Parasha Naso

וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: נשא את-ראש בני גרשון גם-הם לבית אבתם למשפחתם: מבן שלשים שנה ומעלה עד בן-חמשים שנה תפקד אותם כל-הבא לצבא צבא לעבד עבדה באהל מועד:

Today I want a blast from the past… a teaching I did when I was a moreh. It is a bit Remez and D'rash. The teaching is in line with the Haftarah Naso. So, bear with me as we sift through scripture and discover something more. *"Then Manoach asked the angel of Adonai, "What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?" But the angel of Adonai said to him, "Why do you ask for my name? It is wonderful." (Judges 13:17-18)* I want to follow that verse in Judges with *Isaiah 7:14; "Lakhen Yiten Adonai Hu Lakhem Ot Hineh Ha'Almah Ha'Ra V'Yoledet Ben Ve-Ka-Rat She-Mo I-Ma-Nu El." – "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name* ==Immanuel=="*

לָכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא, לָכֶם--אוֹת: הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָה, הָרָה וְיֹלֶדֶת בֵּן, וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ, ==עִמָּנוּ אֵל.==

The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 is among the most well-known passages in the book of Isaiah. It's also one of the most controversial, for many reasons. It's difficult to explain the virgin birth of Yeshua and there is always someone that wants to cast doubt as to the meaning of *almah* Isaiah 7:14. A favorite argument is that the Hebrew word almah does not mean virgin but instead refers to a young woman of marriageable age without respect to prior sexual activity. The more precise word for *virgin* is *betulah*, and that is not used in Isaiah. The Brit Chadasha author, Matthew, we are so often told, mistakenly assumed the term meant virgin. His ignorance led to the doctrine of the virgin birth of Yeshua. Are these assertions correct? It is true that *betulah* provides more contextual clues as to sexual inactivity, but does that mean *almah* never means virgin? Outside of Isaiah 7:14, the word almah occurs only six times in the Tanakh. In all but one of those occurrences, the context provides no clue as to the sexual status of the young woman or women. Virginity is suggested, however, in *Song of Solomon 6:8*, where *almah* occurs in the plural: *There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins (almah; pl: alamot) without number.* The distinction between queens, concubines, and *alamot* is important. A queen was a royal wife, and obviously entails a sexual relationship with the king. A concubine was a sexual partner who held certain privileges, but not to the level of a wife. This would suggest that the third category, the *alamot*, had no sexual relationship with the king. An *almah* in this text was, in essence, a candidate for become either a concubine or a wife. Where else in the Tanakh so we see a God encounter with man? In the Torah of course!

We read in Genesis 32:29 where Jacob was wrestling an angel "Malach" - *"Then He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but rather Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and you have overcome."…*

Va'Yishal Ya'Akov Va'yomer Ha'Gidana Shemekha Va'Yomer Lamah Zeh Tishal Lishmi Va'Yevarekh Oto Sham... then Jacob asked and said, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, <mark>"What's this—you are asking My name?"</mark> Then He blessed him there.

To examine this thought… we will use one of the 7 Principles of Hillel of Interpretation: Ge'zera Shav'vah = Equivalent expressions. "If a seemingly superfluous word or phrase appears in two disconnected passages, it may indicate that those passages are to inform each other and become sources of information – filling in the gaps, as it were, for each other." (Yitzchak Et'Shalom) With that process in mind let us look to the story of Manoach in Judges. *Judges 13:2-3; Now there was a certain man from Zorah, from a Danite clan, whose name was Manoach. His wife was barren and bore no children. [3] Then the angel of Adonai appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have not borne children, but you will conceive and bear a son…* Then *13:6 Then the woman came and told her husband saying, "A man of God came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome! But I did not ask him where he was from, nor did he tell me his name.* Next, *13:17-18, Then Manoach asked the angel of Adonai, "What is your name, so that when your words come to pass we may honor you?" But the angel of Adonai said to him, "Why do you ask for my name? It is wonderful."*

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וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה, <mark>לָמָּה זֶּה תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמִי--וְהוּא-פֶלִאי</mark>.

