

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter V: Chavei Sarah (Gen. 23:1-25:18)

Essay 3: Abraham's eulogy of Sarah, and the effect of the death of a tzaddik

**פסוק** וַיבֹּא אַבְרָהָם לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה קוֹדֵם וְלִבְכָתָהּ. דַּתְחִלָּה אָדָם בּוֹכָה עַל מֵתוֹ וְלִבְסוּף מְסַפִּידוֹ, דְּשִׁלְשָׁה לְבָכִי וְשִׁבְעָה לְהִסְפֵּד וְעוֹד לְמָה יֵשׁ כָּ"ף זַעִירָא בְּמִלַּת וְלִבְכּוֹתָהּ.

We find in a verse, “Abraham came to eulogize Sarah” before it is written “and to cry for her” (Gen. 23:2). The order seems reversed, for **at first a man cries for his departed one and at the end will eulogize him: three days for crying and seven days of eulogy** (Moed Katan 27b). One can also ask, **why is there a miniature *caf* [כ] in the word “and he cried for her”?**

וַיּוֹבֵן בְּמָה נִשְׁפָּטָב בַּעַל סִפְרָא מַעְבֵּר יַבֵּק (בַּמֶּאֱמָר שִׁפְתָא אֶמֶת פֶּרַק י"ט) וז"ל, וְהִסְפֵּד לְמֵת הוּא תוֹעֵלֶת גְּדוּל, כִּי עַל יְדֵי הַדְּמָעוֹת יִפְתָּחוּ לְמֵת שְׁעָרֵי דְמַעָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים, הַמְּסוּלְקִים מִן הַדִּין, כְּאֶמְרָם שְׁעָרֵי דְמַעָה לֹא נִנְעָלוּ. אֲמַנְם צָרִיף שְׁיִהְיֶה הַבְּכִי לְתוֹעֵלֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְלֹא לְתוֹעֵלֶת הַחוּמָר עַכ"ל. וְכַדִּי לְרִמּוֹז שְׁהַבְּכִי שְׁלוֹ הֵיָה לְתוֹעֵלֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְלֹא לְתוֹעֵלֶת הַחוּמָר, הַנֵּיחַ הַכָּ"ף זַעִירָא לִוְמֵר שְׁמִיעַט בְּבִכּוּתוֹ שְׁלֹא בְּכָה כְּלַפֵּי הַחוּמָר אֲלֵא מִחֲמַת הַסִּפְד לְתוֹעֵלֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ. וּמִשּׁוֹם הַכִּי, אֲמַר לְסַפֵּד לְשָׂרָה וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן וְלִבְכּוֹתָהּ.

**It is understood by what is written by the author of the sefer Ma'avar Yavok (in the article Sefat Emet, section 19).<sup>1</sup> He writes: “The eulogy for the dead serves a great purpose, because as a result of the tears shed at the eulogy, the upper gates of tears will open, gates redeemed from judgment, as it says ‘even though the gates or prayer were locked [with the destruction of the Temple], the gates of tears won’t be locked.’<sup>2</sup> So in fact, crying is needed for the purpose of the soul and not for the purpose of the body.” In order to hint that [Abraham’s] crying was for a purpose of the soul and not for the purpose of the body, the miniature *caf* was placed to say that his crying was minimized.<sup>3</sup> That is, he wasn’t crying for**

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron Berechiah ben Moses ben Nehemiah (d. 1639), Italian Kabbalist who lived in Modena. In 1626, he published Ma'avar Yavok, with readings, laws, and customs relating to sickness, deathbed, burial, and mourning rites.

<sup>2</sup> Berachot 32b: “Rabbi Elazar also said: Since the day the Temple was destroyed the gates of prayer were locked [and prayer is not accepted as it once was,] as it is said [in lamentation of the Temple’s destruction]: ‘Though I plead and call out, He shuts out my prayer’ (Lam. 3:8). Yet, even though the gates of prayer were locked [with the destruction of the Temple], the gates of tears were not locked [and one who cries before G-d may rest assured that his prayers will be heard], as it is stated: ‘Hear my prayer, L-rd, and give ear to my pleading, keep not silence at my tears’ (Ps. 39:13).”

