הצליחו אך זה היתה לו רוח אחרת ההוא וימלא אחרי שהושלם בו ולא נסתלק ממנו כמו באחרים.

שנקרא ברוך ויצא מכלל ארור.

Although Eliezer hailed from accursed seed, when Laban said to him, “Come in, O blessed one of G-d,”¹⁵ he went out of the category of the cursed and entered the category of the blessed.

Eliezer was a Canaanite, that is, a descendant of Canaan, whose seed Noah cursed to be a servant caste.¹⁶

ונלע"ד חיים, כי ז"ס ועבדי כלב, כי תחלה היה עבד כנעני ארור, ועתה הוא עבדי ברוך.

It appears to me, Chaim Vital, that this is alluded to in the verse “And My servant Caleb,” meaning that he was originally a Canaanite servant, i.e., cursed, but was now “My servant,” i.e., blessed.



לקוטי תורה, פרשת שלח

סוד כלב ב"ג יפונה מ"כ קודם לזה בלי זה כי כלב בן דוד ג"י סוד יו"ד הי"ה ו"ו הי"ה

Likutei Torah, parashat Shelach

Regarding the mystical significance of Caleb, the son of Yefuneh, I first found it written that the numerical value of Calav, the son of King David¹⁷ is 53, the same as the numerical value of one of the spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* plus the *kolel*.

Calav ben David: kaf-lamed-alef-beit = 20 + 30 + 1 + 2 = 53.

The Name *Havayah*, as we have seen previously, is spelled out in 4 basic ways, such that it yields the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52. The latter is as follows:

yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei = (10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52.

ואח"כ מ"כ ז"ס כלב בן יפונה, ואפשר ששניהם גילגול א',

15. Genesis 24:31.

16. Ibid. 10:25-26.

17. 2 Samuel 3:3.

I then found it written that this is also the mystical significance of Caleb, the son of Yefuneh. It could well be that they are both incarnations of the same soul.

The numerical value of Caleb is exactly 52: *kaf-lamed-beit* = 20 + 30 + 2 = 52.

דע כי נשמת כלב שורשו מן אליעזר עבד אברהם כי אליעזר יצא מקללת ארור כנענן כשאמר לו לבן בא ברוך
הי שאם לא קיימו כך למעלה לא היה נכתב בתורה ואז נכנס לכלל ברוך

Know that the soul of Caleb originated in that of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, for Eliezer left the curse of “cursed be Canaan”¹⁸ when Laban said to him “Come, O blessed of G-d.” Had this not been decreed in heaven, it would not have been recorded in the Torah. At this point, Eliezer became blessed.

Eliezer was a descendant of Canaan, the fourth son of Noah’s son Ham. Noah cursed Canaan after Ham castrated Noah. In the same episode, Noah blessed his son Shem: “Blessed be G-d, the G-d of Shem.”

Abraham sent Eliezer to his nephew, Bethuel, to find a match for his son, Isaac. We are told that Eliezer in fact wanted his daughter to marry Isaac, but Abraham told him, “You are cursed [because you are a descendent of Canaan] and I am blessed [because I am a descendent of Shem]. He who is cursed cannot cling to he who is blessed.”¹⁹

Bethuel’s son was Laban, Rebecca’s brother. Although Laban was wicked, and therefore his words could not affect reality the way a righteous person’s can, the Arizal says that the fact that the Torah takes the trouble to record Laban’s greeting means that it in this case, the reverse was true: because on the spiritual level, Eliezer had already been gone from being cursed to being blessed, Laban was able to intuit this and unknowingly articulated it, thereby causing it to take effect on the physical plane, as well.

Eliezer’s transference from cursed to blessed allowed him to be reincarnated as Caleb.

לכן בשביל מעלה זו שא"ל בא ברוך הי לזה נתגלגל בנבל הכרמלי שאותיותן שוות

Therefore, because of this ascent that he accomplished in Eliezer when he said “Come, O blessed of G-d,” Laban was reincarnated as Naval the Carmelite. This is indicated by the fact that the letters that spell their names are the same.

Laban: lamed-beit-nun; Naval: nun-beit-lamed.

Naval the Carmelite was Abigail’s first husband, before she married King David.²⁰ Her son through King David was Calav, mentioned above.²¹

לכן ארז"ל למנצח על מות לבן שזכה לבן שאמר עליו המזמרו הזה על מות לבן וזהו נבל לבן הוי נבל

Therefore our sages stated on the verse, “For the choirmaster, upon the death of Laban,”²² that Laban in this verse is actually Naval.²³

וז"ש שנקרא כלב בן יפונה [בן מי] שא"ל ואנכי פניתי הבית

18. Genesis 9:25.

19. See Rashi on Genesis 24:39.

20. 1 Samuel 25.

