

# Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

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## Chapter I: Bereisheet (Gen. 1:1-6:8)

Essay 5. Joshua's power to make the sun stand still.

**מדרש** רבה על פסוק ולמשל ביום ובלילה, אמר רבי שמעון בן יוחאי ספר משנה תורה הנה סגנון ליהושע. בשעה שנגלה עליו הקב"ה, מצאו יושב בספר משנה תורה בידו. אמר לו חזק יהושע, אמן יהושע, לא ימוש ספר התורה הנה מפיד. נטלו וקראו לגלגל חמה. אמר לו פשם שלא דוממתי מזה אף אתה דום מלפני. מיד נידום השמש. אמר ר' יצחק אמר לו עבדא בישא לאו זביניה דאבא את, לא פד ראה אותך אבא בחלום והנה השמש נכו', מיד נידום השמש נכו' ע"כ.

There is a **Midrash Rabbah** (Gen. Rabbah 6:9) on the verse, “And G-d set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, **to dominate the day and the night**, and to separate light from darkness” (Gen. 1:17–18):

**Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said, the Book of Deuteronomy was a banner for Joshua. At the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself to [Joshua], He found him sitting with the Book of Deuteronomy in his hand. [G-d] said to him, “Be strong, Joshua; be courageous, Joshua.<sup>1</sup> ‘Don’t let this Book of the Law cease from your lips.’ ”<sup>2</sup> He took it and showed it to the sun in its revolutions. He said to him, “Just as I have not stood still from studying this Book, so you should stand still before me.” Immediately “the sun stood still” (Joshua 10:13).<sup>3</sup>**

**Rabbi Yitzchak said, [Joshua] said to [the sun], “You evil servant, weren’t you the property of my [fore]father? Didn’t my [fore]father see you in a dream:<sup>4</sup> ‘And, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me’ ” (Gen. 37:9)? Immediately “the sun stood still” (Joshua 10:13).**

- (Gen. Rabbah 6:9)

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 31:23: “And He charged Joshua son of Nun: ‘*Be strong and courageous*, for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them on oath, and I will be with you.’ ” Joshua 1:7: “But you must be very *strong and courageous* to observe faithfully all the Teaching that My servant Moses enjoined upon you. Do not deviate from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.”

<sup>2</sup> Joshua 1:8: “*Don’t let this Book of the Law cease from your lips*, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully all that is written in it. Only then will you prosper in your undertakings and only then will you be successful.”

<sup>3</sup> See Joshua 10:12–14, where the sun stood still at the battle at Gibeon.

<sup>4</sup> Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8), and thus was a descendant of Joseph.

צָרִיךְ עֵיוֹן מָה עָנָן מִשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה עִם עֲמִידַת גִּלְגָּל סָמָה, וּמֵאֵי סִלְקָא דְעֵתָהּ מִתְחַלְלָה לְגִלְגָּל סָמָה שְׁלֵא רָצָה לִידוּם לְפָנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְאַחֲרָי כֵּן בְּשִׁרְאָה סִפְרֵי מִשְׁנֵה תוֹרָה מִיָּד עָמַד. וְעוֹד צָרִיךְ עֵיוֹן עַל דְּבָרֵי ר' יִצְחָק, וְשֵׁם בָּא לְחִלּוֹק עַל רַבֵּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָאי קִשְׁיָה בְּמֵאֵי פְּלִיגִי, וְאִם לֹא בָּא לְחִלּוֹק מֵה צוֹרֵךְ לְסִבְרָא חֲדָשָׁה זֶה שֶׁל עֲבָדָא בֵּישָׂא וְכוּ'.