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (the Ba'al ha-Turim) (c. 1269-1343), Medieval rabbinic authority, in his commentary on the Torah, said that the miniature *caf* signified a minimization of crying.

the body, i.e., the loss of her physical presence, but rather as a eulogy for the purpose of the soul. Because of this, it says “to eulogize Sarah,” and afterward it says, “and to cry for her.”

ועוד יש לומר שהפתיח לא זכר הכי ראשון שדָרַךְ לבוא מחמת הטבע, שהרי תָּכַף שָׁאֲדָם שומע איזו שמועה רעה או רואה איזה מקרה רע, בְּרַ מִיָּנֹן, עֵינָיו זולגות דמעה, ואינו שום שבח וכבוד לשָׂרָה. ואף הכי שָׂבָא מחמת ההספד אין צוֹרֵךְ להזכירו, דבְּכָלֵל מֵאֲתִים מְנָה. ומה שפתיח ולבִּפְתָּה חידוּשָׁא קא משמע לן, שָׂאֵף לאַחַר שְׁעָבְרוּ יְמֵי הַהֶסֶפֶד כִּל עוֹד שְׁהִיָּה זֹכֵר מַעֲשֵׂיהָ וּגְבוּרוֹתֶיהָ בְּעֶסְקֵי בֵּיתָהּ וּבְיָרְאָתָהּ, עֵינָיו זולגות דמעה, וְאֵתֵי שְׁפִיר שְׁהֶפְסִיק בְּמִלַּת לְשָׂרָה בֵּין לְסִפְד וּלְבִפְתָּהּ, שְׁהִיָּה לוֹ לומר לְסִפּוֹד וּלְבִכּוֹת אֵת שָׂרָה, אֲלֵא וְדַאי שְׁלִסְפוֹד לְשָׂרָה כְּבָר נִגְמַר הַחַיִּיב שְׁהִיָּה לוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת. וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן וּלְבִפְתָּהּ הוּא עָנָן אַחַר.

Furthermore, it can be said that Scripture doesn't recall the first sob that comes naturally. That is, as a man hears any bad news or sees any bad incident (may it not happen to us), his eyes will be streaming with tears, but in this initial sob there was no praise and honor for Sarah. It also wasn't necessary to mention the crying that came from the eulogy, as in the rule of 200 pieces of silver.<sup>4</sup> From the text, “and to cry for her,” we learn something new: that even after the days of eulogy passed, as long as [Abraham] remembered [Sarah's] actions, and her strength in taking care of her household, and her strength in the fear of G-d, his eyes would stream tears, and with this understanding it's fine that there is an interruption of the word “for Sarah” being placed between the words “to eulogize” and “to cry for her.” That is, [Scripture] could have said “to eulogize and to cry for Sarah,” with the two verbs together, followed by one mention of the object, which would have suggested that the crying occurred at the eulogy. But instead it separated the verbs by having the object mentioned after each, so that it is certain that in eulogizing Sarah, he already concluded the obligation that he had to perform, to rouse others to cry for her, i.e., for the benefit of her soul. The fact that it afterward says “and to cry for her” was with regard to a different matter, i.e., his remembering her even after the days of mourning.

ועוד יש לומר דלא היָה צְרִיךְ קְרָא לומר לְסִפְד לְשָׂרָה, שְׁכָבָר אָמַר וְתָמַת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע וְכוּ', וְהִיָּה לוֹ לומר וְיָבֵא אַבְרָהָם לְסִפְדָּהּ וּלְבִפְתָּהּ. אֲלֵא מִשּׁוּם דְּקִיָּמָא לָן עוֹלָה עִמּוֹ וְאִינָה יוֹרְדָתָה, וְהָאִשָּׁה מְסַפִּידִין אוֹתָהּ אֵף בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהָ בְּעָלָהּ, לְפִיכָךְ אָמַר הַפְתּוּב לְסִפּוֹד לְשָׂרָה דְּנִקְא, שְׂאֲבָרָהֶם לֹא בָּא לְהֶסְפִּיד לְשָׂרָה בְּשִׁבִיל שְׁהִיָּתָה אִשְׁתּוֹ בְּלִבָּד, אֲלֵא אֵף בְּשִׁבַח הַמַּגִּיעַ לַעֲצָמָה אֵף אִם לֹא הִיָּתָה אִשְׁתּוֹ, עַל דְּרָךְ שְׁפִירָשׁוּ ז"ל עִם בְּנֵי אֶפְרַיִם אִינוּ יִצְחָק, עִם יִצְחָק אֶפְרַיִם אִינוּ בְּנֵי.

