

Hanukkah 2014 Notes: Ohr HaOlam

by Rabbi Eh'bed Baw'naw

It is rather interesting the Aramaic word for "world" is "alma(h)" and the word for "young woman" in Hebrew is "alma(h)". But in Aramaic the word "alma(h)" means not only "world" but also "age". Now we must also realize the same letters are used in the word "Olam" in Hebrew which can mean both "world" but more notably and more prominently "universe". Now the word "Eretz" meaning "land" does not have the parallels that ארץ has. Thus showing that alma(h) is regarded as higher than HaEretz. For when we say Olam Haba we are saying "world to come". Meaning the kingdom of Hashem. Now also interesting in this is that in Isaiah 7 we see Isaiah was asking for a sign that parallels as well the birth of Yeshua when an alma(h) bears a son who was not supposed to in Isaiah 8. And Hashem makes more it is a sign by saying "you shall call him Immanuel." Now this is even deeper in the New Testament in Matthew 1:23 because the word used in Aramaic for the Hebrew Immanuel (meaning G-d is with us) is "Amnail" which also parallels the eternal ideal of alma(h) through the use of 3 of the same letters only moved around. Showing that Yeshua indeed is not only a sign and actually Hashem but also that he transcends the universe, he transcends the ages as well. That his being and life is eternal, as the Scripture says.

So when Yeshua says his Talmidim are "not of this world" not only do they transcend the ways of HaEretz (the land) symbolizing the physical land and the cultures. But HaGoyim (the nations) in terms of the nations of the world. But we are to surpass time and space for Hashem is much higher than time and space for alma(h) this world, this age we also transcend. For his ways are ancient. It reminds me of when I think back at how popular culture has really gone into the waste vat slowly over time like the frog slowly being boiled in water. For a Jew is to remain constant whether it is 4000BC or 2014AD. This is also the connotation of "the good fruit" that Yeshua spoke of which is the etrog which is the fruit we eat on Sukkos. The thing with the etrog is the etrog remains constant and keeps growing and it has no season. It grows in drought, it grows in the hottest of summers and the coldest of winters. You can always count on the etrog to grow. This is the good fruit Yeshua was speaking of. Now also the universe grows constantly as science says and as the Talmud says the state of creation has never stopped and is always being created, when a baby is born the world expands, when a good word is said the good word not only exists here but a place in the cosmos is made for it and the universe expands. So if one is not of the world then they are a step above creation and constantly expanding and growing as well in their observance and their connection to Hashem and they become more and more of an alien to this world because they are not of it but are higher than it.

"You are an Ohr HaOlam. A city lying on a mountaintop that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14)

"Then again he spoke to them saying Ani Hu HaOhr HaOlam Hazeh. The one following me will never walk in choshech, but with have Ohr HaChayyim" (John 8:12)

"As long as I am in the Olam Hazeh, I am the Ohr HaOlam" (John 9:5)

The Midrash asks – from what was light created? The answer is whispered: “G-d cloaked Himself in a white shawl, and the light of its splendor shone from one end of the world to the other” (Genesis Rabba 3:4)

There are a number of people who believe that before Adam and Chava (Eve) sinned, they had bodies of light or bodies clothed with light, and that as a result of their sin, they lost their body/clothing of light. When examining the Hebrew language, this is not hard to see.

The Hebrew word for "Light" is "OR" (variant: 'or), spelled "aleph vav resh" - rut
(Remember, Hebrew is written from right to left)

The Hebrew word for "Skin" is also "OR" (variant: 'or), but is spelled "ayin vav resh" - rug

Midrash Rabbah - Genesis XX:12

AND THE LORD GOD MADE FOR ADAM AND HIS WIFE GARMENTS OF SKIN ('OR), AND CLOTHED THEM (III, 21). In R. Meir's Torah it was found written, 'Garments of light (or) '2: this refers to Adam's garments, which were like a torch [shedding radiance], broad at the bottom and narrow at the top. Isaac the Elder said: They were as smooth as a finger-nail and as beautiful as a jewel. R. Johanan said: They were like the fine linen garments which come from Bethshean,³ GARMENTS OF SKIN meaning those that are nearest to the skin. R. Eleazar said: They were of goats' skin. R. Joshua said: Of hares' skin. R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: It was a garment made of skin with its wool. Resh Lakish said: It was of Circassian wool, and these were used [later] by first-born children.⁴ R. Samuel b. Nahman said: [They were made from] the wool of camels and the wool of hares, GARMENTS OF SKIN meaning those which are produced from the skin.⁵ R. Levi said: The Torah teaches you here a rule of worldly wisdom: spend according to your means on food; less than you can afford on clothing, but more than you can afford on a dwelling. Spend according to your means on food, as it is written, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat (Gen. II, 16). Less than you can afford on clothing: AND THE LORD GOD MADE... GARMENTS OF SKIN, AND CLOTHED THEM.⁶ More than you can afford on a dwelling: for lo! they were but two, yet they dwelt in the whole world.

Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the Temple for eight days; and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs when after a long time of intermission they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival on account of the restoration of their Temple worship for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival. Judas also rebuilt the walls around the city, and reared towers of great height against the incursions of enemies, and set guards therein. He also fortified the city Bethsura, that it might serve as a citadel against any distresses that might come from our enemies.

(Josephus: Antiquities Book 12 chapter 7 part 7)

The Mishna does not give us much account in terms of Hanukkah's traditions most mainly come from the Gemara

The story of Chanukkah, along with its laws and customs, is entirely missing in the Mishna apart from several passing references (Bikkurim 1:6, Rosh HaShanah 1:3, Taanit 2:10, Megillah 3:4 and 3:6, Moed Katan 3:9, and Bava Kama 6:6).

The Gemara, in tractate Shabbat, page 21b, focuses on Shabbat candles and moves to Chanukkah

candles and says that after the forces of Antiochus IV had been driven from the Temple, the Maccabees discovered that almost all of the ritual olive oil had been profaned. They found only a single container that was still sealed by the High Priest, with enough oil to keep the menorah in the Temple lit for a single day. They used this, yet it burned for eight days (the time it took to have new oil pressed and made ready).

The Talmud presents three options:

- 1) The law requires only one light each night per household,
- 2) A better practice is to light one light each night for each member of the household
- 3) The most preferred practice is to vary the number of lights each night.

In Sephardic families, the head of the household lights the candles, while in Ashkenazic families, all family members light.

Except in times of danger, the lights were to be placed outside one's door, on the opposite side of the Mezuzah, or in the window closest to the street. Rashi, in a note to Shabbat 21b, says their purpose is to publicize the miracle. The blessings for Chanukkah lights are discussed in tractate Succah, p. 46a.

Our Rabbis taught: The precept of Hanukkah [demands] one light for a man and his household; the zealous [kindle] a light for each member [of the household]; and the extremely zealous, — Beth Shammai maintain: On the first day eight lights are lit and thereafter they are gradually reduced; but Beth Hillel say: On the first day one is lit and thereafter they are progressively increased. 'Ulla said: In the West [Palestine] two amoraim, R. Jose b. Abin and R. Jose b. Zebida, differ therein: one maintains, The reason of Beth Shammai is that it shall correspond to the days still to come, and that of Beth Hillel is that it shall correspond to the days that are gone; but another maintains: Beth Shammai's reason is that it shall correspond to the bullocks of the Festival; whilst Beth Hillel's reason is that we promote in [matters of] sanctity but do not reduce.

Rabbah b. Bar Hana said: There were two old men in Sidon: one did as Beth Shammai and the other as Beth Hillel: the former gave the reason of his action that it should correspond to the bullocks of the Festival, while the latter stated his reason because we promote in [matters of] sanctity but do not reduce.

Our Rabbis taught: It is incumbent to place the Hanukkah lamp by the door of one's house on the outside; if one dwells in an upper chamber, he places it at the window nearest the street. But in times of danger it is sufficient to place it on the table. Raba said: Another lamp is required for its light to be used; yet if there is a blazing fire it is unnecessary. But in the case of an important person, even if there is a blazing fire another lamp is required.

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

We learnt elsewhere: If a spark which flies from the anvil goes forth and causes damage, he [the smith] is liable. If a camel laden with flax passes through a street, and the flax overflows into a shop, catches fire at the shopkeeper's lamp, and sets the building alight, the camel owner is liable; but if the shopkeeper placed the light outside, the shopkeeper is liable. R. Judah said: In the case of a Hanukkah lamp he is exempt. Rabina said in Rab's name: This proves that the Hanukkah lamp should [in the first instance] be placed within ten. For should you think, above ten, let him say to him, 'You ought to have placed it higher than a camel and his rider.' 'Yet perhaps if he is put to too much trouble, he may refrain from the [observance of the] precept'.

(Shabbos 21b)