**It requires review what relevance Deuteronomy has to the revolution of the sun, and why it arose in the mind at the beginning that the sun would not stand still before Joshua, but after it saw the Book of Deuteronomy it immediately stood still. The words of Rabbi Yitzchak also require review. If he was disagreeing with the words of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, what was the disagreement, and if he wasn't disagreeing, what need was there for this new opinion of "you evil servant etc."?**

וּבְפִירוּשׁ הַיְלָקוּט הֵבִיא בְּשֵׁם הַיְפָה תוֹאֵר שֶׁהַקִּשְׁיָה לְמָה לֹא רָצָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לִידוּם, וְהֵלֵא תַנְאֵי הַתְּנָה הַקַּב"ה עִם מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית כְּדָאֲמַרְיָנוּ עַל פְּסוּק אֲנִי יָדֵי נְטוּ וְשָׁמַיִם וְכָל־צָבָאִם צְנוּיִתִי, וְתִירְצֵן שְׁתַּנְאֵי זֶה הִנֵּה בְּסִתְּמֵם שְׁכָל מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית יֵשׁ לוֹ לְהַשְׁתַּנּוֹת בְּצִוּוֵי הַצְּדִיקִים, וּמִשּׁוֹם הִכִּי לֹא רָצָה לִידוּם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁחֲשַׁב שְׁלֵא הִנֵּה יְהוֹשֻׁעַ רָאוּי לְהַשְׁתִּיקוֹ. וְהוּא הַקִּשְׁיָה עָלָיו, וְהֵלֵא בְּפִירוּשׁ אֲמָרוּ תַנְאֵי הַתְּנָה עִם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁיְדוּם בְּפָנָי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְאִם כֵּן לְמָה לֹא רָצָה לִידוּם מִתְחַלְלָה, וְעַד־יֵין הַגֵּיט לְנוּ מְקוּם לְהַקְשׁוֹת אֵיךְ סִלְקָא דְעֵתָהּ לְגִלְגָּל סָמָה שְׁלֵא הִנֵּה יְהוֹשֻׁעַ רָאוּי לְהַשְׁתִּיקוֹ.

**In the explanation of the anthology of the midrash,<sup>5</sup> it is brought in the name of the Yafeh To'ar commentary that he questioned why the sun didn't want to stand still. For didn't the Holy One, Blessed be He, make a stipulation with the act of Creation, as it says on the verse, "My own hands stretched out the heavens, And I marshaled all their host" (Isaiah 45:12)?<sup>6</sup> The solution is that this stipulation was absolutely that every act of Creation had to change its nature upon the command of the righteous, but because of this the sun didn't want to stand still, for it thought that Joshua was not worthy to quiet it. [The Yafeh To'ar] asked on this point, doesn't the explanation say a stipulation with the sun that it would be still specifically before Joshua, and if so, why didn't it want to be still initially? There still remains for us room to question how it arose in the mind of the sun that Joshua was not suitable to quiet it, i.e., was not worthy of the status of being a righteous person.**

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<sup>5</sup> The author uses the word יְלָקוּט (*yalkut*) (anthology), which generally refers to the midrashic compilation Yalkut Shimoni. However, he specifically mentions Yafeh To'ar, which is a commentary on the Midrash Rabbah. Therefore, the translator interprets *yalkut* here as meaning "anthology [of the midrash]."

<sup>6</sup> See Gen. Rabbah 5:4 and Yalkut Shimoni on Nach 462. Also see Shabbat 88a: "the Holy One, Blessed be He, established a condition with the acts of Creation, and said to them: If Israel accepts the Torah, you will exist; but if not, I will return you to [the primordial state of] chaos and disorder."

והנה ומכלהו אמוראי דפליגי בפרק קמא דעבודת זרה על פסוק ויעמוד השמש בחצי השמים ולא יאץ לבוא פיום תמים. נראה ששתי פעמים העמיד יהושע את החמה, אחד בחצי היום ואחד סמוך לערב. ועל זה הקשה שם מהרש"א דלמא לא העמידה בפעם אחת כשיעור העמדת שתי פעמים, והניחו בצריך עיון, ועיי"ש. וידוע מה שאמרו ז"ל פני משה פני חמה פני יהושע פני לבנה, וידוע נמי שממשלת החמה הוא ביום וממשלת הלבנה בלילה, כדכתיב את-המאור הגדל לממשלת היום ואת-המאור הקטן לממשלת הלילה.