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Lamah-zeh Tishal Lishmi …V'hoo Fay'leh? Now let's compare Genesis 32 and Judges 13 a bit more. In both scriptures we see that the Malach, the angel was a man! The Hebrew word for man is "Ish". Let's look at *Genesis 32:25, "Va'Yivater Ya'Akov Levado Va'Yeavek* <mark>Ish</mark> *Imo Ad Alot Ha'Shakhar." - "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a* <mark>man</mark> *with him until the breaking of the day.*

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וַיִּוָּתֵר יַעֲקֹב, לְבַדּוֹ; וַיֵּאָבֵק <mark>אִישׁ</mark> עִמּוֹ, עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר.

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Now to *Judges 13:6, "Va'Tavo Ha'Isha Va'Tomer Le'Isha Lemor* <mark>Ish</mark> *Ha'Elohim Ba Elai U'Marehu Kemare Malach Ha'Elohim Nora Me'od Ve'lo Sheilti-Hu Ei Mizeh Hu Ve'Et Shemo Lo Higid Li"* - "Then the woman came and told her husband, saying: <mark>'A man</mark> of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; and I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name;

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וַתָּבֹא הָאִשָּׁה, וַתֹּאמֶר לְאִישָׁהּ לֵאמֹר, <mark>אִישׁ</mark> הָאֱלֹהִים בָּא אֵלַי, וּמַרְאֵהוּ כְּמַרְאֵה מַלְאַךְ הָאֱלֹהִים נוֹרָא מְאֹד; וְלֹא שְׁאִלְתִּיהוּ אֵי-מִזֶּה הוּא, וְאֶת-שְׁמוֹ לֹא-הִגִּיד לִי.

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But was it a man or an angel? …Let's let scripture tell us… We read in Hosea 12:5, *"Va'Yasar El-Malach Va'Yukhal Bakha Va'Yitkhanen-Lo Beit-El Yimtzaeinu Ve'Sham Yedaber Imanu." - "Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won; he wept and sought his favor. At Bethel he will find us, and there He will speak with us.*

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וַיָּשַׂר <mark>אֶל-מַלְאָךְ</mark> וַיֻּכָל, בָּכָה וַיִּתְחַנֶּן-לוֹ; בֵּית-אֵל יִמְצָאֶנּוּ, וְשָׁם, יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ.

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Hold on, didn't an angel appear to the Manoach's wife? Indeed, *Judges 13:3* says, "Va'Yera Malach Adonai El-Ha'Isha Va'Yomer Eleiha Hine-nah At Akara Ve'Lo Yalad-Te Ve'Harit Ve'Yalad-Te Ben." – "And the angel of Adonai appeared unto the woman, and said to her: 'Behold now, you are barren, and have not borne; but you shall conceive, and bear a son."

וַיֵּרָא מַלְאַךְ-יְהוָה, אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה; וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ, הִנֵּה-נָא אַתְּ-עֲקָרָה וְלֹא יָלַדְתְּ, וְהָרִית, וְיָלַדְתְּ בֵּן.

 And it wasn't a man Jacob wrestled, was it? Was it an angel… or was it God? Let's see… *Genesis 32:31*, "Va'Yikra Ya'Akov Shem Ha'Makom Penei-El Kiraiti ELohim Panim El-Panim Va'Tinatzel Nafshi." – "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.'

וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם, פְּנִיאֵל: כִּי-רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים, וַתִּנָּצֵל נַפְשִׁי.

Well, if Ge'zera Shav'vah = Equivalent expressions holds true, then it has to be God with Manoach too, yes? Let's see, *J udges 13:22, Va'Yomer Manoach El Ishto Mot Namut Ki Elohim Rainu." – "And Manoach said to his wife: 'We shall surely die, because we have seen God.'*

וַיֹּאמֶר מָנוֹחַ אֶל-אִשְׁתּוֹ, מוֹת נָמוּת: כִּי אֱלֹהִים, רָאִינוּ.

