

A Sojourn In The World Of Kabbalah And Zohar

Sundays Dec 6, 13, 20 1:30 - 2: 45PM

Text: The Zohar Pritzker Edition Daniel C Matt Editor

Excerpts Volume III

Schedule

December 6

Introduction To The Zohar The Book Of Radiance  
The Primary Source Of Mystical Truths

December 13

Parashat Va - Yeshev Joseph And His Brothers  
The Zoharic Interpretation

December 20

Parashat Mi-Qets Pharoah's Dream And Joseph's Release From Prison  
The Zoharic Interpretation

Some Final Thoughts Before Concluding Our Stay

## Myth and Mysticism In The Zohar

Gershom Scholem - On The Kabbalah And Its Symbolism

Myth - The instrument whereby we are effectively moved beyond what is base and transient in human experience and toward that which is pure and eternal. Removing myths is akin to saying that we do not need flesh upon our bones.

Mysticism - A state where the component features of myth become spiritual components of a divine reality which the individual has internalized. By the term, Hebrew mysticism or Kabbalah in the broad sense, we refer to the totality of those streams within Judaism which strive to arrive at a religious consciousness beyond intellectual comprehension.

Michael Fishbane - Biblical Myth And Rabbinic Mythmaking

Myth - Sacred and authoritative accounts of the deeds and personalities of the gods and heroes during the formative events of primordial times or during the subsequent historical interventions or actions of these figures which are constitutive for the founding of a given culture and its rituals.

Mysticism - The move from myth to mysticism may be effected at the point where the component features of myth are not elements of an external narrative or divine drama but rather spiritual components of a divine reality which the individual has internalized. Through this interiorization of the mythic drama, the person assimilates the modalities of the divine reality and strives to actualize its truths in every thought and action. Myth may therefore comprise and condition a mystical mentality by being fully subjectivized and lived. For the companions of the Zohar the images of myth constitute an interior landscape of the soul by which they may in truth conform to the reality of God.

Moses de Leon 13th Century Castile

PARDES - The Gateway To The Sublime Orchard

Under the title PARDES, I have written a book in connection with the mystery of the stories and the facts related in the Torah in order to show that they relate in a mystical sense to eternal life and there is nothing in the Torah that is not contained in the mystery of His name.

PARDES

Pshat - Literal meaning of the Torah

Remez - Allegory

Drosh - Interpretation

Sod - The hidden, secret meaning of the Torah. The consummate experiential moment

BT Hagigah 14b

Four entered Pardes. Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Aher and Rabbi Akiba. Ben Azzai looked and died. Ben Zoma looked and lost his reason. Aher looked and cut the shoots. Akiba went and came down unscathed.

## Why God created the world with the 2d letter of the Alphabet Beth and not Aleph

When the Holy One wished to fashion the world all the letters were hidden away. For two thousand years before creating the world, He contemplated them and played with them. As He was on the verge of creation, all the letters came before Him from the last to the first. The letter Tav entered first and said: Master of the Universe, may it please You to create the world starting with me, for do I not complete your seal, Truth (emet)? Is it not fitting to begin the creation of the world by me? The Holy One replied: You are certainly worthy....however You are also the seal of death (mavet) which makes you unqualified to be the first letter of creation.

The letter Shin came before Him and said: Master of the worlds may it please You to create the world by me you are named Shadday (Almighty) so it is fitting to create the world by Your holy name. He replied, you are seemly and good and true, but since letters of deceit take you as their accomplice, I do not wish to create the world by you. (Deceit = Sheker. Shin, Kof, Resh. Kof also stands for Klipah-Husk and Resh, Ra, Evil).....

The letter Beth entered and said to Him: Master of the World, may it please You to create the world by me, for by me are You blessed above and below. (Beth = Bracha, blessing). The Holy One replied, indeed by you will I create the world. You will be the beginning of creation.

The letter Aleph stood and did not enter. The blessed Holy One said to her: Aleph, why did you not enter my presence like all the other letters? She said, because I saw all of the other letters leaving your presence fruitlessly. What luck would I have? Besides, you gave this enormous gift to the letter Beth, and it is not fitting for an exalted King to take back a gift he has already given and give it to someone else.

The blessed Holy One said: Aleph, Aleph, Aleph, although I will create the world with the letter Beth, you will be the first of all the letters. Only through you do I become One. (Ehod). Only through you does counting begin. No union is actualized except by Aleph. And that is why the Torah begins: Breishit Bara Elohim Et....

Zohar 1: 205b Vayigash

8.

The Tosafists challenge Resh Lakish citing the fact that Yocheved, the mother of Moses was born to Levi two years after the fast had begun which means that Jacob's sons had engaged in marital relations du exemplary manner. Apparantly, they conclude, others such as Levi ( Yocheved's mother) opted not to do so.

Joseph as mystery of the Covenant n. 303. Joseph symbolizes Ysod, the Divine Phallus, the covenant of Circumcision (the rejection of Potiphar's wife)...

Pp. 251 - 2 n. 430. At three things the earth trembles.....(Proverbs) See reference to p. 162, note 490. (A play on words regarding the phrase "a loathsome woman". See Leviticus 15 Laws governing male and female "impurities" such as menstruation, nocturnal emissions and masturbation. Verse 32: Such is the ritual concerning him who has a discharge and him who has an emission semen and becomes unclean thereby and concerning her who is in menstrual infirmity...And also the man who lies with an unclean woman." Here Potiphar's wife symbolizes the demonic female (Lilith) who lusts to for Divine potency by seducing the divine male (Joseph - Ysod) to lie with her.

P. 252 n. 434. You are cleaving to YHVH Deut 4: 2 - 4. Vatem hadveikim baAdonoy Eloheihem Hayim Kulchem Hayom...

"You shall keep the commandments of the Lord you God that I enjoin upon you. You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did in matter of Baal Peor; How the Lord your God wiped out from among you every person who followed Baal Peor; but you who held fast to the Lord your God are all alive today.

Baal Peor: The Canaanite God of Sexual Indulgence and Licentiousness

Numbers 25

"While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women. The people partook of them and worshipped that God. Thus Israel attached itself to Baal Peor....Moses said to Israel's officials: Let each of you slay those of his men who attached themselves to Baal Peor....Those who died numbered 24, 000.

Sanctify yourselves to be holy. BT Shevuot 18b

R. Yochanan said in the name of Shimon bar Yochai: Whoever does not separate himself from his wife close to the time of her period, even if he has children as righteous as the sons of Aaron, they will die....R. Hiya bar Abba said in the name of R. Yochanan: Whoever separates from his wife close to the expected time of her period will merit to have male children.....