21. 2 Samuel 3:3.

22. Psalms 9:1.

23. *Midrash Tehilim* 9:17.

This is also alluded to by the fact that Caleb is called “the son of Yefuneh,” i.e., the “son” of Laban, the one who said, “I have emptied (*paniti*) the house.”

When Laban invited Eliezer into his home, he said, “Come, O blessed of G-d. Why do you stand outside? I have emptied the house and there is place for the camels.”²⁴ Rashi on this verse says that the words “I have emptied the house” mean “I have removed all the idols, so you can now enter it.”

The root of the word for “I have emptied” (*paniti*) is *paneh*, which is also the root of the name *Yefuneh*. By calling Caleb “the son of Yefuneh,” the Torah thus alludes mystically to the fact that Caleb was a reincarnation (“son”) of the one who emptied his house, Laban.

וארז"ל שפינה מעצת מרגלים

The sages further stated that the name Yefuneh alludes to the fact that Caleb “turned away from the scheme of the spies.”²⁵

The root *paneh* also means “to turn away.”

כי ע"י ברכת לכן נתגלגל אליעזר בכלב וכבנו הוא חשוב,

Through Laban’s blessing, Eliezer was reincarnated into Caleb, and is therefore considered Laban’s “son.”

וסוד כלב שם בין דהי"ן כי שם זה גי' כלב יו"ד הי"ה וי"ו הי"ה

The mystical significance of Caleb is that the numerical value of his name is the same as that of the Name *Havayah* when spelled out to equal 52 as stated above.

וסוד שם זה הי"ס ההו' רוחא דעייל בנוקבא לעורר מי"ג כמו שפי' בפי' נה דהא לית איתערותי' במי"ג עד דרוח' דדוכרא עייל בה

The mystical significance of this Name is that it is “the spirit that enters the female” in order to enable it to arouse the male with feminine waters. As we explained in reference to the *Zohar*’s statement that “there is no arousal of feminine waters until a spirit from the male enters her.”

The four spellings-out of the Name *Havayah* correspond to the four *partzufim* *Abba*, *Ima*, *Z'eir Anpin*, and *Nukva*. Thus, the Name *Havayah* whose numerical value is 52 corresponds to the feminine principle, *Nukva*.

“Feminine waters” is the Zoharic term for “arousal from below,” the recipient’s arousal of the giver to give.

והיינו סוד ביאה ראשונה שארז"ל אין אשה מתעברת מביאה ראשונה

This is the mystical correlate to the first marital intercourse between a couple, for our sages have noted that “a woman cannot become pregnant from her first marital union.”²⁶

24. Genesis 24:31.

25. *Sotah* 11b.

26. *Yevamot* 34a.

“To become pregnant” here is mystically understood to mean “to be able to produce a spiritual arousal” of the male. In the first, virginal intercourse, the male seed does not impregnate the female, i.e., “his spirit does not enter her” and she cannot produce.

וסוד שם זה מורה על המלכות כאשר היא אבי"א כי היא מתפרשא בדרועין ושוקין דיליה ודילה וע"כ השם הזה די ודי שהם די אותיות מצד הזכר ודי מצד הנוקי להראות דרועין ושוקין דיליה ודילה

This Name alludes to *malchut* as she is postured back to back with *Z'eir Anpin*, for then “she separates his and her arms and legs from each other.” Therefore, this Name takes the form of **four opposite four, i.e., four letters on the masculine side and four on the feminine side, to indicate his and her arms and legs.**

Presumably in this depiction, the *vav-dalet* of the spelling out of the *yud* is considered one letter. We thus have:

masculine	<i>yud</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>hei</i>
feminine	<i>vav-dalet</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>vav</i>	<i>hei</i>

ועל סוד שם זה נקי בנימין בין ימיין ועליו נאמר ויהי בצאת נפשה כוי

Based on the mystical meaning of this Name, Benjamin was called “the son of the right.” Of him, it is written, “When Rachel’s soul departed in childbirth, for she died, she named him *Ben-oni* (‘the son of my affliction’), but Jacob, his father, called him *Benjamin*.”²⁷

Benjamin was the last son born to Jacob, and the only one born in the land of Israel, which lies south of Padan-Aram (modern-day Syria), where all his other sons were born. Therefore, in order to change his son’s name to one that had positive connotations yet still preserved some alliteration to the name Rachel gave him, he called him “the son of the right” (*ben-yamin*), for the in the Torah’s orientation (that of a person standing in the holy of holies and looking outward toward the world), the south is on the left.