It is also worth noting that it wasn't necessary for Scripture to say “to eulogize Sarah,” as [the verse] had already said, “Sarah died at Kiryat Arba,” and so afterward [the verse] could have said, “and Abraham came to eulogize her and to cry for her.” Rather,

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<sup>4</sup> Sanhedrin 31a discusses two witnesses, where one says that a defendant owes a plaintiff 100 dinar, and the second says the defendant owes the plaintiff 200 dinar. The law is that the defendant owes 100, because the second witness's “200” encompasses 100 (i.e., there are two witnesses to 100, but only one witness for 200). Thus, it is understood that crying is subsumed within a eulogy, and it wasn't necessary to separately mention it.

because we hold that, “she ascended with him and didn’t descend with him” (Ketubot 48a),<sup>5</sup> and to contrast her case with the fact that people typically eulogize a woman by giving her some credit for the actions of her husband, Scripture says specifically “to eulogize Sarah.” That is, Abraham didn’t come to eulogize Sarah only because she was his wife, i.e., to give her partial credit for his accomplishments, but rather also to eulogize the praise due to her own accomplishments apart from her being his wife. This was explained by the compiler of Gen. Rabbah of blessed memory, that Sarah protected Isaac by requesting the expulsion of Ishmael, whom she didn’t want associated “with my son, even if he wasn’t Isaac;” or “with Isaac, even if he wasn’t my son.”<sup>6</sup>

ובנה יובן מאמר רבותינו ו"ל פֶּרֶק י"ג דְּשַׁבָּת: אָמַר ר' [שְׁמַעוֹן] בֶּן פִּזִי אָמַר ר' יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי מְשׁוּם בַּר קַפְרָא כָּל הַמּוֹרִיד דְּמַעוֹת עַל אָדָם כְּשֶׁר הַקַּב"ה סוֹפְרָן וּמְנִיחָן בְּבֵית גְּנֻזִי, שְׁנֵאמַר נְדִי סִפְרָתָה אֶתָּה שִׁימָה דְּמַעְתִּי בְּנֶאֱדָד וְכוּ'. דְּקִשָּׁה הֵיכָא רְמִיזָא בְּפִסּוּק הוֹרְדַת דְּמַעוֹת עַל אָדָם כְּשֶׁר.

With this explanation that shedding tears helps the soul of the deceased, one will understand the saying of our rabbis of blessed memory, in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter in Shabbat (105b): “Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said in the name of Bar Kappara: Anyone who sheds tears over an upright person, the Holy One, Blessed be He, counts his tears and places them in His treasury [בְּבֵית גְּנֻזִי], as it is stated: ‘You have counted my wanderings, put my tears into your flask; are they not in your book?’ (Ps. 56:9).” Because without this explanation, it would be difficult to see how this verse hints at shedding tears over an upright person.

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<sup>5</sup> Ketubot 48a: A wife must be considered at least equal in status to her husband. If he comes from a higher social status, she ascends with him, i.e., to his social status. However, if she comes from a higher social status, she does not descend to his social status, but remains elevated.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 21:8-10 states that Isaac grew and was weaned, with Abraham hosting a great feast, and Sarah saw Ishmael playing (or laughing) [using the same word that is the root of Isaac’s name] and “said to Abraham, ‘Cast out that servant-woman and her son, for the son of that servant shall not share in the inheritance *with my son, with Isaac.*’ ”

Gen. Rabbah 53:11 explains this apparently uncharitable action. It quotes Rabbi Akiva that Ishmael’s “playing” meant engaging in illicit sexual relations (as in Gen. 39:17). It quotes Rabbi Ishmael that Ishmael’s “playing” meant engaging in idolatry (as in one interpretation of Ex. 32:6). It quotes Rabbi Elazar, the son of Rabbi Yosi the Galilean, that Ishmael’s “playing” means spilling blood (as in Sam. II 2:14). It quotes Rabbi Azaria as quoting Rabbi Levi that Ishmael was aiming an arrow at Isaac, while pretending to be playing (as in Prov. 26:18-19). Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said that the dispute was simply one of inheritance, that Ishmael was laughing at everyone’s happiness during the feast to celebrate Isaac’s weaning, saying, “You are fools, because I’m the firstborn and I will take a double portion,” and thus Sarah answered that she didn’t want Isaac to have to share his inheritance with Ishmael (let alone get a smaller portion).