**Here all the *amoraim* disagree in the first chapter of Avodah Zarah (25a)<sup>7</sup> on the verse, “Thus the sun halted in midheaven, and did not press on to set, for a whole day” (Joshua 10:13).<sup>8</sup> It appears that there were two times that Joshua stayed the sun, once in the middle of the day, and one closer to evening. The Maharsha questions why it didn’t halt just once for the total amount of time that it halted two times, and he leaves it needing explanation, and see there.<sup>9</sup> It’s known what [the rabbis] of blessed memory said, “The face of Moses was as bright as the face of the sun; the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon” (Bava Batra 75a). It’s also known that the rule of the sun is during the day, and the rule of the moon is at night, as it’s written, “the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night” (Gen. 1:16).**

ומעתה אפשר לומר שהגלגל חמה היה ממאן לשמוע בקול יהושע בהעמדה הראשונה ואין הכי נמי שהיה שומע לו בהעמדה אחרונה, שהואיל שפני יהושע פני לבנה אין לו מממשלת רק בלילה שהוא זמן שליטת הלבנה. ובאותו זמן יש לו רשות לצוות לגלגל חמה נמי לפי שפך התנהג[ק]ב"ה בעת בריאת העולם, אבל יהושע אדרבא רצה להעמידו שתי פעמים כדי לסתור הסברא שלו ולהראות שיש לו פח להעמידו אפילו ביום שהוא זמן מממשלת החמה. ואם היה מעמידו רק פעם אחת אפילו שיעמידהו באמצע היום לא היה ניכר פחו וזכותו של יהושע, והיינו אומרים שבשביל התנאי הקדום והקרח המלחמה לבד הוצרך השמש לשמוע בקולו ולא מחמת זכותו של יהושע, ולכן נטל ספר משנה תורה והראהו לגלגל חמה וכו'.

**Now it’s possible to say that the revolution of the sun was loath to listen to the voice of Joshua in standing still the first time, and also wasn’t listening to him in standing still the last time, since the face of Joshua was like the face of the moon. I.e., he had governance only at night, which was the time of rule of the moon. At the same time, he had permission to command the revolution of the sun also according to the stipulation of the Holy One, Blessed be He, at the time of the Creation of the Universe, but Joshua on the contrary wanted to make it stand still two times in order to rebut [the sun’s] opinion and to show that he had the power to make it stand still, even in the day, which was the time of the rule of the sun. If he would make it stand still only one time, even if he would make it stand still in the middle of the day, the power and the merit of Joshua wouldn’t be known. We say that because of the**

<sup>7</sup> This citation actually appears in the second chapter of Avodah Zarah.

<sup>8</sup> How much [time elapsed before the sun finally set]? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said 24 hours: It traveled [across the sky for] six [hours] and stood [still for] six [hours, and again] traveled six [hours] and stood [still for] six [hours, so] the entire matter [lasted the duration] of an entire day. Rabbi Elazar said 36 [hours: The sun] traveled for six [hours] and stood for 12 [hours, and again] traveled six [hours] and stood for 12 [hours, so that the accumulated time of] its suspension was that of an entire day. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said: 48 [hours elapsed before it set.] It traveled six [hours] and stood for 12 [hours, and then] traveled six [hours] and stood for twenty-four [hours].

<sup>9</sup> Not located by the translator.

**initial condition** that the righteous could control the acts of Creation **and the needs of the war alone, the sun needed to listen to [Joshua's] voice, and not because of the merit of Joshua, and therefore he raised the Book of Deuteronomy and showed it to the revolution of the sun, etc.**

ונודע כי שם אדי"ד במלואיו הם בגימטריא תנ"ה, והוא סוד משה במלואיו מ"ם שי"ן ה"י. וכן עולה חות"ם עם הפולל, והוא סוד החותם הגדול של יום הכפורים.