 So, we have Manoach and Jacob encountering a man, an angel and God… Yet I think we have to dig a little deeper to we how this plays out. Reading *J udges 13:18* again, *"Va'Yomer Lo Malach Adonai Lamah Zeh Tish-Al Lish-Mi Ve-Hu Fay'eh?" – "And the angel of Adonai said to him: 'Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?'*

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה, לָמָּה זֶּה תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמִי--וְהוּא-פֶלִאי.
Lamah-zeh Tishal Lishmi V'hoo Fay'leh?
Now I am sure you know where I am going with this… Who is called wonderful? We only need to read Isaiah 9:6 for the answer… *"Ki Yeled Yulad-Lanu Ben Nitan-Lanu Va'Tehi Ha'Misra Al-Shikhmo Va'Yikra Shemo Pe'Leh Yoetz El Gibor Avi-Ad Sar-Shalom." – "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*

כִּי-יֶלֶד יֻלַּד-לָנוּ, בֵּן נִתַּן-לָנוּ, וַתְּהִי הַמִּשְׂרָה, עַל-שִׁכְמוֹ; וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא, אֵל גִּבּוֹר, אֲבִי-עַד, שַׂר-שָׁלוֹם.

Rabbi Yose the Galilean said, "The name of the messiah is peace, for it is said everlasting father, prince of peace." He also said, "Great peace for in that hour in which messiah is revealed to Israel, he begins with peace for it said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announces peace, the harbinger of good tidings, that announces salvation; that saith unto Zion: 'Thy God reigns!' (Isaiah: 52:7)

I want to read the next verse, Isaiah 9:7, because I think it holds a clue. It says, Le'Marbeh Ha'Misra U'Le'Shalom Ein-Ketz Al Kiseh David…- *"Of the <mark>increase</mark> of His rule and peace there is no end, upon the throne of David and over His reign, to establish it and sustain it with right-ruling and with righteousness from now on, even forever."* The word for increase here is L'Marbeh". Bute something isn't right in the Hebrew… the word, has what appears to be a defect in the spelling.

<mark>לסרבה</mark> הַמִּשְׂרָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם אֵין-קֵץ, עַל-כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְעַל-מַמְלַכְתּוֹ, לְהָכִין אֹתָהּ וּלְסַעֲדָהּ, בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָקָה; מֵעַתָּה, וְעַד-עוֹלָם, קִנְאַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, תַּעֲשֶׂה-זֹּאת.

לְ<mark>מַ</mark>רְבֵּה   L'Marbeh – there's a closed mem, a mem sofit in the middle of the word…. if you know anything about Hebrew a sofit is always at the end of a word, not in the middle… ם - A Closed Mem (Mem Sofit), מַ An Open Mem – מַ - ם Do you see the problem here? An example would be מַיִם Mayim (water) and מִרְיָם, Miriam (Mary) That's how it should be. *"Our sages have taught that the closed letter Mem which normally appears at the end of a word, but here it appears in the middle of the word L'Marbeh, as an allusion to Mashiach."* Now of course I chose those words on purpose as it demonstrates the point of where I am going… the birth of our messiah by a virgin. We all know that water comes forth during childbirth, so that's the mayim… and Miriam, well, she was the mother, the virgin I am speaking about. We also know that the numerical value of the letter MEM is 40! This is alluding to the 40 weeks the baby is formed in the womb. But we got to prove that she was a virgin… and this is where it is a matter of Hebrew grammar gymnastics.   We read in *Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore Adonai Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young <mark>maiden</mark> shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*   In this verse the word for maiden is Almah, YET the Hebrew word for virgin is Betulah? בְּתוּלָה   Are we missing something wrong here?

