

HALAKHIC AND AGGADIC DISCOURSE FOR SHABBAT HAGADOL 1975

I basically reworked the derashah for 1961, A-378, with the following significant changes:

I kept all the questions, and the core of my *פירוש* was substantively the same. However, I did not use the rationale of women not needing "holiness of time", because of observance of "family purity," and therefore being exempt from time-condition positive commandments -- which argument I presented, quoting Rackman, in my Hedge of Roses. Rather, I developed an alternative theory: that women represent the negation rather than the celebration of time, *פירוש* rather than *פירוש*, and that is why they are exempt from time-conditioned positive commandments, because the latter celebrate time, whereas women suppress it. This accords much better with the whole nature of the "count" of the "seven clean days," and all "counts" in Halakhah (omer, jubilees, and the seven clean days) are all indicative of suppression rather than celebration of time.

The rationale for my typology is this: men are involved in careers, in upbuilding this world and society, and therefore they revel in time and hence come to the concept of the sanctification of time. Women, however, are primarily concerned with raising the next generation. They seem to be engaged in trivialities, such as those that apply to child-raising, which can easily loom large and make life miserable. Indeed, this is the contemporary critique of housewifery. However, in the Jewish scheme of things, women develop the orientation of *משא פנים* by which I mean that they can ignore the troubles and woes and trivialities of the present because

they are future-orientated, they know that for which they strive and which lies in the distant future. Therefore women represent the negation of the present for the sake of the future, whereas men represent the affirmation of the present, with the attendant danger of forfeiting the future.

This explains beautifully why Ramban considers the counting of the Omer as a non-time conditioned commandment -- because every count is in the nature of suppression of time, the reverse of all other time-conditioned positive commandments, and therefore falls perfectly within the purview of women's orientation. Similarly, for *וְיִשְׂרָאֵל* which is, as the formulation of the blessing indicates, geared to *יְשׁוּעָה*, and therefore inapplicable to a commandment like counting, which is by nature the suppression rather than celebration of time.

The other answers I give to the other two questions are essentially the same as in the original talk.

For the Aggadah, I developed the idea in a somewhat different manner. I abandoned the representation of the two concepts by historical periods -- ~~XXXXXX~~ that was quite weak in the first place. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Instead, I applied it to Abraham and Moses ~~as in the~~ the symbolic typology. Abraham is patient, long-suffering, whereas Moses is impatient, counting the days, pulling the blank sheets off the calendar, rushing on to the future event which he aspires to. Abraham can wait even until "the fourth generation shall return here" even for 2,000 years till his children return to the Land. See Rashi in *וְיִשְׂרָאֵל*, ~~א~~

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל ... וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

and did not ask *למה לא*, whereas Moses did. Moses, on the very threshold of redemption is impatient. Abraham is by far the most tolerant individual in all human history: He tolerates Lot, he tolerates the evil men of Sodom, he even tolerates Ishmael -- and what a trying experience that was! Whereas, Moses is angry at everyone: Aaron, his people, his tribe -- even at God. He is the perfectionist. That is why, when they die, Abraham who lived ~~with~~ with his people, *ויקבר עם אברהם*, he is gathered together with them; whereas Moses, the angry prophet, the perfectionist-idealist, dies alone: *ולא יקבר*.

I then continue by showing the need for both, how either orientation alone lead, paradoxically, to the opposite of what it intends, and then I go on to the Haftarah and Elijah.

Here, see the cards accompanying the talk. I interpret Elijah as a Moses-type. In the Baal story, you find Elijah following the whole pattern of Moses. Both of them, as people of *אמונה*, have a low threshold of frustration. ~~With both of them,~~ With both of them, ~~the~~ the action takes place at Sinai-Horeb, there is a hiatus of 40 days and 40 nights, there is a cave, a theophany, and a turning aside of the eyes at the last moment. Elijah, like Moses, is a man of the desert who comes crashing into civilization, shaking people up, radicalizing them, in the hope of finding perfection -- and both are frustrated. *מה עושה אדם* means, what does a man of your kind want with the *הנה*, ~~the~~ with the present, the here and now? And yet, you have got to learn it. So he shows them the tornadoes --

which accords with the temperament of Elijah, that of doing things quickly and radically, but *ד' נורא עש'*. The same for the earthquake... the same for the fire -- instead of ^mwarring people slowly, Elijah wants to sear and burn them. But its only in the small still voice that God is found -- the fine and easy, patient, plodding, *prosaic*, regular activity... Elijah emerges from the cave -- perhaps outside his cave, in the real world, ~~wh~~ he will be able to adjust to this technique. But then he covers his face -- he can't or won't do it. So God says again to him the same thing: what are you doing "here?", and he gets the same answer. Elijah will not go along with changing his Moses-pattern of *פירוש*. So then God told him to go to Damascus -- here I connect the two geographical locations -- Beer Sheba and Syria -- as ^{the} ~~a~~ loci or parameters of Abraham's career. In other words, Elijah must imitate not only Moses he must also assimilate the idea of Abraham and *משן פירוש*.

I then go on to the ~~the~~ scene where Elijah gives over the succession to Elisha. (II Kings). He tells his student, *שלושה פעמים* three times -- you must learn how to live in the here and now. He gives Elisha the right for a last request. Elisha says: *פעמיים רוחי* -- twice your spirit: Abraham as well as Moses... Elijah says: *קשה מאד* -- it is very difficult, I could not do it too. Then Elijah disappears in Heaven -- like Moses, he goes off by himself and is alone in death as in life -- to reappear at the end of days, "before the arrival of the day of the Lord, that is great and awesome." In this world we have to live on the pattern of Abraham, the celebration of time, in the

present. But as we become involved in the life of exile, and are endangered by complacency, we need too the radical reminder of the perfectionism of a Moses and an Elijah. As we draw close to redemption, we need the ability to look with contempt upon the present because we are in a rush to attain the great future. Elijah thus represents the one who will usher in the climax of redemption, withheld from him in this life and in this world and for which he pined and yearned and struggled and strived so mightily.

P.S. It has been suggested to me by Dr. Grajower to show the difference between נִמְנָה and נִמְנָה, the former indicating the value of time as such and the latter indicating אֲנִי שֶׁנִּמְנָה, striving for the future. This may explain the difference between Rambam and Ramban on whether counting the omer is time-conditioned.