

MILA YOMIT : THE TORAH, WORD BY WORD

by Rabbi Itzhak Marmorstein

MILA YOMIT 37:

וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ

(OO'VEIN HA'MAYIM ASHER) ME'AAL (LA'RAQIYAA),
Translation: (And Between The Waters Which Were) Above (The Firmament)
Breishit 1: 7

CONTEXT-

We are in Breisheet 1:7. ELOHIM has made the

שָׁמַיִם-SHAMAYIM-Heavens / רְקִיעַ-RAQIYAA-Firmament

and is now placing it בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ-BEIN HA'MAYIM ASHER MEE'TACHAT LA'RAQIYAA-Between The Waters That Are Below The Firmament and....

MILOT CHOZROT-Repeating Words:

הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ

וּבֵין-OO'VEIN:And Between (see MILA 25)

הַמַּיִם-HA'MAYIM:The Waters (MILA 17)

אֲשֶׁר-ASHER:Which Were (MILA 35)

MILA CHADASHAH-New Word:

מֵעַל -ME'AAL,: (literally) From Above-

-while similar to MILA 12- **עַל**-AAL, it is used with a prefix that adds a dimension to its meaning.

OTIOT:LETTERS:

מֵ MEM(M) : prefix means 'from' , -Numeric -40

עַ AYIN - Eye -Numeric- 70

ל LAMED- Learning-Numeric 30

(see MILA 12 for full treatment of AAL)
-Numeric value=140.

RELATED WORDS and MEANINGS:

מֵעַל ME'AAL is an adverb meaning 'from above, aloft'.

עָלָה-AALAH- is a verb 'to go up, to ascend'.

מִעַל-MoAAL is a M. noun meaning 'lifting, raising'.

מַעַל-MAAL is M. noun meaning 'high place, height'. It's used only in the adverb form **מִמַּעַל**-'from above,

מַעְלָה MAALA is a F. noun for 'step. stair, ascent (as in Shir Ha Maalot:Song of Ascent)

מְעֵלָה -MeOOLeh is a Post Biblical Hebrew adjective meaning 'superior, prominent, excellent, distinguished'.

Seemingly unrelated but same word -מַעַל MAAL is the root verb 'to act unfaithfully, behave treacherously'. This is perhaps related to the word מְעֵיל -MeEEL-'coat, robe' -something which covers.

Backwards it spells לַעַם -LeAAM- which means to the nation, to the people.

MILA CHOZERET-Repeating Word:

לְרַקִּיעַ -LA'RAQIYAA- literally-'From The Firmament'

CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION-

Rashi explains that the verse does not say "AAL HA'RAQIYAA":'on' or 'upon the firmament' but 'ME'AAL LA'RAQIYAA'- 'hanging above the firmament' because the waters above the firmament were 'suspended in mid-air'.

Hirsch explains that the 'waters above' relates to a dimension which serves the physical demands for the development of all beings, all existence. That which is above us, is perhaps spiritual in nature, and yet in service of our vivification.

MeAm Loez, a very important Sephardic compendium , by Rabbi Yaakov Culi (1689-1732) comments:

"The firmament between the upper and lower waters serve to bring peace between the high and the low. Originally, the lower ones would complain 'Why are you on top, while we are on the bottom?' The world cannot exist without peace, and where there is strife, no good can grow, so God made a firmament to separate them."

(Volume 1, P. 57)

The Zohar in the teaching continued from the last posting discusses that אֱלֹהִים EL extended to הַיָּם Heh, Yod, Mem (creating ELOHIM) which spells 'El HaYam-to the sea' is the extension of the upper waters.

"The reversal of thee letters, יָמָה yamah (seaward) is the lower waters. When they were firmly established, all became one whole, and this name was extended to a number of places. The upper waters are masculine and the lower waters feminine. At first they were commingled, but afterwards they were differentiated into upper and lower waters. This is the meaning of "Elohim-upper waters" and this is the meaning of "Adonai-lower waters"; and this is the meaning of upper הַיָּם HEH and lower הַיָּם HEH. The frame of spiritual dimension and physical dimension reflecting each other is being set into place.

OO"VEIN HAMAYIM ASHER ME'AAL LA'RAQIYAA:
And The Spiritual Waters That Are Above The Firmament.

All a gift of the Creator, bringing us life in all its forms. As the Psalmist invites us:

" הַשָּׁמַיִם הַשְּׁמַיִם הַשְּׁמַיִם Halleluohu Shmei Ha'Shamayim: Praise you the heaven of heavens,

וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל הַשָּׁמַיִם -VeHaMayim Asher MEAAL
HaShamayim: And you, the waters that are above the heavens." (Psalm 148:4).

This approaching Shabbat is Shabbat HaGadol-the 'large' Shabbat before Pesach/Passover. It is thus appropriate to close this posting with the following from Rav Kook:

"The perception that dawns on us to see the world not as finished, but as in the process of continued becoming, ascending, developing-this changes us from being "MEETACHAT":under the sun' to being

LE'MAALA :above the sun' from the place where there is nothing new to the place where there is nothing old, where everything takes on new form.

The joy of heaven and earth abides in us as on the day that we were created. In this luminous perspective, we look at all the world, at the general and the human development, at the destiny of each creature, at all the events of all times.

The time that is an uninterrupted Shabbat on which eternal peace shines, is the day when, but the nature of its creation, there pulsates a continued thrust for newness. It needs no end, no termination. It is the choicest of days, an ornament of beauty, the source of all blessings."

(Orot HaKodesh/ Lights Of Holiness, 2: 535)

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LeShalom
Itzhak

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