

**Neurology &**  
**Pain Management**

JULIAN UNGAR-SARGON, M.D., Ph.D.  
123 McKinley Avenue  
Renssalaer, IN 47978

The Torah as Access Codes to the Divine: Divine Script  
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וכך קבלתי כי העולם כולו הוא ספר שעשה השי  
ושהתורה הוא פירוש שעשה וחיבר על אותו ספר

"and so I have received that the world in its  
entirety is a book that God, blessed be He, made,  
and the Torah is a commentary on that book" .

Reb Tsadok Hakohen  
Machshavot Charutz

רבי יוחנן דידיה אמר (שמות כ) אנכי נוטריקון: אנא נפשי כתיבת יהבית.  
רבנן אמרי: אמירה נעימה כתיבה יהיבה. איכא דאמרי אנכי למפרע: יהיבה  
כתיבה נאמנין אמריה. דבי רבי נתן אמרי: (במדבר כב) כי יר"ט הדרך לנגדי  
יראה ראתה נטתה. דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא: (ויקרא כג) כרמ"ל כר מלא. רב

אחא בר יעקב אמר: (מלכים א,ב) והוא קללני קללה נמרצ"ת נוטריקון: נואף הוא, מואבי הוא, רוצח הוא, צורר הוא, תועבה הוא. רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר: (בראשית מד) מה נדבר ומה נצטד"ק נכונים אנחנו, צדיקים אנחנו, טהורים אנחנו, זכים אנחנו, קדושים אנחנו. משנה. הכותב שתי אותיות בשתי העלמות, אחת שחרית ואחת בין הערבים רבן גמליאל מחייב, וחכמים פוטרין. גמרא. במאי קמיפלגי? רבן גמליאל סבר: אין ידיעה לחצי שיעור, ורבנן סברי: יש ידיעה לחצי שיעור. הדרך עלך הבונה.

IF ONE WRITES ONE LETTER AS AN ABBREVIATION, R. JOSHUA B. BATHYRA HOLDS HIM LIABLE, WHILST THE SAGES EXEMPT HIM. R. Johanan said in R. Jose b. Zimra's name; How do we know [that] abbreviated forms [are recognized] by the Torah? Because it is written, for' AB [the father of] Hamwn [a multitude of]3 nations have I made thee: a father [Ab] of nations have I made thee; a chosen one [Bahur] among nations have I made thee. Hamwn beloved [Habib] have I made thee among nations; a king [Melek] have I appointed thee for the nations; distinguished have I made thee among the nations; faithful [Ne'eman] have I made thee to the nations.

R. Johanan on his own authority quoted. anoky [I — am the Lord thy God, etc.].

I [ana] Myself [Nafshi] have written the Script [Kethibah Yehabith].

The Rabbis interpreted: Sweet speech [amirah Ne'imah], a writing, a gift [Kethibah Yehibah]. Others state, anoky [interpreted] reversed is: Scripture was given [to man] [Yahibah Kethibah]. faithful are its words [Ne'emanin amarehah]. The School of R. Nathan quoted, Because thy way is perverse [Yarat] before me:8

She [the ass] feared [Yare'ah], saw [Ra'athah], [and] turned aside [natethah]. The School of R. Ishmael taught: Karmel [fresh ears]:9 rounded [Kar] and full [Male]. R. Aha b. Jacob quoted, and he cursed me with a curse that is grievous [Nimrezeth].<sup>10</sup> This is an abbreviation: he is an adulterer [No'ef], a Moabite, a murderer [Rozeah], an adversary [Zorer], an abomination [To'ebah]. R. Nahman b. Isaac quoted, What shall we speak<sup>7</sup> or how shall we clear ourselves [Niztadak]:<sup>11</sup> We are honest [Nekonim], we are righteous [Zaddikim], we are pure [Tehorim], we are submissive [Dakkim], we are holy [Kedoshim].

The very word אָנֹכִי can be used as an abbreviation. the very letters of Torah can thus be expanded to give new meanings. This unique word, the word representing me or myself the very self-identity by which God Himself introduces Himself at the beginning of the Decalogue in

Exodus 21, this word, pregnant with personal identity becomes the very subject of debate as to its expansive meaning.

The meaning proposed by Rabbi Yochanan is that the word is an abbreviation for the following dramatic meaning: "

I [ana] Myself [Nafshi] have written the Script [Kethibah Yehabith].

another way of translating this might be "I Myself am written into this text"

This reading has been appropriated by the Hassidic Rebbes in their immanentist interpretation of the Bible. God Himself is literally "written into the text!"

If the Torah is divine then the very literality and lettering of the Torah has inherent properties that reflect the divine origin. We need to explore these qualities since they might be mined for deeper meanings hidden within. What if we took in a hyper-literal fashion the

above statement? God Himself is somehow written into the very text of Torah. I think of a lover caressing a love note from her beloved. She devours every word finding deeper and deeper expressions of love. She sees her beloved in the very words themselves even the letters.

