OR HA-AM

A MIDRASH COMMENTARY

December 10, 1971

#1 CREATION

B EFORE CREATION--

BEFORE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

BEFORE THE STARS AND THE MOON AND THE SUN

BEFORE THE WATERS ABOVE AND BELOW

BEFORE THE FIRMAMENT AND THE DRY LAND.

BEFORE THE SWARMING INSECTS, THE SEA-MONSTERS & THE

WINGED FOWL ; THE BEAST AN CATTLE: BEFORE MAN

....

THERE WAS FIRE.
BLACK FIRE BURNING INTO WHITE FIRE.

TWENTY-TWO LETTERS OF BLACK FIRE BURNING AGAINST A

A PARCHMENT OF WHITE FIRE

.....

A TORAH LYING IN THE LAP OF GOD---

AND A MYRIAD OF ANGELS BUZZING ALL AROUND HIM, OFFERING

COUNSEL AGAINST CREATION--

WARNING HIM OF THE DANGERS OF CREATIVITY AND OF FREEDOM---

SERVING HIM ADMONITION %THAT WITH LIFE a THERE IS DEATH

WITH JOY & DESPAIR

WITH ACHIEVEMENT & ENVY AND SCORN

WITH LOVE e HARDNESS OF HEART

"BE CONTENT THEN e GOD & WITH THE QUIETNESS OF THE ABYSS r

WITH THE TRANQUILITY OF EMPTINESS &

WITH THE REST AND PEACE OF THE DARK NOTHING"

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AND GOD LOOKED DEEP INTO THE FLAMES OF THE PARCHMENT,

---LOOKED DEEP INTO THE FUTURE INTO WHAT MIGHT YET BECOME

AND DECLARED---LET THERE BE LIGHT!

AND THE LIGHTI HE CALLED DAY

AND THE DARKNESS & NIGHT AND

THERE WAS EVENING

AND THERE WAS MORNING---

ONE DAY?

#2 THE BURNING BUSH

A COMMON & ORDINARY BUSH

---STRANDED IN THE FARTHEST END OF THE WILDERNESS. AND A FLAME BLAZING WITH FIRE OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE BUSH LAY HOLD UPON THE SHEPERED OF JETHRO Ù S FLOCK

____A HEAT SEIZING HOLD, NOT LETTING GO.

OUT OF THE FIRE CAME A SOUND IN THE VOICE OF AIᵛRAMt HIS FATHER. "MOSHE--MY SON. YOU HAVE FLED TO MIDIAN--TO SAFETY AND EASE. BUT THE VOICE OF THE BLOODS OF YOUR

BRETHERN CALL TO YOUR BLOOD. FROM BETWEEN THE WALLS OF THE PYRAMID IN WHICH THEY ARE IMMURED---

FROM BENEATH THE ROADS THEY HAVE LAID--AND& UPON WHICH THE WHEns OF PHAROAH U S CHARIOTS ROLL WITH METALLIC CONTEMPT: THEY CRY FOR RELEASE.-___

RETURN TO EGYPT. RETURN TO THE BURDEN OF YOUR PEOPLE. BIND THEM TOGETHER. LIFT THEM UP, TEACH THEM HOW TO BREAK THE SHACICES OF THEIR FEARS; TEACH THEM TO LOOSEN THE MANACLES OF MELANCHOLY; TEACH THEM TO CAST OFF THEIR INNER SERVITUDE. TEACH THEM THAT NO PEOPLE IS REDEEMED WITHOUT THE WORK OF ITS HANDS IN THE NAME OF DIVINITY.

MOSHE & MY SON & RETURN TO YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD IN THE NAME OF THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS. "

____A COMMON BUSH---IN A BARREN LAND---FILLED WITH THORNS WHICH RIP THE FLESH, AND TEAR THE SKIN. THORNS OF THE SUFFERINGS WHEREIN THE SCHECHINA DWELLS.

---ACOMMON BUSH---AFIRE WITH GOD

A LOVLY BUSH NOT CONSUMED.

CREPIATED AGAIN AND AGAIN &

THE SPIRIT IS NOT BURNED OUT

____A COMMON BUSH OF THORNS

BEARING BLOSSOMS.

#3 NER TAMID

IN SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, THE WINDOWS WERE CURIOUSLY BUILT.

WIDE INSIDE, NARROW FROM WITHOUT.

AN ARCHITECTURE DESIGNED NOT TO RECEIVE ITS LIGHT FROM

THE MARKET PLACE.