Now, the numerical value of the word for “son” (*ben*) is 52 (*ben*: *beit-nun* = 2 + 50 = 52). Thus, the names given by Rachel and Jacob to Benjamin in this verse can be understood to mean “The spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* that equals 52 is my affliction” and “The spelling-out of the Name *Havayah* that equals 52 is on the right,” respectively.

כי שם זה מעורר מי"נ והוא נקרא נפשה

For this Name arouses feminine waters as we have said, and is therefore called “her soul.”

As we have seen previously, Rachel personified *Nukva*, the feminine archetype. The phrase “When her soul departed” can thus mean, “when the 52-Name departs the female.”

ומפני כי שם זה מורה אחוריים בהיות אבי"א והוא קרוב להאחו בו החיצונים

Since, however, this name indicates the posture of back-to-back, it is easy for the powers of evil to gain a foothold through it.

When *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva* are back-to-back, their attention and energies are not focused on each

27. Genesis 35:18.

other. It is thus a prime opportunity for the powers of evil to try to divert some of their energies to themselves.

Interestingly, we are taught that Rachel had hidden her father Laban's idols in her saddle in the vain hope that this would force him to give up idolatry. She had not told Jacob about this plan, however, and therefore, when Laban accused him of stealing his idols, Jacob said, "the one with whom you find your idols will die," and from that curse, Rachel died later in childbirth. Rachel's failure to include her husband in her scheme recalls Adam's failure to communicate with Eve and indicated a lack of communication—a back-to-back stature—between them. This lack of communication was the proverbial recipe for disaster, the opportunity for the forces of evil to cause tragic damage.

לכן קראו אמן בן אוני

His mother therefore called him "the son of my affliction."

This was because this Name indicates the back-to-back posture.

אך אביו קרא לו בנימין לקשרו בימין היינו בסוד אנ"א שעולה ב"ן

But his father called him Benjamin, in order to connect him to the right side, i.e., reflecting the fact that the numerical value of the word for "please" (*ana*) is also 52.

Jacob was thus associated Benjamin with a positive aspect of the value 52, instead of the less favorable association of 52 with the spelling-out of the Name that is prone to invasion by evil. The word for "please" used here is the word used in prayers for G-d's mercy and kindness, thus focusing on the right side of the *sefirotic* tree, the side of *chesed*.

Ana: *alef-nun-alef* = 1 + 50 + 1 = 52.

בסוד מסי"נ שאנו אומר"י בנפילת אפי

This supplication is the self-sacrifice we espouse in *Tachanun*.

Tachanun ["supplications"] is the part of the liturgy that follows the *Amidah*, consisting of various appeals for G-d's mercy on us as individuals and as a nation. In the verses and prayers that compose this liturgy, we make repeated mention of the fact that we have throughout history many times given up our lives for G-d, and in this merit we ask G-d to show us mercy today.

אליך ה' נפשי יאשא יאלד"י ר"ת ב"ן.

Thus, the combined numerical value of the initials of the italicized words in the phrase, "Unto You, O G-d, I lift up my soul; my G-d..."²⁸ is 52.

The italicized words, in Hebrew, are: *nafshi esa Elokai*, the initials of which are *nun-alef-alef* = 50 + 1 + 1 = 52.

ואגב אורחא נפרש סוד נ"א כי נופל למטה בסוד עשיה כי בעמידה היה באצילות

In this connection, we will now explain the mystical significance of *Tachanun*, in which the supplicant falls to the world of *Asiyah* from the world of *Atzilut*, where he was during the *Amidah*.

28. Psalms 25:1-2.

וגי שמות אלו הוא

Let us first note with regard to the following three spellings-out of the Name *Havayah*:

יו"ד ה"י וא"ו ה"י הוא סוד אמא עילאה מקננא בכורסיא

***Yud-vav-dalet hei-yud vav-alef-vav hei-yud* indicates the supernal *partzuf* of *Ima*, which rests in the "throne," i.e., the world of *Beriah*,**

The numerical value of this spelling out is $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 10) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 10) = 63$.

יו"ד ה"י וא"ו ה"י ז"א מקננא ביצירי

***Yud-vav-dalet hei-alef vav-alef-vav hei-alef* indicates *Z'eir Anpin*, which rests in the world of *Yetzilah*, and**

The numerical value of this spelling out is $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 1) + (6 + 1 + 6) + (5 + 1) = 45$.

יו"ד ה"ה ו"ו ה"ה מ"ל מקנן בעשיה,

***Yud-vav-dalet hei-hei vav-vav hei-hei* indicates *malchut*, which rests in the the world of *Asiyah*.**

The numerical value of this spelling out is $(10 + 6 + 4) + (5 + 5) + (6 + 6) + (5 + 5) = 52$.