Finally, Gen. Rabbah interprets the apparently redundant “with my son, with Isaac” of Gen. 21:10 as follows: “I wouldn’t want my son to be influenced by Ishmael, even if my son was not a special boy. Furthermore, even if Isaac weren’t my son, I still would recognize him as a special boy with great holiness and potential, and wouldn’t want him to be influenced by Ishmael. Even more so, since Isaac is both my own son and also a boy imbued with great holiness and potential, I wouldn’t want him to be influenced by Ishmael.

ולפי הפשט יש לומר שהמזמור מסתיים כי הצלת נפשי ממנות, הלא רגלי מדחוי, להתהלך לפני אלהים באור הסיים, וקשה דאם מתהלך לפני אלהים באור הסיים, שמע מינה שכבר מת ונפטר! ומהו כי הצלת נפשי ממנות? וצריך לומר דמיירי על מיתת הצדיקים שמכפרת, ואמרו במדרש הקב"ה רואה צדיק אחד ונוטלו מביניהם ומגין על כל הדור. ולכן בעת שאנו חייבים מיתה מה אלה עושה כדי להצילנו, אלה לוקם צדיק אחד להתהלך לפניו באור הסיים, ובנה הצלת נפשי—דהיינו כל בני דורי—ממות. ולא די שאנו ניצולים ממנות, אלא אף מגזרות קשות, בר מינו, וזהו הלא רגלי מדחוי.

**One can note that the psalm concludes, “For You have saved me from death, my foot from stumbling, that I may walk before G-d in the light of the living” (Ps. 56:14). According to the plain meaning, the difficulty is that if one walks before G-d (in the light of the living), it sounds as if the person is already dead! So why does it say, “for You have saved me from death”? It is necessary to say that the judgment of the death of the righteous is an atonement, and it says in the Midrash (Gen. Rabbah 44:5), that the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees one righteous person and takes him from among them (i.e., G-d takes the life of the righteous person) and thus protects the entire generation. Therefore, the psalm can be understood as meaning that “at a time that we are worthy of death because of our sins, what You have done in order to save us, is that You take one righteous person to walk before You in the light of the living, and in this you saved me—that is all the members of my generation—from death. It’s not enough that we were saved from death, but also from strict decrees (may it not happen to us), and this is the meaning of ‘saved . . . my foot from stumbling.’ ”**

ועוד יש לומר שנדי חסר נא"ו הם אותיות די"ן. ונודע ששם אדני מורה על הדין, שכן שלש אותיות אחרונות הם אותיות די"ן. ואות אל"ף היא בחינת הרחמים המשותפים עם הדין, שבה היא מורה על שם אהי"ה שהוא רחמים. ואף באותיות די"ן עצמם יש הי"ד שהיא רחמים, אלא שכשהיא באמצע אותיות ד"ן, נשארת מובלעת ביניהן ואין לה כח לפעול רחמים, ומכל מקום גורמת שלא יהיה רוגז גמור.

**Furthermore, one can say with regard to Ps. 56:9 quoted above, that the word נדי [nodi] [“my wanderings”], spelled without the *vav*, i.e., instead of being spelled נודי, has only the letters נדי, which if taken as a word spell *din*, justice. It is known that the title “L-rd” [אַלְרַדִּי] teaches justice, as the last three letters similarly spell די [din] [“justice”]. But the first letter of the title “L-rd”, א [aleph], is the aspect of compassion that participates with justice, as separately taught by the name of G-d אהי"ה [“I will be”]<sup>7</sup> that is itself compassionate.<sup>8</sup> Even in the letters of the word די [din] [“justice”] there is the י [yud], which is itself merciful, but when it is between the letters ד [dan] [“sitting in judgment”], it remains concealed and doesn’t have the power to act with complete compassion, though in any event it is effective that in justice, as *din* is spelled with a *yud*, there won’t be complete anger.**

<sup>7</sup> Ex. 3:13-14: Moses said to G-d, “When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The G-d of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And G-d said to Moses, “I will be what I will be.” He continued, “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘I will be sent me to you.’”

<sup>8</sup> The name “I will be” is compassionate in that it implies the eternity of G-d, and also is seen as a promise that He will remain by the side of the Jewish people.

