

Identifying Shiloh *The Secret Soul of the Mashiah* Commentary to Parashat Vayehi

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***"The staff shall not depart from Yehuda,
nor the scepter from between his feet, until Shiloh comes,
and the obedience of the people be his."***

(Bereshit 49,10)

In this parasha, Ya'aqov Avinu blesses his sons before his death. With regards to Yehuda, Ya'aqov makes reference to "Shiloh." Yet, no explanation is given as to who Shiloh is. According to Onkelos, Midrash Rabbah and Rashi, the name Shiloh is a reference to the future Melekh HaMashiah.

Belief in Mashiah and awaiting his coming is one of the Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith. It is a core belief of Torah. Yet, study about the coming of Mashiah, how this is to occur and what this is to mean for mankind is not widespread.

RaMBaM writes about the coming of Mashiah in his Hilkhos Melakhim. Yet, he emphasizes there that what he writes are his own opinions and not necessarily the only way to understand the subject. On the other hand, the mystical literature of the holy Mekubalim is rich with material about the topic of Mashiah, who he is, why he is and what he is to accomplish. This material however is rarely made available to outsiders of the Mekubalim schools, all the more so available in a language other than Hebrew. While this topic rightly deserves to be covered in depth in a book of its own, let it suffice for now just to skim the surface and learn who Mashiah really is and what we can do to help speed his coming.

Concerning the name "Shiloh", the Ba'al HaTurim notes that its Gematria (numerical value of the letters) is the same as that of the name Moses. While the Ba'al HaTurim does not elaborate on this, the master Mekubal Rabbi Haim Vital does, in his Sha'ar HaPesukim (Vayehi 20B). There has always been an interesting mystical relationship between Moses and the Mashiah. One was our first redeemer and the other will be our last. The question is whether this relationship goes any further. Moshe Rabbeynu and Mashiah, what is their relationship? Rabbi Haim tell us:

"It has already been referred to in the Zohar (1,25B), Ra'aya Mehemna (Pinhas 246B), and the Tikunim (21,52B) that [the name] Shiloh is numerically equal to [the name] Moshe, for it is he who is Mashiah Ben David. ... Now, regarding Mashiah Ben David, it is written, "Behold, my servant shall be enlightened, he shall be extolled and exalted, and be elevated immensely" (Yishaya 52, 13). [He shall be] "extolled" more than Avraham, "exalted" more than Yitzhak, "elevated" more than Ya'aqov and "immensely" more than Moshe.

This is the explanation, Mashiah Ben David will merit the Neshama of the Neshama, that which not even Moshe merited to receive. We thus find that the first shepherd, Moshe, he himself will be the final shepherd, even as our Sages have referred to in the Midrash. Therefore "Shiloh", who is the Mashiah and Moshe, add up to an equal numerical value. For they are one, [the only difference] is that the Mashiah is the Neshama of the Neshama of Moshe."

Apparently, Rabbi Haim is telling us that Moshe Rabbeynu himself is to come again and be the Mashiah. While this is true, it is at the same time not exactly true. Rabbi Haim clearly states that Mashiah will be the Neshama of the Neshama of Moshe Rabbeynu, which is a level of soul that Moshe did not acquire when he lived here on earth. However, Rabbi Haim fails to mention to us here that this Neshama of the Neshama of Moshe Rabbeynu has already incarnated on earth and we knew this soul by a name other than Moshe Rabbeynu.

This is an intriguing mystery, the higher soul of Moshe Rabbeynu, who is none other than Mashiah himself has already incarnated on earth? Who? When? In order to understand this we must first learn more about this Neshama of the Neshama of Moshe Rabbeynu and what relationship Moshe had with this lofty aspect of his own soul. This will require of us to delve into some of the deeper secrets of the Torah.

In Exodus 3:2, it states, "and the angel of HaShem appeared to him in a flame of fire from within the bush." This is the famous story of the burning bush, but notice that it specifically is the "angel of HaShem" who appears to Moshe, and not HaShem Himself. The Ben Uziel Targum even identifies this angel by name, and translates the beginning section of this verse as, "and Zag..., (sorry, no angel names allowed in translation) the angel of G-d was revealed to him." The Perush Yonatan identifies this angel and calls him Moshe Rabbeynu's teacher (Rabo, i.e., his Rabbi). This angel is also referred to as the Prince of the Torah. What we must do now is to learn more about this angel Zag... and his relationship to Moshe Rabbeynu and to the Torah.

The Gaon of Vilna reveals a profound secret in his commentary to the Sefer Yetzirah (1:1, ofan 3, 3a) that sheds great insight on the relationship between a man and his Neshama soul. “The Neshama soul is the mind [of a man] that teaches him knowledge. It is a man’s mazal (guiding destiny) and his angel (spiritual teacher), as is known. [The Neshama soul] exists in Heaven and [only] sparks [of it] descend to a man to guide him and to enlighten him.”