**It's known that the name [of G-d] אהי"ה (I will be) has a Gematria of 455 according to the Mispar Shemi/Milui method** when the *heh* is spelled three different ways,<sup>10</sup> the same as the standard Gematria of תנ"ה (*tana*) (give),<sup>11</sup> **which is an esoteric secret equal to the Gematria of [the letters of] Moses spelled according to the Mispar Shemi/Milui method** when the *heh* is spelled ה"י.<sup>12</sup> **Similarly, the word חות"ם (*chotem*) (seal) has a standard Gematria that rises to 455 when one includes the total number of words,<sup>13</sup> and this is an esoteric secret of the great seal of Yom Kippur.**<sup>14</sup>

אמנם המילואים לבדם הם גימטריא שצ"ב, והוא סוד קחלק בשמי"ם ראש, ועם כללות שלשה השמות יעלה למנין שצ"ה, ובגימטריא משנ"ה, והוא סוד החותם של ליל הושענא רבה שהוא משנה לחותם הראשון של יום הכפורים, והחותם הראשון זכה כו משה שזכה לבינה כנודע, והשני ניתן ליהושע שעולה שצ"ב עם הפולל והוא פני לבנה כנודע.

**In truth, the Gematria for the added letters alone** according to the Mispar Ne'elam method **is 392** (when the *heh* is spelled three different ways),<sup>15, 16</sup> **and this is an esoteric secret equal to the standard Gematria of the word בשמי"ם (*besamim*) (spices)<sup>17</sup> in the phrase “take choice spices” (Ex. 30:23). With the inclusion of adding the number of words of the three names [of G-d], i.e., referring to the name “I will be,” for which we spelled each letter completely three times, with a different spelling of the letter *heh* each time, [the total] increases to 395, and this is**

<sup>10</sup> This relies upon the letters of G-d's name אהי"ה being spelled out three times, with different spellings for ה (*heh*) each time. Thu, אל"ף ה"י יו"ד ה"י yields 161, אל"ף ה"א יו"ד ה"א yields 143, and אל"ף ה"ה יו"ד ה"ה yields 151. The total of these three spellings, 161+143+151=455.

<sup>11</sup> The Gematria of תנ"ה is 400+50+5=455.

<sup>12</sup> The first letter, מ (*mem*) when spelled completely (מ"ם) has a Gematria of 40+40=80. The second letter, ש (*shin*) when spelled completely (שי"ן) has a Gematria of 300+10+50=360. The third letter ה (*heh*) when spelled completely (ה"י) has a Gematria of 5+10=15. Thus, the word has a total Gematria of 80+360+15=455.

<sup>13</sup> Using the Gematria method of adding the number of words to the total, the value of חות"ם is 8+6+400+40=454. and adding one for the word equals 455.

<sup>14</sup> On Yom Kippur, the fate of each person is sealed for the upcoming year.

<sup>15</sup> That is, in note 10, we added up the value of the letters אל"ף ה"י יו"ד ה"י (161), אל"ף ה"א יו"ד ה"א (143), and אל"ף ה"ה יו"ד ה"ה (151). If only the added letters are considered, יו"ד ה"י would yield 140, יו"ד ה"א would yield 122, and יו"ד ה"ה would yield 130. Thus, 140+122+130= 392.

<sup>16</sup> Hayyim Vital's Pri Etz Chaim, Gate of the Holies 2, notes that אהי"ה has the same Gematria of תנ"ה according to the Milui method, and that אהי"ה has a Gematria of 392 for the Ne'elam method.

<sup>17</sup> The standard Gematria of בשמי"ם is 2+300+40+10+40=392.

the same as **the standard Gematria of the word משנ"ה (*mishneh*) (second),<sup>18</sup> which is an esoteric secret of the seal of the night of Hoshana Rabbah, which is second to the first seal of Yom Kippur.<sup>19</sup> Moses thus merited the first seal, as he merited understanding, as is known. The second seal was given to Joshua, who had a total (including counting the word) of 392,<sup>20</sup> and he had the face of the moon, as is known.**

וענין בהקדמת הרמ"ז לקריאת ליל הושענא רבה וז"ל: על־פני נאמר ונתתה מהודך עלי. ומלת []נת"ת[] מבינה סוד משנ"ה וסוד תנ"ה, ומשנה תורה הוא ספר התמישי והוא נגד ההוד, וזה הכוונה תנ"ה הוד"ף על־השמים. ומשה אל העקר נכון. ויהוש"ע משנה"ו גנוז בתיכון. והוא סוד חותם תוף חותם ועיי"ש. ובנה הראה יהושע לשמש שיש לו הכח כמו משה הואיל שהיה תלמידו, ויש לו כח לצנות לשמי"ם שהם בגימטריא משנ"ה ומיד נידום השמש.