To further this idea, let us read a typical but daring reading by the Degel Machaneh Efraim, Reb Efraim of Sidelkow, a grandson of the founder of Hassidism The Baal Shem Tov. In his mediation on the parsha Ki Tissa (Exodus 32:16) on the words "Vehamiktav Miktav Elohim" :

טז וְהִלְחֵת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הַמָּה וְהַמְּכַתֵּב מִכְּתָב אֱלֹהִים הוּא קְרוּת  
עַל־הִלְחֵת:

"And the writing was the writing of the Lord; etched onto the tablets" and we were taught (Talmud Eruvin 54a) "do not read "etched (charus)" rather free (cheirus)"

"Now one could interpret this as follows:

It is known (Zohar Parsha Acharei Mos 73a) that "Torah, The Holy One and Israel are all one unity". Also the word אָנֹכִי from the first commandment (אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים) can be expanded to read the letters of the word as initials for four other words (method known as notarikon) such as אֲנִי "I myself am written in it" (Talmud Shabbat 105a).

"This implies that God as it were, Himself, His very soul (nefesh) kivyachol (metaphorically speaking) is located inside the Torah (text) and since He is written therein His essence, then perforce all the dark side and evil is nullified. ...

"And this is also the meaning of **וְהַמְּכֻתָּב מִכְּתָב אֱלֹהִים הוּא** the writing is the writing of the Lord, for God is the author of the Torah as the talmud suggested **אֲנִי נִפְשִׁי כְּתִיבַת יְהוּדֵי** "I am written into the text" therefore "etched" into the stone, meaning "freedom" from the dark side and kelippot."

In this remarkable pericope the Degel, Reb Efraim the grandson of the founder of Hassidism the Baal Shem Tov suggests a radically new way on interpreting the midrashic-aggadic passage from the Talmud.

Weaving three texts together:

1. Using the citation from the Talmud Eruvin, punning on the word 'charus' to 'cheirus', meaning "etched" to "freedom", he builds on the notion of freedom meaning freedom from evil and the dark forces in the universe. Thus Torah, the tablets and the observance thereof provide one a place of safety and freedom from those dark forces that inhabit one's psyche.

2. The Zoharic teaching that God and the Torah and the corporate ecclesia of Israel are all one unity, in a very real sense. Thus the equivalence of the Torah and God, one being finite and text or tablet and the other the Infinite One, boggles the mind without a notion of tzimtzum or contraction, hiding or enclothing in the real finite world of the Infinite One. This incarnation is not something rational.

3. The other citation of the aggadah from Talmud Shabbat 105a whereby the method of notarikon opens up meanings in words by splitting them apart and using each letter of the word to signify yet another word. Here the very first word of the Decalogue, that word that actually introduces the Divine to His people, is fractured (sic) i.e it comes to signify much more than merely a pro noun. I the subject of

all subjects, God Himself, is midrashically now expoded into 4 new words that gives us an inkling as to how to access that I-ness the אָנֹכִי. In fact the first word represented by the aleph of אָנֹכִי is אָנָּא meaning I in aramaic or ani in hebrew.

These three units are carefully woven together to suggest that freedom is obtained by access to the Divine, and that is accomplished only via the text, not merely its content rather also the very materiality of Torah-Tablets. Reb Efraim is teaching us that our approach to the very addictions and paroxysms of our inner lives and needs, the darker side of ourselves the deceits, the lies and betrayals, the little yezer hara we have buried deep inside becomes intractable without help from above. Access to the infinite can take place through the gift of Torah, not so much in the sense of a rule book (though that too) following the do's and dont's, rather (also) the claim that God, Israel and the Torah are united, allowing us the opportunity to seek divine help in overcoming the darker forces within us by accessing Him directly for He Himself and His essence are buried within the very textuality of the Torah. We need merely to unearth His presence in the text.

This gives us a completely new insight into the verse Exodus 32:16

טז: וְהִלְחֵחַ תְּמַעֲשֶׂה אֵלֵי הַיָּם הַמָּה וְהַמִּכְתָּב מִכְתָּב אֵלֵי הַיָּם הוּא חָרוּת עַל־הַלְחֵחַ תְּ

"The tablets were the work of God, and the writing the writing of the Lord, etched into the tablets"

Reb Efraim is telling us that the tablets and the writing were the handiwork of God, but God is infinite so the tablets were somehow incarnated with the Divine Presence as was the writing. The implication of this claim via the midrashim he quoted is to suggest

that God is written into the text and that by my participation in that text I make myself available to the Divine Presence which immediately takes care of the kelippot and darker forces by the very presence of the Lord.

This is a healing text for me since it makes no assumptions about the need for mastery of the text, in fact the very splitting of words (notarikon) is a device to expand meanings inherent in the text.

What makes this a sacred text-this Torah, is the claim that there is something Divine incarnated within it, something mystical, a sense that when reading or studying, one is in the presence of the Divine. Not only that but Reb Efraim teaches us that it has magical properties, to heal broken souls, who are steeped in the dark side or addictions or yezer hara. It has properties to fix independently of the moral worth of the individual participating. All that is required is the belief in the text, the Torah .

Reb Efraim has in classic midrashic style posed a question to the text namely why the repetition of the words **וְהַמְּכַתֵּב מְכַתֵּב** for the verse could have gotten away with only one mention.

His daring theological response seems to be that the very participation in the text allows for a sense of refuge in the Lord since we may surrender our need to fight the darker forces and allow Him to take care of us. The text then becomes this place of refuge.

This is a healing text!