לָכֵן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנָי הוּא, לָכֶם--אוֹת: הִנֵּה <mark>הָעַלְמָה</mark>, הָרָה וְיֹלֶדֶת בֵּן, וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ, עִמָּנוּ אֵל.

We need to use the principle of Ge'zera Shav'vah again to figure it out. We see in the book of Esther. In Esther 2:3, 8, we read that Esther was held in waiting twelve months with (literally) young women, virgins (na'arah betulah) under the supervision of Hegai while the king sought a new queen. That the description of these women involves both terms na'ar and betulah is important.   It means that a na'ar could indeed be a betulah - the more precise word for virgin. Esther was eventually taken from the harem under Hegai to the king for an evening liaison. Afterward, she was assigned to second harem supervised by Shaashgaz who oversaw the concubines (Esther 2:14), indicating Esther was no longer a virgin. That Esther and the king had a sexual relationship during the night is clear from Esther 2:14; she [Esther] would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name. To go in to a man or woman is, of course, a common euphemism for sexual intercourse.

The ancient cultural context shows us that every attempt was made to have a supply of virgins for the king. However, it is possible that among the third category some prior sexual activity could not be detected. But that overlooks the point of Song of Songs 6:8: each almah was construed to be a virgin. It simply is not correct to assert that almah would never have been understood as virgin. But another tack: Esther is never called an almah in her story, so does that mean that almah, the word in Isaiah 7:14, does not mean virgin? Hardly. For the assertion that almah cannot speak of a virgin to be coherent, na'ar and betulah cannot overlap with almah. In other words, almah needs to be firmly distinct from these other terms. This is not the case. In Genesis 24 Rebekah is referred to with all three terms (na'ar – 24:14, betulah – 24:16, and almah - 24:43). This indicates quite clearly that these terms do overlap and, therefore, an almah could indeed be a virgin.

Reading again in Genesis this time with the story of Eliezer finding a wife for Isaac in *Genesis 24:16, "Now the girl [Rebekah] was very beautiful to behold, a virgin [בתולה, betulah]; no man had known her; and she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up."* Then another glitch when Eliezer recalls his story to Rebekah's father (Bethuel), he calls Rebekah a young woman (עלמה, almah'), a sexually mature woman at the prime age for work, because he was not privy to her actual sexual status. Genesis 24:42-44, *"So I came today to the spring, and I said, 'Adonai, the God of Abraham my master, if You are really going to make my way upon which I am walking successful, look, I'm standing by the spring of water. So let it be that the <mark>unmarried girl</mark> who is going out to draw water, to whom I'll say, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jug," and she'll say to me, "You drink, and I'll also draw water for your camels"—let her be the woman whom Adonai appoints for my master's son!'* The word here is almah, an unmarried girl.   The same if seen in *Matthew 1:23*, "*Henei ha'Almah...*<u>*Behold, the virgin* </u>*shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel; being interpreted, God with us."* The Hebrew word almah is often erroneously translated as "virgin." A betulah' (virgin) can be an al-mah (young sexually mature woman) and vice versa; but these two words are not synonymous! A betulah' is not necessarily a young woman and a young woman is not necessarily a virgin. Something is awry and it has to do with these two words, almah and betulah. So, let's find that word elsewhere and get some clarity.   Reading Exodus 2:8 we find another Miriam, the young child. It says, *"And Pharaoh's daughter said to her: 'Go.' And the <mark>maiden</mark> went and called the child's mother."* Again, the word here is בְּתוּלָה (betulah), an obvious virgin, Moshe's sister, a young girl. So, while the word 'almah can refer to a virgin, it does not specifically mean 'virgin.' Its basic meaning is primarily related to adolescence, not sexual chastity." Some may think this line of reasoning destroys the case for a virgin birth. But it does not. If we translate almah as a "young woman of marriageable age," in the culture of Isaiah's time, it was assumed that she would be a virgin!