**See the Introduction of the ReMeZ<sup>21</sup> on the reading for the night of Hoshana Rabbah, and these are his words:**

**Therefore it is said ‘And give him some of your majesty (i.e., authority)’ (Num. 27:20), and the word נת"ה (*natata*) (give) means the esoteric secret משנ"ה (*mishneh*) (second) and the esoteric secret תנ"ה (*tana*) (give), i.e., a second giving of the Law.<sup>22</sup> Thus, **Mishneh Torah (second law), which is the fifth book, i.e., Deuteronomy, is compared to G-d’s majesty, and that is the intent of ‘You have set Your majesty (תנ"ה הוד"ך) upon the heavens’ (Ps. 8:2).<sup>23</sup>****

**Correlating Moses to the primary is correct. And Joshua (ויהוש"ע) his lieutenant (משנה"ו) was concealed in the secondary. This is an esoteric secret of a seal within a seal.<sup>24</sup>**

<sup>18</sup> The Book of Deuteronomy was known as Mishneh Torah (Second Law) until the Middle Ages. “Deuteronomy” is Greek for “Second Law.” The word משנ"ה (*Mishneh*) has a standard Gematria of 40+300+50+5=395.

<sup>19</sup> While on Yom Kippur, the fate of each person is sealed for the upcoming year. The Zohar says that this judgment is not “delivered” until Hoshana Rabbah, the last day of Sukkot, during which time one can still alter his verdict and decree for the new year.

<sup>20</sup> Using the Gematria method of adding the number of words to the total, the value of יהוש"ע is 10+5+6+300+70=391. and adding one for the word equals 392.

<sup>21</sup> Rabbi Moses ben Mordechai Zacuto (c. 1625–1697), Kabbalist and poet in Amsterdam and Italy.

<sup>22</sup> As noted above, the standard Gematria of משנ"ה (*mishneh*) (second) is 395, and the standard Gematria of תנ"ה (*tana*) (give) is 455. Added together, this totals 850, which is the standard Gematria of נת"ה (*natata*) (give): 50+400+400=850. The first edition reads ומלת ונת"ת “and the word ו'natata (and give),” thus including the prefixed *vav* from Num. 27:20. But that would make the Gematria 856. Therefore, the translator has emended the text to omit the prefixed *vav*. [Furthermore, Num. 27:20 has the spelling ונתתה מהודך עלי, with a *heh* added to the end of the word, which would also throw off the total. However, the spelling ונתת מהודך עלי appears in a number of places without the *heh*, including the Kli Yakar and Rabbeinu Bahya, as well Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotecha 16:1; and Zohar I:21b.]

<sup>23</sup> The use of *gershayim* for תנ"ה הוד"ך indicate that the Gematria (490) is relevant, but the translator has not determined the relevance.

<sup>24</sup> The use of *gershayim* for ויהוש"ע and ויהוש"ע suggest that the Gematrias are relevant (397 and 401, respectively), but the translator has not determined the relevance.

And see there for his comments.<sup>25</sup> In this, Joshua showed the sun that he had the power, like Moses, as he was [Moses'] student. He had the power to command לשמי"ם (to the heavens) that have the Gematria משנ"ה (second),<sup>26</sup> and immediately the sun halted.

ובנה מדוקדק תחלת המדרש, ספר משנה תורה הנה סגנון ליהושע, שהוא ממש מכון נגד בחינתו של יהושע, והקב"ה אמר לו לא-ימוש ספר התורה הנה מפיה שיהיה לו הפס של כל הספר תורה, הואיל שראש התורה הולך אחר הסוף.

In this way, the beginning of the midrash is precise, the Book of Deuteronomy was a banner for Joshua, which was actually directed against Joshua's viewpoint. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, "Don't let this Book of the Law cease from your lips" (Joshua 1:8), so that you'll have the power of all of the Book of the Law, since the beginning of the Torah takes after the end, i.e., the Book of Deuteronomy is considered a summary of the laws given earlier.