והנה באמרו אליך ה' נפשי אשא קושר עשיה ביצירי ויצירי בברי' בסוד ג' שמות

Now, when the Psalmist says, "Unto You, O G-d, I lift up my soul," he connects *Asiyah* with *Yetzilah* and *Yetzilah* with *Beriah*, via these three Names.

"My soul," we said, was the soul of *Nukva*, the 52-Name. This is "lifted up" through prayer to the 45-Name and the 63-Name, which are associated with *Yetzilah* and *Beriah*, respectively.

ואח"כ בסוד המלכות דאצי" בסוד שם ב"ן שבה

Then, the soul enters *malchut* of *Atzilut*, i.e., the 52-Name within *Atzilut*.

Just as the four spellings out correspond to the four worlds, they also correspond to the four levels of each world. The 52-Name thus corresponds to the world of *Asiyah* in general and also to the sub-world of *Asiyah* within the general world of *Atzilut*, i.e., with *malchut* of *Atzilut*. Thus, through *Tachanun*, the soul re-ascends into the world of *Atzilut* from which it fell after finishing the *Amidah*.

ואז הוא נעשה מ"ן,

It then becomes "feminine waters."

Once it assumes the identity of the feminine archetype of *Atzilut*, it can arouse the male archetype, *Z'eir Anpin*, to channel Divine beneficence to it.

The soul "falls" after the *Amidah* because the intense awareness of G-d it achieves therein, i.e., the consciousness of the world of *Atzilut*, makes it keenly aware of its shortcomings in the "real world," i.e., its day-to-day affairs in life. This awareness is brought into full relief only when compared with the ideal Divine consciousness achieved in the *Amidah*.

והנה בסוד בנימין שפי' נבין למה לא נקברה רחל במערה,

Now, by understanding the mystical meaning of Benjamin that I have explained, we can understand why Rachel was not buried in the Machpelah cave.

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah were all buried in the Machpelah cave in Hebron. Rachel, in contrast, was buried to the north, at the outskirts of Bethlehem.

והענין כי כל סוד קבורה הוא סוד התעלמו' במה שלמטה ממנו

To explain: the whole mystical meaning of burial is that an entity disappears into another entity lower than it.

והנה יעקב בסוד הקבורה נתעלם ביצירי ורחל בעשי' ולא בבריא'

When Jacob was buried, he disappeared into *Yetzirah*; when Rachel was buried, she disappeared into *Asiyah*; when Leah was buried, she disappeared into *Beriah*.

All three began in *Atzilut*, but they each "fell" to differing degrees. Inasmuch as Jacob personified *Z'eir Anpin*, the *midot* of *Atzilut*, he fell into the world of the *midot*, *Yetzirah*. Leah personified *Ima*, the intellect, so she fell into the world of intellect, *Beriah*. Rachel personified *Nukva*, expression, so she fell into the world of expression, *Asiyah*.

והנה זה ירידה ליעקב ואם לא היה מציאת הקודם שילדה רחל את בנימין ויהי בצאת נפשה כי מתה כבר היה אפשר שתתעלם עשי' ביצירי ויצירי בבריא' והיו מספרות הנפשות רוחא ברוחא,

Now, had not Jacob's descent been preceded by Benjamin's birth and Rachel's untimely death, in which "her soul departed, for she died," it would have been possible for *Asiyah* to disappear back into *Yetzirah* and *Yetzirah* back into *Beriah*. All of their souls would have then been able to converse with each other.

The circumstances surrounding Rachel's death meant that she had lost her connection to Jacob. Had she merely fallen to *Asiyah* but still retained her connection to Jacob, she would have been able to use that connection to ascend back to *Yetzirah* (where he fell to) and then with him back up to *Beriah* (where Leah was).

אמנם רוחא דרחל כבר יצאה ולא נשאר בה רוחא דשדי בגוה להתקשר עמה

But Rachel's spirit had already departed, and the spirit he had given her did not remain so that he might communicate with her.

In a sense, she had reverted to her virginal status, her connection to her husband not being able to produce any arousal in him, as we described above.

לכן נקברה בדרך ויעקב מתעלם בבריא' עם לאה ומספרים זה עם זה רוחא ברוחא.

Therefore she was buried on the road, and Jacob disappeared when he died back into *Beriah* with Leah, and the two of them converse together in the cave.