---BUT AN INWARD LIGHT OF FEELING AND COMPASSION &

AN INTERNAL LIGHT FEEDING THE WORLD WITH HOPE. mu
~~EXPECTATION~~

~~AN×INTERNAL×LIGHT×FEE~~

AN INTERIOR LIGHT PENETRATING THE COLD & DARK LIGHT OF POWER.

THAT LIGHT-INTERNAL, ETERNAL

TAKEN FROM THE CENTER____

____FROM THE CENTER OF THE EARTH---FROM THE HOLY LAND

____FROM JERUSALEM c THE CENTER OF THE HOLY LAND.

____FROM THE TEMPLE, THE CENTER OF JERUSALEM

____FROM THE HECHAL& THE CENTER OF THE TEMPLE

----FROM THE HOLY ARK & CENTER OF THE HEACHAL

BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION STONE, CENTER OF THE EARTH.

THAT ETERNAL LIGHT IS ON EARTH:

THAT ENERGY IS IN OUR EARTELY

SANCTUARIES.

"PURE OLIVE OIL BEATEN FOR THE LIGHT TO CAUSE A LAMP

TO BURN NIGHT AND DAY.

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN THE SANCTUARY AND INTO THE WORLD.

STRENGTH AND LIGHT

THE LIGHT COULD NOT BE CONTAINED.

IT COULD NOT BE HELD IN THE STRONGEST OF VESSLS.

THE VESSEL PROVED FRAGILE. THE FLAME TOO DEMANDING.

IT BROKE INTO A THOUSAND PIECES____

THE LIGHT SCATTERED INTO INFINITE FRAGMENTS

S PARKS ,

FALLING INTO THE HUSKS OF THE WORLD.

ENTERING INTO CAVES AND STONES AND METALS.

BURIED IN ANGER & IN ENVY & IN RAGE 2 IN LONELINESS.

PIECES OF FIRE LOCKED INTO _____

CRYING TO BE REDEEMED & TO BE RELEASED, TO BE

REJOINED INTO ONE FLAME.

THE TASK IS ADAM'S WHO STUIVELED UPON TWO STONES____

ONE MARKED "DEATH" _____"QEATH' THE OTHER "DARKNESS

NESS"_____

AND RUBBED THEM TOGETHER UNTIL THEY RELEASED A SPARK.

AND IT LIT UP THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT---

AND ADAM WAS NO MORE AFRAID,

ow

#5 LAMP & SPIRIT

LOOK TO THE WALL! TO THE YAHRZEIT LAMP

נר יהוה נשמת אדם

HOW SHALL WE TRANSLATE THE VERSE IN PROVERBS

נר יהוה THE LIGHT OF THE LORD

נשמת אדם THE SPIRIT OF MAN.

IS GOD ^g S LIGHT THE SPIRIT OF MAN;

OR MAN ^I S SPIRIT THE LIGHT OF GOD?

OR IS IT STUDIED AMBIGUITY.

DELIBERATE AMBIVALENCE TO EACH A PROFOUND SYMMETRY.

READ THE PROVERB BOTH WAYS.

MAN NEEDS GOD.

GOD NEEDS MAN.

MAN COVEORTED BY GOD.

GOD CONSOLED BY MAN.

PARTNERS--INEXTRICABLY BOUND ONE TO ANOTHER.

"HE WHO PERFORMS A MITZVAH LIGHTS A CANDLE BEFORE GOD. #6 SABBATH CANDLES

SHABBATUM--THE BABYLONIANS CALLED IT

SHABBATUM--A DAY OF THE FULL MOON

A DAY IN WHICH THE GODS MUST BE APPEASED.

A DAY OF STUMBLING, OF PIT-FALLS AND SNARES.

A DAY OF DEMONS R

SHABBATUM--THE SEVENTH DAY

MEN IN DARKNESS :
WITHOUT LIGHT. SHIVERING, IMMOBILE, LIFnESS-awaiting the

disappearance of the seventh day;

A DAY SHROUDED IN FEAR.

OUT OF SHABBATUM& SHABBAT---

AND THE SEVENTH DAY TRANSFIGURED INTO JOY AND LAUGHTER---

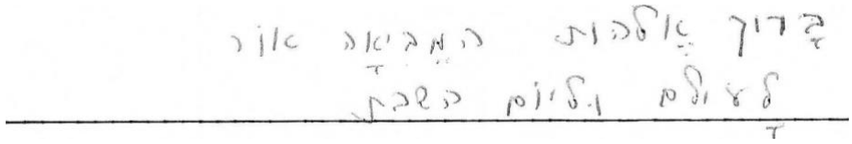
~~CANDLES --- LIGHT~~ --SONG--WINE--

--FOOD DRE S S--PRAYER--STUDY--DANCE

~~CANDLES... AND NO LIGHT~~

TEN FINGERS SHIELD THE EYES FROM SEEING THE LIGHT.