ור' יצחק בא [הו]סיף טעם אחר בדרך הפשט, לאו זביניה דאבא את נכו', שפעס עליו על שלא הנה רוצה לשמוע בקולו. ואמר לו לא פה ראה אותך אבא בתלום והנה השמש והירח נכו'. והקשה היפה תואר וז"ל, תימה מה טענה היא זו? וכי ראובן שחלם ששמעון הנה עבדו יחזיק בו בהקיץ נכו' עכ"ל?

Rabbi Yitzchak came to add a different flavor with a simple meaning. Joshua asked the sun, "You evil servant, weren't you the property of my [fore]father?" He asked this because he was angry at the sun, that it didn't want to listen to his voice, i.e., his command to stand still. That is why he said to it, "Didn't my [fore]father see you in a dream: 'And, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me' (Gen. 37:9)?" The Yafeh To'ar commentary asks, "What kind of claim is this?" I.e., why did Joshua present this as a question, instead of making a statement? The Yafeh To'ar continues, "Was it Reuben who dreamed that Simon was his servant, who would thus be daydreaming?" I.e., everyone knows that it was Joshua's forefather, Joseph, who dreamed that the sun would bow down to him, so why didn't Joshua express this as a statement? The answer is that he presented a rhetorical question to the sun for dramatic effect, because he was angry with it.

<sup>25</sup> Rabbi Moses ben Mordechai Zacuto ("the ReMeZ"), Hen Kol Chadash (Amsterdam 1712). *Zera Shimshon* actually paraphrases Hen Kol Chadash, rather than quoting it precisely.

<sup>26</sup> As noted above, the standard Gematria of משנ"ה is 395. The word לשמי"ם (to the heavens) has a standard Gematria of 30+300+40+10+40=420, which does not match. If the prefixed *lamed* (to the) is removed, the standard Gematria of שמי"ם would be 390, which still would not match. Perhaps the intent is השמי"ם (the heavens), which would have a matching standard Gematria of 395.



וּלְדַדּוֹן נִרְאָה לְפָרֵשׁ שְׁעַל כְּרַחֵף לֹמֵר שֶׁפֶשֶׁט זֶה הַחֲלוֹם הוּא אֲמֵת בְּעֵצְמוֹ. שֶׁהָרִי זֶה הַחֲלוֹם גָּרַם שְׁנֵאת אֲחִיו, וְדוּעַ שְׁזוֹ הַשְּׁנֵאת הַיְתָה הַשְּׁגָחָה פְּרִטִית מֵאֵת הַבּוֹרָא עֲלִיוֹן, כְּדֵאִיתָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ לְמָה וַיִּשְׁנָאוּ אוֹתוֹ, כְּדִי שִׁיקְרַע הַיָּם לְפָנֵיהֶם, כְּדִכְתִּיב הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס. מָה רָאָה? אָרוֹנוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף רָאָה. וּמִחֲמַת שְׁנֵאתָם מְכַרוּהוּ, וְכִיּוֹן שְׁנַמְכֵר לְמַצְרַיִם בָּא לְאוֹתוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה שְׁמֵשׁם וְזָכָה לְהִיּוֹת נִקְרָא רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּדִכְתִּיב רֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל הַאֲזִינָה נִהְגַּ כְּצִאֵן יוֹסֵף.

**It appears that you must say that the dream’s plain meaning is true. This dream caused the hatred of his brothers (Gen. 37:5–11),<sup>27</sup> and it’s known that this hatred was Divine Providence from the Supreme Creator, as is written in the midrash, “Why did they hate him? So that the sea would be torn before them” (Gen. Rabbah 84:8),<sup>28</sup> as it says, “The sea saw and fled” (Ps. 114:3). What did it see? It saw the coffin of Joseph.<sup>29</sup> Because of their hatred, [the brothers] sold him, and because he was sold to Egypt, he came to the situation from which he merited to be called “a shepherd of Israel,” as it’s written, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Who leads Joseph like a flock (Ps. 80:2).”<sup>30</sup>**

וּמִי שֶׁהוּא רוֹעֵה צֶרֶף שִׁיְהִיו מוֹכְנִים בְּיָדוֹ הַמְזוֹנוֹת שְׂאֵם לֹא כֵן אֵיךְ יָכוֹל לְהִיּוֹת רוֹעֵה? וְכֵן מְצִינוּ שֶׁכְּשֶׁבְּרָכוּ מִשֵּׁה לְאַחֵר שְׂאֵמֵר מִבְּרַכַּת ה' אֲרָצוֹ מִמְּגַד שְׁמַיִם מִטֵּל וּמִתְהוֹם רִבְצַת תַּחַת. וְהִינּוּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁבְּרַךְ יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב מִטֵּל הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁמַיִ הָאָרֶץ, חֲזוֹר וְאָמֵר וּמִמְּגַד תְּבוֹאֵת שְׁמֵשׁ וְכוּ', כְּלוֹמֵר שֶׁהַשְּׁמֵשׁ מְשׁוּעָבֵד לוֹ לְהַכִּין הַמְזוֹן כְּדִי סִיפּוּקוֹ לְהִיּוֹת רוֹעֵה, וְהוּא מְחַוֵּיב לוֹ מִן הַדִּין, שֶׁהוּאֵיל שֶׁבְּשִׁבִילוֹ קָנָה זֶה הַשֵּׁם, דְּהִינּוּ שֶׁבְּשִׁבִיל שֶׁהַשְּׁמֵשׁ הִשְׁתַּחֲנָה לוֹ בְּחֲלוֹם, בָּא לִידֵי שְׁנֵאת אֲחִיו. מִשׁוֹם הֵכִי מְחַוֵּיב הַשְּׁמֵשׁ עֲצֵמוֹ לְעַבְדוֹ בְּכָל הַצֶּרֶף לוֹ.

**One who is a shepherd needs to have food for his flock at hand, for if not, how can he be a shepherd? Thus we find when Moses blessed [the tribes of Joseph], as he said, “May his land be blessed by the L-rd with excellence from Heaven: with dew and with watery depths stretched out below” (Deut. 33:13). This is as Isaac blessed Jacob, “May G-d give you of the dew of Heaven and the fat of the earth” (Gen. 27:28), and [Moses] returned to this theme and said, “with the bounteous yield of the sun” (Deut. 33:14). This is as if to say that the sun served [Joseph] to prepare the food for his needs as a shepherd, and [the sun] is obligated to him as a point of law, since G-d created it for [Joseph’s] sake, as because the sun bowed to him in his dream, he came to the hands of the hatred of his brothers. Because of this, the sun is itself obligated to serve him in all that he needs.**

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<sup>27</sup> Technically, they hated Joseph before his dreams, due to his father’s favoritism (Gen. 37:4). They also hated him after his first dream, when the sheaves his brothers were binding bowed down to his sheaf (Gen. 37:5–8). The dream discussed here, when the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him, was his second dream (Gen. 37:9–11).

<sup>28</sup> The midrash makes a play on words from the embroidered tunic (כתנת פסים) that Israel made for Joseph, noting that פסים (*pasim*) can be split into two words פס ים (*pas yam*) (a strip of sea).

<sup>29</sup> Midrash Tehillim (Shocheh Tov) 114: “When Israel arrived to the sea, they waged war with each other to see which tribe would descend into the sea first. . . . The sea saw that Israel was waging war on each other for the sake of sanctifying the Holy Name. The sea said, ‘Why am I standing?’ Immediately it fled, as it says, ‘The sea saw and fled.’ Another factor [led the sea to flee]: it saw the coffin of Joseph going down to the sea.” Gen. Rabbah 87:8: “Shimon, a man of Kitron, says, “In the merit of the bones of Joseph, the sea was torn for Israel.”

<sup>30</sup> That is, the “Shepherd of Israel” in Ps. 80:2 refers to G-d. But Sotah 36b and Rashi take the view that Israel is equated to a flock called Joseph, because it was Joseph who supported Israel and provided for them during the days of famine. Thus, Joseph, too, is considered a shepherd of Israel.