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וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה בְיַד רָמָה מִן הָאֲזָרָח וּמִן הַגֵּר אֶת ה' הוּא מְגַדֵּף
וְנִכְרְתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּהּ. כִּי דָבַר ה' בָּזָה וְאֶת מִצְוֹתוֹ הִפְרָה הַפְּרָת
תִּכְרַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת עֹנָה בָּהּ.

*"The soul that performs [idolatry] with an uplifted hand... blasphemes G-d, and that soul will be cut off from the midst of its people. For it has disgraced the word of G-d and abrogated His commandment; that soul will be cut off, yes, cut off, [as long as] its transgression is within it [i.e., if it does not repent]."*²⁹

<p style="text-align: right;">לקוטי תורה, פרשת שלח</p> <p>הכרת תכרת הנפש ההיא עונה בה, קרי ב" עונה בחולם מלי ועונתה לא יגרע</p>		<p style="text-align: left;">ספר הלקוטים, פרשת שלח</p> <p>הכרת תכרת הנפש ההיא עונה בה: קרי ביה עונה בה.</p>
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Likutei Torah and Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Shelach

The word for "its transgression" in this verse (*avonah*) can also be read as "time-period" (*onah*), as in the phrase, "he will not diminish her conjugal rights."³⁰

The word *onah* means "time period" or "season," and is used also to mean "conjugal rights" or "frequency of marital relations."

<p style="text-align: right;">ופ"י הדבר כי אותה הנשמה אם היתה קדושה ולא חטאה היתה מתחברת עם בת זוגה בג"ע ומולדת נפש לגרים כמ"ש בזהר</p>		<p style="text-align: left;">פירוש הדבר, שאם אותה נשמה היתה קדושה ולא חטאה, היתה מתחברת עם בת זוגה בג"ע, לפיכך רוח בנפש שמזדווגים בג"ע ומוציאים נשמות וכו'. וזהו פ"י שהצדיקים מזדווגים עם בת זוגם, רוחין עם נפשין.</p>
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This means that if the soul in question had remained holy and not sinned, it would have joined together with its mate in Paradise and thereby produced the soul of converts, as is mentioned in the *Zohar*.³¹

The marital union of soul-mates is always fertile; if it does not produce physical offspring, it produces good metaphysical "energy" that spreads throughout the world. Sometimes this "offspring" takes the form of souls that eventually convert to Judaism. In the spiritual afterlife, also, soul-mates unite in marital union after midnight; this produces souls of converts.

<p style="text-align: right;">וכן ע"י עסק התורה מולידין נפש הגר, כמ"ש ס' הגלגולים בפירוש, ע"ש, ומוציאים נפשות לגרים כנז' בפי זו.</p>		<p style="text-align: left;">וכן ע"י עסק התורה מולידין נפש הגר, כמ"ש ס' הגלגולים בפירוש, ע"ש, ומוציאים נפשות לגרים כנז' בפי זו.</p>
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Souls of converts are also produced by Torah study.³²

And Torah study is a central occupation of the soul in Paradise.

29. Numbers 15:30-31.

30. Exodus 21:10.

31. 3:167b, 168a.

32. *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 34.

אך נפש הזו שחטאה חטא גדול שחייבים עליה כרת | אבל הנפש הזאת שחטא חטא שחייבין עליו כרת,
 נכרתה מבת זוגה חלף מה שהיה ראוי להיות עונה | נכרתת מבן זוגה, חילוף מה שהיה ראוי להיות עונה
 בחולם ל' זוג עתה יהיה להיפך בבחינת עון וחטא | בה.
 ותכרת מבת זוגה

But this soul, which performed such a serious sin that it becomes liable to the punishment of excision, is cut off from its mate. Thus, what should have been *onah*—the conjugal act, becomes transgression (*avon*) and sin, and it is cut off from its mate.

The sense of the verse quoted above thus becomes: “that soul will be cut off [from its mate]; its transgression prevents its coupling [with its mate] from taking place.”

וזה א' מאופני כרת ואופן כרת זה לפעמים למי | וזהו א' מאופני הכרת, ואופן כרת זה, לפעמים למי
 זכה להבנות ולהיות לו בנים, כנזכר בסבא. | שלא זכה להבנות, כנזכר בפרשת אם בגפו וגו'.

This is one type of excision. This type of excision is sometimes given to a person who has not tried to have children, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.³³

When the Torah uses the expression, “he shall be cut off,” the punishment referred to is called “excision” (*karet*). This may take a number of forms.

Although not marrying and trying to have children is not one of the sins the Torah applies the punishment of excision to, it is stated in the *Zohar* that someone who did not try to have children in this world is sometimes punished by not being allowed to couple with his soul-mate in the afterlife, either.

33. 2:106a.