A SELF-IMPOSED CONCEALMENT IN PREPARATION FOR SURPRISE.



BLESSED IS THE GODLINESS WHICH BRINGS LIGHT TO THE WORLD

AND TO THIS SHABBAT.

REMOVE HER HANDS FROM HER EYES----

THE WONDER OF LIGHT TOUCHES THE HOME t FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

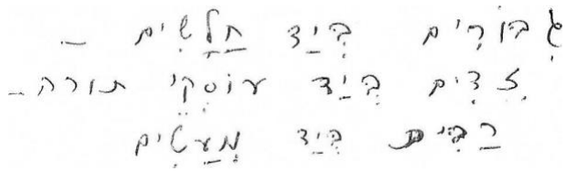
THERE IS LIGHT & THERE IS WARMTH & THERE IS JOYO THERE IS שבת

HANUKKAH L I GHTS

---THE MIGHTY Dn1VERED INTO THE HANDS OF THE WEAK

---THE ARROGANT INTO THE HANDS OF THE MEEK

---THE MANY INTO THE HANDS OF THE FEW.



NOT "ONCE UPON A TIME"

NOT A FABLE

NOW CELEBRATE MORE THAN "BAYAMIM HAHEM"

MORE THAN HISTORY & NOSTALGIA &

MORE THAN "THOSE DAYS MORE THAN THE HOARY PASTO

CELEBRATE "BAZMAN HAZEI-I EI_____

IN OUR DAYS e IN OUR TIMES! HERE AND NOW'.

MIRACL ES VICTORIES -- ימים / פלאות

SIGNS OF DIVINITY - IN THE COURAGE OF OUR PEOPLE,

IN SELF-SACRIFICE, HEROISM AND STRENGTH UNDREAMT OF____

SHROUDS OF BUCHENWALD STANDING STRONG BEFORE SO MANY NATIONS?

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES RAISED INTO THE SINGING HILLS OF

JUDEA?

NOT ONCE UPON A TIME--BUT IN OUR DAYS

~~NOT ONCE UPON A TIME--BUT IN OUR DAYS~~

A WALL RESTORED

A LAND, CONTAMINATED BY NEGLECT & CLEANSED.

THE BARREN MADE FRUITFUL . OF OUR PEOPLE/
TUE OF OUR

FOR THE MIRACLE OF RESSURECTION--IN OUR TIMES & IN OUR WORLD

BLESS THESE OLD-NEW LIGHTS

#8 NEW LIGHT

_____WHEN THE WORLD WAS PUT TOGETHER---

THE MOON WAS JEALOUS OF THE SUN'S LIGHT

AND ITS ENVY WAS PUNISHED.

ITS LIGHT WAS DIMINISHED

AND THE MOON 9 S LIGHT WAS ONLY A REFLECTION OF THE SUN 8 S.

NOW& WHEN THE LIGHT FELL FROM THE MOON, TINY THREADS

WERE LOOSENED FROM HER BODY.

THESE ARE THE STARS IN THE HEAVENS.

BUT TOMORROW - THE MOON OF OUR FOREFATHERS HAS BEEN

PROMISED THAT ITS LIGHT WILL BE RESTORED.

NO MORE TO SHINE IN ANOTHER'S GLORY

BUT ONCE MORE TO SHINE AS BRIGHT AS THE SUN.

TO SHINE AS _____ AS A NEW LIGHT.

EPILOGUE

HOW WAS THE LIGHT CREATED?

THE CREATOR WRAPPED HIMSELF IN A WHITE TALLITH AND PRAYING

CAUSED THE WORLD TO BE BRILLIANT IN HIS LIGHT.

_____ A PEOPLE OF THE LIGHT - COVERED BY HIS

PRAYER SHAWL - HELD TOGETHER BY THE FOUR CORNERS OF

THE FRINGES OF HIS TALLIT.

LIGHT OF CREATION

LIGHT OF SUN & MOON

LIGHT OF BURNING BUSH

LIGHT OF SABBATH AND HAVDALLAH

LIGHT OF FESTIVAL' AND YAHRZEIT

LIGHT OF WEDDING AND YIZKOR

LIGHT OF TORAH, LIGHT OF TEMPLE

LIGHT OF SPARK, LIGHT OF TORCH

WARM US ENLIGHTEN US SANCTIFY US

MAKE US HOLY'.