The Gaon is telling us that one’s angelic teacher, magid and guide is none other than one’s own higher soul. As for Moshe Rabbeynu, his Neshama soul was actually the Neshama of his Neshama. Zag..., the angelic teacher who taught Moshe Rabbeynu Torah in Heaven was none other than Moshe’s own Neshama of his Neshama. In other words, the angel who taught Moshe Rabbeynu was none other than his higher Self, who is none other than Mashiah.

Apparently, therefore, Melekh HaMashiah is an angel. Yet, what type of man is an angel? Angels by definition are on a lower level than the Neshamot of men. Therefore for this “angel” to be an “angel” and at the same time be Moshe Rabbeynu’s Neshama of Neshama, he must be a very special lofty being. Indeed, this Zag..., Prince of Torah, is none other than the Sar HaPanim (the angel of G-d’s Presence), Hanokh - MemTet himself. Enoch as is well known ascended to Heaven alive (Gen. 5:24) and was transformed into the angel MemTet. MemTet is the chief archangel whose name is the same as his Master’s and like HaShem also has seventy names, one of which is Zag...

Rabbi Haim Vital confirms this for us in his Likutei Torah (Vilna 19a) where he clearly states that; “Enoch was on a higher level than Moshe for he was his teacher. He was the angel Zag... for he achieved the Hayah (the Hokhma soul) and Moshe the Neshama (the Binah soul), but Mashiah will achieved the Yehida (the Keter soul).”

Zag... was Moshe Rabbeynu’s teacher in Heaven; thus, Moshe’s teacher was none other than Enoch-MemTet. Enoch-MemTet is related to the Neshama of the Neshama of Moshe Rabbeynu in that he is one step higher on the ladder of souls. Yet, Mashiah is still one step higher. Moshe Rabbeynu, Hanokh and Mashiah thus share a unique bond. These three individuals all share the same soul, each at his own level. This is not a unique occurrence, for Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya’aqov also shared the same soul, each at his own level.

One must understand something here about the relationships of souls. All souls of Israel are interconnected and in a sense form one great super-soul. This was the nature of the soul of Adam before the Fall. According to a secret teaching recording in Sefer Emek HaMelekh, certain souls left Adam before the Fall and thus did not descend with the others. These were the souls that emanated from

the three supernal sefirot Binah, Hokhma and Keter. These souls collectively became known as MemTet. The three sefirot of Binah, Hokhma and Keter are forever joined. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeynu, Hanokh and Mashiah are all the same soul. Each of them together therefore is Zag..., MemTet and Melekh HaMashiah. Yet, the highest of the three, the soul of Mashiah, is the Keter (crown). He is called the source soul of Adam and of Israel. I confess in my brevity that I have revealed an inch and concealed a mile. This is necessary for now.

MemTet rules over G-d's entire universe, not just here on planet earth. Thus when Melekh HaMashiah comes, he will be MemTet incarnate. As such, he will serve as G-d's regent over the entire universe and not just king here on earth. Mashiah will be to HaShem what Yosef was to Pharaoh in Egypt. Thus, we see that the role and authority of Mashiah is not merely limited to this world. Much more is revealed in the mystical writings about Mashiah and his mission, yet, I must be brief for lack of time and space.

There is a practical lesson to be learned from knowing the true identity of the Mashiah. Understanding that he is the source soul of all Israel, each one of us must realize that we have a spark of Mashiah within us. The Ba'al Shem Tov writes, "Every one of Israel needs to rectify and prepare that part of the stature of the Mashiah that is related to his soul. As it is known [the three letters that spell the name] Adam (A'D'M) stand for Adam, David, Mashiah.

The original stature of Adam [before the Fall] was from one end of the world to the other (Hagigah 12a). The souls of all Israel were included [and united] within Adam. After the sin, his stature was lessened. Thus, Mashiah will become the "complete stature" of all the souls of Israel. . as Adam was before the Fall. Therefore every one of Israel needs to prepare that part of the stature of the Mashiah that is related to his soul, until the entire image is rectified and complete." (S.B.S.T. Nitzavim 8).

When we ask when will Mashiah come and what can we do to shorten his way, we must first look within before we look without. By reading RaMBaM, we might draw the conclusion that to bring Mashiah, we must wage war. While this is true, we must remember that the first war we need to wage and win is the war against the blemishes within our souls. We must bring Mashiah to ourselves psychologically before we can expect to bring him politically.

The coming of Mashiah is no mere political event. When Mashiah comes, it will change the course of human events and evolution forever. The incarnation of archangels among us is no small matter. Mashiah is no mere man, nor mere angel. Although he will be born a normal human being of a flesh and blood

father and mother, (as were Enoch and Moshe Rabbeynu), the soul of Mashiah will include within it all of ours.

He will be a real “superman” as were Enoch and Moshe Rabbeynu before him. Yet, each of us has a spark of this “superman/woman” within us. When we observe Torah and mitzvot, we are strengthening the aspect of Mashiah within ourselves and within collective Israel. Mashiah is the “father soul” of Israel. As such he can and will transform the world using the power he has received from us.

At this time, we must renew our efforts to strengthen ourselves, to refine our souls for the sake of collective Israel. We must make ourselves ready for Mashiah. Only then will Mashiah be ready for us.

Shabat Shalom.