

MILA YOMIT 32: (VA'YOMER ELOHIM YEHEE) RAQIYAA

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ

CONTEXT-We are beginning Breisheet 1:6. We just completed YOM ECHAD-Day One. The creation continues to unfold...

MILA CHOZERET: Repeating Words

וַיֹּאמֶר VA'YOMER- And Said - MILA 18.
This is the second Act of Divine Speaking.

אֱלֹהִים ELOHIM-THE CREATOR - MILA 3.
This is the seventh mention of this Name.

Sefer Yetzira explains that this second Act of Divine Speaking corresponds to the manifestation of the Sefira:Bina -Understanding.

Sefer Yetzira, which is the primary source book of Kabbala explains that each mention of ELOHIM in the creation narrative marks the emergence of one of the Ten Sefirot of the Tree of Life or one of the 22 paths of connection between the Sefirot.

In Yom Echad:Day One: "Va'Yomer Elohim: And the Creator Said" denotes the manifestation of Chachma: Wisdom.

Now as the 'second day' is beginning Bina:Understanding is brought in. This is where "division exists, and where things are delineated and defined as separate objects." (Yetzira, p. 12)

The Ophanim manuscript defines Bina as Conception.

"Bina/conception is the expression of individual consciousness. It reveals that all created things are distinguished from one another for the purpose of uniquely grasping the meaning of the Ultimate Good. The whole is contained in each part, and each part becomes redeemed from separateness by knowing the whole. Thus, each being can be amended by uniting to the purpose of the whole creation." (Rabbi Daveed el Harar, P. 13)

יְהִי YEHEE-Let There Be -MILA 19

YEHEE is a palindrome in which the letters are the same backwards and forwards. The palindromes in Hebrew are often very interesting and significant as we shall see.

MILA CHADASHAH-New Word

רְקִיעַ RAQIYAA

OTIOT:LETTERS

ר REISH (R)-consciousness

ק KUF (Q)-redemption

י YOD (Y)-Divine Spark

ע AYIN (AA)-eye, sight, multiplicity

MEANING and RELATED WORDS:

רְקִיעַ RaQiYAA- is a masculine noun meaning 'firmament, heaven, expanse, canopy'. It is related to the verb 'רַקַּע RaQAA-'to spread out, to stretch, to hammer out'. רְקַע ReQAA-means

'background, foundation'. רֻקַּע RoQAA- means 'ceiling'

Hirsch connects it to 'רַקַּע QaRQAa -ground (trodden firm or flat)

Mozeson connects it to the English- 'reach'-to extend out and the word 'rack' (Medieval stretching torture).

רק RaQ(reish, kuf) means 'only'. Backwards it is 'קר QaR'-cold.

Interestingly, backwards it is the word 'עקר AAQaR' which as a verb means 'to uproot, remove'. As a masculine noun it means 'barren or impotent'.

עקר EeQaR means 'root, essence, foundation, principle'.

CONTEXTUAL MEANING:

Rashi: "Let the expanses become fixed; for although the heavens were created on the first day, they were still in fluid form, and they become solidified only on the second day when the Divine said "Yehee Raqiyaa."

This is interesting in light of the scientific theory that the material world began to form as the light-heat of the Big Bang explosion 'cooled down'.

Ibn Ezra explains that RAQIYAA means something that is stretched out, and that in this verse it refers specifically to the atmosphere..."when the primal light intensified upon the earth and the (moisture laden) wind evaporated, the primal flame changed and became the firmament." (Artscroll, p.4)

Hirsch explains that "if רקיע RAQIYAA is related to 'רקע RaQAa as in 'spread out'- than it would be referring here to be " a characterization of the air, as the gaseous expansion in contrast to the denser water and earth...the atmosphere which fills the space between the water below and the waters above...(it also means)flattening out, stamping down...beating thin...According to that 'RAQIYAA' would mean, as it were, the lower surface of the heaven which appears to us as a dome over and about the earth." (Hirsch, p. 13)

Midrash Rabba explains that the firmament is made of water:

“And ELOHIM Said: ‘Let There Be A Firmament In The Midst Of The Waters’ It is written, ‘He Sets the rafters of His lofts in the waters’.
(Psalms 104:3)

In human practice, a mortal king builds a palace and roofs it over with stones, timber and earth. But the Holy One roofed over His world with nothing but water, as it is said, 'He sets the rafters of His lofts in the waters.'

"The Psalmist says" Forever, O God, Your word stands in the heavens". (Psalms 119:89). The Baal Shem Tov explains that "Your word" refers to the saying "God said, "There shall be a firmament..." (Genesis 1:6)

"The words and letters of this saying stand and remain forever within the firmament of the heavens giving them existence. If they would be removed, even for an instance, everything would revert to nothingness."
(Innerspace, p. 114)

The Holy Zohar has some fascinating comments on this phrase::

"Let there be a gradual extension. Thereupon אֱלֹ-EL- God, the 'right cluster, EL Gadol (Great God) spread forth from the midst of the waters to complete this name EL and to combine with this extension, and so אֱלֹ-EL was extended into אֱלֹהִים with the addition of הֵ-HEH and ׀-YOD and ׀-final MEM [which spells אֱלֹהִים-HA'YAM-The Ocean...(17b, to be continued as we meet more words in this verse)...

Come and see when the Holy One created the world, He created 7 firmaments above and 7 'earths' below. 7 Days. 7 Rivers, 7 Weeks [probably between Passover and Shavuot-the exodus from Egypt and hearing the Decalogue at Mt. Sinai]. 7 years and 7 cycles of 7 years [reaching the 49th year and the jubilee-50th year]. 7000 years to the existence of the world. The Holy One is 'found' in the 7th firmament.

There are 7 firmaments above and in each of them there are stars, constellations and suns that operate in each firmament. All the firmaments have structures (merkavot-literally 'chariots') upon each other. These take upon themselves the yoke of the Sovereign Master....These firmaments are like the skins of an onion. Some above and some below. And each firmaments trembles in the presence of the Creator. By His 'mouth' they develop and by His 'mouth' they exist. And the Holy One controls them all with His strength and power." (46a)

In one of the most insightful contemporary books on Kabbala, Allan Afterman (z"l) comments:

"According to the teachings of Kabbala, reality is a composite of images produced by the play of the light of Infinity. Both human consciousness and the physical world result from the progressive screenings of 'enclenchments' of light into images. The purpose of such screenings is to allow the world to manifest and not be obliterated. Rocks, trees, the human body -all physical objects- are images or forms ('vessels') which themselves are made of 'thickened' light: so opaque, however that the inner 'spark' of infinite life is concealed....Just as Einstein has show that matter is only a form of energy, the light of Infinity is both the life force or creative energy of the universe, and its only substance. The inner essence of this light is God's love."
(Afterman, Z"L, Kabbalah and Consciousness, P. 5)

VA'YOMER ELOHIM "YEHEE RAQIYAA"

The Light begins to form into matter. The Creator begins to 'subdivide'. "Let the 'ShaMaYiM: heavens (see Mila 5) be stretched forth and solidify." The background and foundation of space begins to be defined and delineated.

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