וְזֶה סוּד שְׁאֵנוּ מִתְפַּלְלִים בְּרִגְזוֹ רַחֵם תַּזְכּוּר, וְהִנֵּי מִיְלֵי לִישְׁרָאֵל. אֲבָל בְּאוֹמוֹת כְּתִיב דֵּן אֲנֹכִי, בְּדִין גָּמוּר. אֲמַנָּם בְּהַשְׁתַּחֲוֶה גַם הָאֱלֹהִים יִהְיֶה הַשֵּׁם שְׁלֵם וְיִהְיֶה אֲדָרְבָּא הַדִּין מוּבָלַע. אֲלֵא לְפִי שֶׁהֵם מְחַצֵּה עַל מְחַצֵּה שְׂתֵי אוֹתִיּוֹת דִּין וְשְׂתֵי אוֹתִיּוֹת רַחֲמִים. מִשּׁוֹם הַכִּי, נִקְרָא דִּינָא רַפְיָא. וְאִם בְּמִיתַת הַצַּדִּיק אֵינוֹ דִּין גָּמוּר כָּל כּוֹ, שְׁהֵרִי אֵין הַצַּדִּיק נִפְטָר מִן הָעוֹלָם עַד שֶׁנִּבְרָא צַדִּיק כְּמוֹתוֹ. וְעוֹד דְּלִגְבֵי דִידֵיהּ שָׂבַח הוּא לֹא שְׁהוֹלֵךְ לְמִנְחוֹת שְׁאֲנָנוֹת, וְיִפֶּה שְׂעָה אַחַת בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא מְכַל חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. וְשִׁיבָה בֵּיהּ שְׁפִיר הַצִּירוּף שֶׁל נְדִי.

**This is an esoteric principle, that we pray, “Though angry, may You remember compassion” (Hab. 3:2), which applies to Israel. But for the nations, it is written, “I will judge” (Gen. 15:14), i.e., with complete justice. In fact, as said above, if דִּין [din] [“justice”] is spelled in partnership with an *aleph* and the letters reordered, then the title [“L-rd”] will be complete, and on the contrary justice will be intermingled with compassion, i.e., so the judgment will be tempered to some extent with mercy. Actually, the title [“L-rd”] is divided in half, with two of the letters, the *daled* and *nun*, representing justice, and two of the letters, the *aleph* and *yud*, representing compassion. Because of this division, the combination of [the title “L-rd”] is called a “lenient judgment.”<sup>9</sup> Even in the death of a righteous person there is not such a complete judgment, as “no righteous person departs from this world until another comparable righteous person is created” (Yoma 38b). Furthermore, concerning [the death of a righteous person], praise is due to him in that he goes to a carefree rest,<sup>10</sup> and “one hour . . . in the World-to-Come is better than his entire life in this world” (Pirkei Avot 4:17). This partnership with an *aleph* is a good combination with נְדִי [“my wanderings”].**

וְאָמַר הַכְּתוּב נְדִי: בְּשִׂעָה שְׂאֵתָה עוֹשֶׂה דִּין בְּעוֹלָם לְהַמִּית הַצַּדִּיק, סְפָרְתָּ, אֶתָּה סוֹפֵר דְּמַעוֹתַי, שְׂיִמָּה דְּמַעְתִּי כְּלוֹמַר הִיוֹ"ד שֶׁל דְּמַעְתִּי, בְּנִאֲדָה עִם נֹא"ד. וְאֵז וְיִהְיֶה שֵׁם אֲדֹנָי מְלֵא עִם הָאֱלֹהִים שֶׁל רַחֲמִים. הֲלֵא בִּסְפָרְתָךְ כְּמוֹ שְׂאֲמָרוֹ בְּזוֹהַר אֶתֶר אֵית לִיהּ לְהַקְבִּי"ה דְּאִיקָרִי סְפָר, וְאֵית סְפָר לְעֵילָא, וְאֵית סְפָר לְתַתָּא.

**Scripture says “my wanderings”: At the hour that You exact judgment in the world through the death of the righteous person, You count, You count my tears, put my tears [דְּמַעְתִּי] into your flask, as if to say, the *yud* of the word for “my tears” represents compassion, that you put compassion into Your flask [בְּנִאֲדָה] [*binodecha*] with the root having the spelling of a *nun*, an *aleph*, and a *daled*. Then, with the *yud* from “my tears” and the *nun*, *aleph*, and *daled* from “flask” the title of the L-rd will be complete with both the *yud* representing compassion and also the *aleph* representing compassion.<sup>11</sup> Your counting is as it says in the Zohar II:56a on the parshat Beshalach (Ex. 13:17–17:16): “The Holy One, Blessed be He, has a place called a**

<sup>9</sup> Literally “soft judgment.” The term appears in the Zohar, which contrasts the “hard judgment” (i.e., strict judgment) of the first day of Rosh Hashanah with the “soft judgment” (i.e., lenient judgment or mercy) of the second day. Gen. Rabbah 33:3 quotes Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani that in Scripture, the title *Elokim* (G-d) relates to the trait of strict judgment, while the Tetragrammaton relates to the trait of mercy. In reading Scripture and saying prayers, instead of pronouncing the Tetragrammaton, Jews pronounce the title “L-rd” (אֲדֹנָי). Thus, as with the Tetragrammaton, the title אֲדֹנָי has become associated with the trait of mercy.

<sup>10</sup> As discussed in Essay 1 of this parsha with regard to the woman of valor, that she laughs at the final day of her life because at her death she will go to a carefree rest. (See the text in Essay 1 associated with footnote 89.)

<sup>11</sup> Below, Rabbi Nachmani attributes this teaching to Rabbi David Finzi.

‘Book [of Remembrance],’ as it says, ‘search and read it in the scroll of the L-rd [not one of these shall be absent, not one shall miss its fellow; for His mouth has spoken, it is His spirit that has assembled them]’ (Isaiah 34:16).<sup>12</sup> I.e., G-d records the deeds of people in the Book of Remembrance, and likewise counts the tears of a righteous person and records them there. It also says in the Zohar II:200a on the parsha Vayakhel (Ex. 35:1–38:20), “**And He will write a Book of Remembrance. What is this? There is an upper book, and there is a lower book.** A remembrance of an existing holy place, that was hurled from below upward, forever upward. The Book of Remembrance exists on two levels, as one entity.”

ומה שאמר, הקב"ה סופרן ומניחן בבית גנניו, משום דנאד"ה גימטריא גנניו עם הפולל. ועוד פי בבי"ת גנניו הוא בגימטריא ת"ץ, והשם הראשון של שם מ"ב יש בו רמז לנפילות של עלמין קדמאין. והוא מתחלק לשני חלקים, חלק אחד בגימטריא י"ו וחלק השני הם אותיות ת"ץ, שהעלמין הנקראים אבג"י כלם נתצו ונשברו, שהוא סוף השם ת"ץ. וסוד מפת הצדיקים היא העלאת מ"ן וקבוץ פזורים.

**What this is saying, is that the Holy One, Blessed be He, counts and places [tears] in His treasury, because נאד"ה [nodecha] ["Your flask"] has the Gematria value of גנניו ["His treasury"], with the total.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, בבי"ת גנניו ["in His treasury"] (quoted above in Shabbat 105b) has a Gematria of 490, ת"ץ, and the first name of the 42-letter name of G-d<sup>14</sup> has within it a hint of the downfall of the early spiritual worlds that existed before the physical universe was created.<sup>15</sup> This first name of six letters is divided into two parts, one part [אבג"י] with the Gematria of 16, and a second part with the letters ת"ץ, as the worlds which are called (i.e., represented by) אבג"י (i.e., father of mercy) were completely shattered and broken, which is represented by the end of the name, ת"ץ ["broken"]. The esoteric meaning of the death of the righteous is the raising of מ"ן and the gathering of the dispersed.<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew word for “book” (ספר) (*sefer*), is derived from the same root as the Hebrew word for “counting” (ספירה) (*sefira*). I.e., a book is a telling or recounting of a story.

<sup>13</sup> Using the Gematria method of adding the number of words to the total, the value of “your flask” [75] adding one for the word equals 76, which is the Gematria of “his storehouse.”

<sup>14</sup> This sentence and the next relates to the mystic prayer “Ana b’koach,” attributed to Rabbi Nechuniah ben Hakanah. It contains seven verses, each with six words. The acronym of each verse forms a mystic six lettered name of G-d; and the acronym of the entire 42-word prayer forms a mystic 42-letter name of G-d. The first verse of the prayer is אָנָּא בְּכַח גְּדֻלַּת יְמִינְךָ תַּתִּיר צְרוּרָה, “Please! With the strength of your right hand’s greatness, release the bound!” “Release the bound” is interpreted by some as “free Israel from our Exile,” and is interpreted by others as “untie the bundled sins,” i.e., the accumulated sins of Israel that are bound together as a barrier that prevents our prayers from ascending to the Heavenly Throne. The acronym of the first verse is therefore א"ב ג"י ת"ץ, which is divided in *Zera Shimshon*’s discussion into the first four letters and the last two letters.

<sup>15</sup> Ordered in two-letter groups, as א"ב ג"י ת"ץ, the acronym can be interpreted as *av* (father) *yud-gimmel* (the Gematria for 13, representing G-d’s 13 attributes of mercy) and *tatz* (breaks, as in breaking the *klipot* of concealment and constriction). This is the hint at the destruction of spiritual worlds before the physical universe was created.

<sup>16</sup> מ"ן is an acronym for מַיִן נִוְקָבִין (the waters of the feminine principle). The feminine principle in Kabbalah describes a vessel that receives the outward male light, then inwardly nurtures and gives birth to lower Sefirot. The waters of the feminine principle seek to rise upward toward the male principle. Rabbi Nachmani seems to be saying, “Please! With the strength of your right hand’s greatness” relates to the rising of the waters of the feminine principle, and that “Release the bound” relates to the end of Israel’s Exile by the gathering of Jews from around the world.

וכן ההספד שעושים עליהם סודו הוא, להעלות נשמות צשוקות עמהם לגן עדן. ולפי הכס והריבוי של הדמעות, כך מתרבה התיקון למעלה. ולכן דניק לומר, הקב"ה סופרן, שסופר אותן הדמעות, ונדע שחרבן העלמין קדמאין הוא בסוד העיון. פקח עיניך וראה שממתינו. ואם כן הדמעות הם דבר בעתו מה טוב בעת מיתת הצדיק וחרבן עולמו, שהצדיק יסוד עולם וקושה לפני הקב"ה סילוקן של צדיקים, ודוקא מפני שנוזלים מהעין. וכן פירש המקובל האלהי פבוד מורינו הרב רבי דוד פינצי זצ"ל בענין אחר, שימה דמעותי בנאדך, היו"ד על נא"ד, שהם אותיות של השם הקדוש.

**Thus, the eulogy made for [the righteous] has a great esoteric meaning, to elevate oppressed souls<sup>17</sup> with them to the Garden of Eden. According to the strength of the multitude of tears, the corrective actions above that are required to address any sin committed by the righteous will be multiplied. Therefore, it is precise to say, the Holy One, Blessed be He, counts them, that He counts these tears, and it is known that the destruction of the early worlds is an esoteric secret of the eye, as it says, “Open Your eyes and see our desolation” (Dan. 9:18). If so, the tears are a good thing at the time of the death of the righteous person and the destruction of his world. For the righteous person is a foundation of the world and the removal of the righteous from before G-d is difficult,<sup>18</sup> and especially because of the streaming of tears from the eye. Therefore, the holy Kabbalist, my great teacher David Finzi<sup>19</sup> of blessed memory, explained on a different matter as noted above, with regard to, “put my tears into your flask,” the *yud* from “my tears” in combination with the *nun*, *aleph*, and *daled* of “flask”, these are the letters of the Holy Name (L-rd).**

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<sup>17</sup> Oppressed souls are those that suffer from the remembrances of the sins they committed while alive, not realizing that G-d will also remember their good deeds and that He will go beyond the letter of the law to be lenient toward them. See, e.g., Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522–70), *Pardes Rimmonim*, 31:7:4.

<sup>18</sup> “The removal of the righteous is more difficult for the Holy One, Blessed be He, . . . than the destruction of the Temple.” *Eichah Rabbah* 1:37.

<sup>19</sup> Rabbi David ben Uzziel Finzi, rabbi and Kabbalist in Mantua, Italy, was the father-in-law of Moshe Chayim Luzzatto (the Ramchal), and a teacher of Rabbi Nachmani. His sermons, entitled “*Shetach ha’Ohel*,” of a Kabbalistic character, are not known to have been published, but reportedly still exist in manuscript.