

Trans
Zn_{a,b}

Rebels: 6/11/11
"Rebels" 6/11/11
PS 129

③ *Rumex intubatus* + *Stem.* +

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My. 14 136

This shall they give, everyone that passes among these who are numbered, half a shekel . . . for an offering to the Lord (Exodus 30: 13)

Every year, during the month of Adar, every Jew was required to donate half a shekel to pay for the daily sacrifices (*temidim*) brought not by individuals, but by the Priests on behalf of the entire people of Israel. Even to the present day we read the portion of the Torah dealing with the half a shekel on the Sabbath preceding the month of Adar. This is called *Shabbat Parshat Shekalim*. This contribution was mandatory upon every Jew, and had to be paid at one time, in full, even if it was necessary for an individual to sell one of his garments in order to be able to do so.

SEVENTH OF ADAR. [42] C

לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – The celestial signs hold no sway over Israel, i.e. prayer and merits can prevail over the fate they foretell.⁽⁹⁰⁾ And R' Yochanan follows his own reasoning expressed elsewhere, "מִיָּדָה רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֵשְׁמַרְיָא – For R' Yochanan said: From where do we know that the celestial signs hold no sway over Israel? – בֵּה, אֲמַרְיָהוּ אֶל־דְּרִיךְ הַמָּוֶת אֶל־הַלְקֵתָּ – As it says:⁽⁹¹⁾ וְלֹא תִפְחַדְתָּ מִלִּפְנֵי הַמָּוֶת – Do not adapt the way of the nations and do not fear the signs of the heavens, for the nations fear them. לֹא יִשְׂרָאֵל – They, the nations, should fear them, but not Israel.

The Gemara adds:
 וְאֵין אֵין קָבֵר רַב קָבֵר – And Rav too holds that the celestial signs hold no sway over Israel. אֲמַר – רַב יְהוּדָה אֲמַר – For Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: מִיָּדָה רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֵשְׁמַרְיָא – From where do we know that the celestial signs hold no sway over Israel? אֲמַרְיָא – As it says:⁽⁹¹⁾ וְלֹא תִפְחַדְתָּ מִלִּפְנֵי הַמָּוֶת – And He took him outside, and said: Gaze toward the Heavens... אֲבִרָהָם אֲמַר – Abraham said before the Holy One, Blessed is He: מַלְאָכָי יִשְׁמְרוּנִי – Master of the Universe, "בְּיָדִי בְרִיתִי וְיָשׁ אִתִּי" – my steward inherits me...⁽⁹²⁾ אֲמַר לוֹ לֹא – [The Holy One] replied to him: No, that one will not inherit you; "וְיָשׁ אִתִּי וְיָשׁ אִתִּי" – only he that shall come forth from within you shall inherit you.⁽⁹³⁾ אֲמַר לְקִינִי רַבּוֹתִי שֶׁל עוֹלָם – [Abraham] then said before him: Master of the Universe! נִקְבְּלִיתִי בְּאֶמְצָנֶיךָ שֶׁל אֱלֹהִים – I have already consulted my astrology, וְרָאִיתִי לְהוֹלִיד בָּךְ – and I see that I am not fit to bear a son! אֲמַר לֵה – [The Holy One] said to him: אֵין בְּאֶמְצָנֶיךָ שֶׁלְּךָ – Go outside of your astrology,⁽⁹⁴⁾ שְׂמַרְיָא לֵשְׁמַרְיָא – for the celestial signs hold no sway over Israel!

Shabbas 156a

לְשִׁמְרוֹתָם אֵין דְּרִיךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים – can be interpreted in two ways: either to guard the way to the tree of life, so that man will not be able to find the way; or to guard the way to the tree of life, so that the way should not be lost to man, and so that man should return to it someday. Indications from the words of our Sages point to the latter interpretation (Yalkut Shimoni, Bereshais, 34).

Be Hushch
 Bereishit 3:24

וְיָשׁ אִתִּי בְּרַחֲמֵי אֲבָא רַבִּי יִצְחָק בְּרַחֲמֵי אֲבָא רַבִּי יִצְחָק – R' Chiyah bar Abba, R' Ami and R' Yitzchak the son of Elazar, were sitting on the porch of R' Yitzchak the son of Elazar, and the following matter came up between them: מִיָּדָה רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֵשְׁמַרְיָא – From where do we derive that the primary period of mourning lasts for seven days? אֲמַרְיָא – For it says:⁽⁹⁵⁾ And I will turn your festivals to mourning. מִיָּדָה רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֵשְׁמַרְיָא – For it says:⁽⁹⁶⁾ From which we infer that just as a festival is seven days,⁽⁹⁶⁾ so mourning is for seven days.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Mishnah 20a

וְהָיָה אֵת הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֵת כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת הָאָדָמָה:

He annihilated those cities and the entire Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and the vegetation of the ground. Bereishit 19:25

וְגִלְשֵׁי אֶת־הָאָדָם וְיִשְׁכֹּן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אֶת־הַבְּרָכָה וְאֵת לֶהֱטֹב הַחֵרֶב הַמַּחֲלֹפֶת לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־דְּרֹכָהּ עַד הַיָּמִים:

He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life. Bereishit 3:24

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הַחֵרֶב הַמַּחֲלֹפֶת represents misery, pain, and catastrophe, which recur again and again, like a revolving wheel. As soon as the Edenic period ended, blood-stained human history began. Human history begins with fratricide. Suffering — of the individual and of mankind as a whole — paves the way for the recognition that only if man looks upward and subordinates himself to God Most High will he find eternal life on earth. Sensual desire and the lust for ownership will not bring man eternal life and happiness; the essence of all the great events of history is capsulized in one word: חֵרֶב!

This is the meaning of the הַחֵרֶב הַמַּחֲלֹפֶת, which preserves for man the way to the tree of life. Indeed, מִיָּדָה רַבִּי יִצְחָק לֵשְׁמַרְיָא (Mishlei 6:23); the road to life leads through suffering. Thus, חֵרֶב הַחֵרֶב הַמַּחֲלֹפֶת is the negative result of world history.

The cherubim represent the traces of Divine revelation to man, God's beckonings, by which man perceives the hand of God in the course of history. These are the positive means of instruction employed by Divine providence for the education of mankind.

Thus, the cherubim and the sword symbolize the two elements that preserve for man the way to the tree of life.