

MILA YOMIT 18: VA'YOMER (ELOHIM)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים

And Said (Elohim)

OTIOT: Letters:

וַיֹּאמֶר - VAV - And

The Vav in Biblical Hebrew has a few significant uses.
Earlier on we saw it as Vav HaChibur-Vav of Connection

וַיֵּאָבֵד - Ve'Et- (Mila 6)-joining heaven and earth, spirit and matter.

Here it is Vav HaHipuch-Vav of Inversion:

"The letter vav also possesses the function of inverting the apparent tense of a verb to its opposite-from past to future or from future to past. (This is) the first appearance of this type of Vav..."Ve- And God said"-the verb 'said' is being inverted from the future to the past tense by the vav at the beginning of the word. (The phenomenon of light breaking through the darkness of the tzimtzum, the primordial contraction, is itself the secret of time (future becoming past) which permeates space.)" (Ginsburgh, The Alef Bet, p.94)

יָי - YUD (Y)-Divine Spark

אָ - ALEPH (A)-Unity- mother letter

מָ - MEM (M)-Womb- mother letter

רָ - REISH(R)-Head, Mind

Speech as the Divine Spark that fills the unity, birthed out of consciousness.

The Yud extended in all four directions is the basic shape of the Aleph, so the Yud's journey of expansion begins with the Aleph, is gestated in the fountain of wisdom and enters consciousness. The birth of thought perhaps.

MEANING and RELATED WORDS

אמר-AMAR is three letter root verb meaning 'to say'.

וַיֹּאמֶר- means 'And He Said'

אָמַר-OMER is a M. noun meaning 'speech, saying, utterance'.

אֵמֶר -EMER is a M. noun meaning 'word'(based on Genesis 49:21-

אִמְרֵי-שֵׁפָר-Imrei Shafer-Fine Words)

אִמְרָה-IMRA is a Post Biblical Hebrew F. noun meaning 'word, speech, saying, utterance'.

אִמְרָה-AMIRA is a PBH F. noun meaning 'saying, talk'

MILA CHOZERET: Repeating Word

אֱלֹהִים ELOHIM: This is the third appearance of the Name of the Creator. It is the first time that it is attached to the act of Speaking. Sefer Yetzira, the very first book of Kabbala, explains that each of the 32 times this Name is used in the Creation story corresponds to one of the ten sefirot and 22 lines of connections. The 10 acts of ELOHIM Speaking correspond to the creation of the 10 Sefirot-Root spiritual dimensions.

(Except for the first one, Keter-Crown. Keter is brought in with the very first statement,

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים-BREISHEET BARA ELOHIM-In The Beginning ELOHIM Created.)

This utterance which uses the verb VA'YOMER for the first time

corresponds to the creation of Sefira Chachma-Wisdom.

CONCEPTUAL MEANING:

Aryeh Kaplan in Innerspaces (another excellent English introduction to Kabbala) explains: "The Torah writes "God said'...we see God literally speaking the physical universe into existence. On a deeper level, however, we are being told that when God speaks, God is creating the concept of speech."
(Innerspaces, p. 114)

What is this thing called speech, perhaps our most remarkable faculty?

AMaR is first Torah word that we meet that denotes 'expression'. The Torah uses a few other words a little later. (Ledaber is the main other one).

Kabbala suggests that AMaR is the beginning of speech. Ramban and other commentators explain that VA'YOMER is related to 'willed, desired, thought'. Internal talk as it were.

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, in his extraordinary book on the Alef Bet elaborates. He explains that this process is related to the

letter  REISH which is formed as a 'bent over head'.

"In order to speak, the thought of the mind must 'bend over' and contract its own inner brilliance for the sake of communication to others...The letter Reish itself is the inner bending over of the mind to force the heart to respond in accord with the mind's perception, to speak from the heart, thereby giving one's words the power to penetrate the heart of others. First the mind speaks to the heart and then the heart speaks to others.... AMaR signifies the inner speaking of mind to heart....

(So too) God "bends over' God's 'concealed things' (power of intellect), in order to reveal the 'revealed things' and permeate them

with light from the realm of consciousness." (Ginsburgh p. 300-301)

The Zohar calls speech the 'power of Daat-knowledge' concealed in the mouth.

The Vilna Gaon's ((1720-1797). Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, also known as Ha-Gra, was the foremost scholar-sage of Lithuanian Jewry in the eighteenth-century) commentary on Sefer Yetzira (as quoted in The Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism by Leonard Glotzer) explains further:

"Talking breaks down into Will, Idea (Machshava), Thought (Hirhur), Sound and Speech.

The will is the first desire to speak.

The idea is the pondering of what to say before the specifics are formed.

Thought is the formation of the speech in the mind.

Sound is in the throat, before it enters the mouth.

Finally, speech is the cutting of the letters.

The will's place is in the soul, the idea is in the brain, thought is in the heart, sound is in the throat, and speech in the mouth. (These correspond to the five Partzufim (faces or personifications))"

AMaR seems to be the process of will, encloded in idea and then encloded in thought. The soul to brain to heart. This is the very beginning of manifestation, the inner process before the outer emergence.

Kabbala speaks of this 'AMeeRa'-Saying as the beginning of 'YeSh'-Being'.

Isaac Luria, the Ari (revolutionary kabbalist and head teacher of the Kabbala renaissance in Tsfat in the 1500's) describes this process:

"Before all things were created...the Supernal light was simple. It filled all existence.

All was one simple undifferentiated Infinite light.

When it arose in God's simple will to create all universes, (this moment of VaYomer- Itzchak's addendum) God constricted the

Infinite light, distancing it to the sides around a centre point,
leaving a vacated space in the middle of the light of Ain
Sof-Infinite...This space was perfectly spherical."
(Quoted in Innerspaces, p. 120)

Everything emerges from this moment:

"The Divine Act of Creation is referred to by the metaphor of speech,
as we say in our morning prayers...Baruch She Amar ve haya
haolam-Blessed is the one that spoke, and the world was." (Zohar)

This first speaking contains all the rest of creation within it.

Kabbala points out that "אמר-AMaR-to say' is an acronym for the
first three
primary creations:

א-Aur-light (beginning with a Aleph),

מ-Mayim-water (m Mem)

ר-Rakeeya-firmament (r Reish)

These represent the three stages in the materialization of the
creative seed, as taught by the Arizal (Luria): the spiritual origin of
the seed in the mind-light.

(Ginsburgh, p. 3)

VA'YOMER ELOHIM-From within the Divine, the desire to share
and the will to create begins its expression.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים