

MILA YOMIT 16: MERACHEPHET

מֵרַחֶפֶת

Meaning: HOVERED

CONTEXT-

We are in Breisheet 1:2.

To review:

וְהָאָרֶץ-VEHA'ARETZ-And The Earth

הָיְתָה-HAYTA-Was

וְתוֹהוּ-TOHU-Astonishingly Empty Nothingness

וַיְבוֹהוּ-VA'VOHU-And Chaos

וַיְחֹשֶׁךְ-VA'CHOSECH-And Darkness

עַל-AAL-(Was) On

פְּנֵי-PNAI-The Face Of

תְּהוֹם-TEHOM-The Primeval Depth

וְרוּחַ-VE'RUACH-And (The) Spirit Of

אֱלֹהִים-ELOHIM-The Creator

MILA CHADASHA-New Word:

מֵרַחֶפֶת-MERACHEPHET

OTIOT: Letters

מֵ MEM (M)-fountain

רֵ RESH (R)-head

כֶּת CHET (CH)-life

פֶּה PHE (PH)- Soft Peh, correspondence to 'memshala- governance' (structure) rather than 'avdut-subjugation' (hard peh).

תָּב TAV-(T)-completion, seal:

Here it provides a feminine ending to verb- denotes ruach which it can be both masculine or feminine.

רוּחוֹת-ruchoth ; רוּחַיִן- ruchin- are feminine plural forms of

רוּחַ-Ruach

If we look at the letters as specific pieces of information, then we could poetically say that מְרַחֵפֶת-MERACHEPHET connotes: From the Fountain Head flows life structuring existence.

MEANING, RELATED WORDS and WORDS CONTAINED WITHIN:

מְרַחֵפֶת-MERACHEPHET- is based on the letter root verb

רָחַף-Rachaph- which means 'to move gently, to hover, flu, flutter'.

Klein's Etymological Dictionary explains that it is probably a

'metathesis variant' of פָּרַח-PoReyaCH-to fly. (Notice that the same letters in different order are in these two words). He compares it to the Syrian -Racheiph-moved gently, hovered- and the Arabic 'Rachafa-was soft.

MERACHEPHET-is the present tense feminine form of RaCHaPH. Meaning -'She Is Hovering' or 'Fluttering'.

In Deuteronomy, 32:11, in Moses' final song in HaAzinu we find:-

'like an eagle arousing its nest, over its young- יִרְחַף-YeRaCHePH

-it hovers,"

Let us notice that רוח־RUACH -Spirit is base on the letters
'REISH, CHET which are also at the root of רחף-Rachaph-to
hover.

רחף-RaCHaPH- is a New Hebrew M. noun meaning 'hovering,
flying, fluttering' and 'trembling, shaking, shivering'

רחב-RaChaV-is the root verb 'to be wide, be broad'

רחב־is an adjective meaning 'wide, broad, spacious'

מרח MaRaCH is the root verb 'to rub in, anoint, spread'.

כפה CHaPHah- is 'to cover'; it is related to חופה-CHUPAH-
wedding canopy, and the seat of Divine Majesty.

חפה-CHoPHeyPH-is 'to surround, to cover'

חפה־CHeePHaH is a New Hebrew F. noun meaning 'shade over;
hood, bonnet'.

מרחף־ MeRCHaPHaH is the modern Hebrew F. noun for
'hovercraft; air cushion'

CONCEPTUAL MEANING:

Rashi, the premier commentator, who basically drew on earlier Midrashic sources teaches that “the throne of Divine Glory was sitting in space, hovering over the face of the waters by the breath of the mouth of the Holy Blessed One, and by His command, as a dove hovers over its nest’.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch translates it as : the breath of God was hovering.

The Aramaic translators give it the sense of: blowing, breathing.

Midrash Rabbah:

“VE’RUACH ELOHIM MERACHEPHET alludes to the spirit of the King Messiah, as it says ‘And The RUACH-Spirit Of God shall rest upon him’ (Isaiah 11:2)

The Kabbala adds another dimension to these words:

"According to the ARI, Issac Luria (the luminary in TZFAT, who revolutionized Kabbalistic understanding in the 1500's) this entire process of death and resurrection is hinted at in the verse, 'G-d's spirit merachephet [hovers] over the waters' (Breisheet 1:2).

The first and last letters of MERACHEPHET- מ mem and ת tav,

spell מת MeT, which means literally 'dead.' The three remaining

letters are ר reish, ח chet and פ phe [pronounced RaCHaPH]. The numerical value of these three letters is 288. These are the 288 sparks of holiness that descended ['died'] with the shattered vessels.”

(Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, Innerspace, P. 82-83)

Rabbi Kaplan, who is central to the renaissance of Kabbalistic knowledge in our days also points out that the letters of

תְּהוֹם-TEHOM-The Depth can be rearranged to make the word

הַמָּוֶת-HA'MAVET-The Death.

It is also significant that MERACHEPHET is the feminine form, so that we have here an allusion to the 'feminine aspect' of the Divine Presence.

It is also in the present tense and alludes to the constant creative presence and energy of the Creator.

MERACHEPHET:
Ruach Elohim-
Spirit of the Creator Spiriting,
about to awaken existence into birth,
the Expansive Breath of the Mother and Father,
Lovingly, Pausing before Acting,
Before bringing into being...that which is to be.

May we sense the Divine Presence always hovering over our egg shaped nest.

As all existence is pervaded by Ruach Elohim Hovering, Fluttering Gently.

מרחפת