In other words, rather than needing to show beyond a shadow of a doubt that almah linguistically means "virgin," we can simply point out that an almah in that culture was a virgin. Some have argued that the other Hebrew word that clearly does refer to a virgin is betulah. If Isaiah really meant "virgin," the argument goes, he would have been better off using this alternate word. But betulah, while it could refer to a virgin, often simply means a young woman. Thus, the word betulah would not have worked for Isaiah if he meant to indicate virginity. "The Torah is again not being specific as to who, because it wants to teach us something more than just the story, it is portraying – it is the same condition and presentation we find in Genesis 24:43 that prompts us to ask of the Torah, who is the Almah in Exodus 2:8? We don't ignore the immediate context at all since it's the context that gives us clues to find the answer…Therefore we ASK THE TORAH, who is the mother of the messiah? It is Miriam (Exodus 15:20)

It is said the word of God is new every day and that concept is called שִׁבְעִים פָּנִים לַתּוֹרָה Shiv'im Panim la-Torah, "The Torah has 70 faces."   Moshe ben Shem-Tov taught that there are four basic levels of scriptural interpretation. They are: Plain/Literal - P'shat - Messianic Hint - Remez - Story/Sermon - Drash – and Hidden/Mystical – Sod.
Using this form of exegesis we have discovered in Isaiah 7 that;
1)   The Almah gives birth (Isaiah 7:14)
2)   The Torah defines Almah as a virgin (Betulah)
3)   The Almah brings forth water. (Rivkah)
4)   The Almah is appointed for the Masters son. (Isaac)
5)   The Almah's name is Miriam. (Moshe's sister)

Then in Isaiah 9 we find;
1)   The person born of the prophecy will be born of a closed womb. (word L'Marbeh)
2)   The one born of a closed womb is the Messiah. (Rabbi Yose the Galilean)
3)   The person born is the Angel of Adonai, who is both God and Man.

And it is important to note that the ancient Jewish Sages also held the belief that the Messiah wouldn't have a biological father. Here is what they taught – "The redeemer whom I shall raise up from among you, will have no father" *(Genesis Rabbah of Rabbi Moshe haDarshan)* YET, we still haven't answered the original question! Lamah-zeh Tishal Lishmi? Proverbs 30:4 says, …*Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if you know?* I ask the proverbial question, what is his name?

 We read in *Numbers 13:16: "And Moshe called Hoshea, the son of Nun, Yehoshua",* Joshua. Hoshea is written as follows: הושע and Yehoshua is written יהושע Hoshea means *salvation, from the root* ישע *(yasha)*. Yehoshua means *Yah is salvation*.   YET…
Lamah Zeh Tishal Lishmi? WHAT IS HIS NAME?

After all I have said it should be clear that when Matthew wrote, "*His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Immanuel! And you shall call him YESHUA for He shall save His people from their sin! (Matthew 1:21),* He knew the answer to the name of His Messiah. When we compare the Tankah and the Brit Chadasha we find an allusion to the answer. This gives so much more meaning to when the psalmist wrote: *"Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me." (Psalm 40:7)* and it was confirmed in *Hebrews 10:7, "Then I said, 'Here I am - it is written about me in the scroll - I have come to do your will, O God.'"*

And so, Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14, a promise made not just to Ahaz but the whole "house of David" – the entire Jewish people. In Matthew's time, Judah is still oppressed and in need of deliverance by an Immanuel, someone known as "God with us." This time, the prophecy is fulfilled in all its fullness: Yeshua, if you accept the teachings of the Brit Chadasha - was indeed God with us as He became incarnate in a human being. And for good measure, Miriam literally remained a "young woman of marriageable age", without having relations with her husband, up through the time of Yeshua's birth. Ahaz may have had his "Immanuel" in his own time as a sign that God was then with Israel, but, with the incarnation of Yeshua, the entire Jewish people have now had the ultimate "Immanuel," God literally with us in Yeshua. You now know the answer to the question…

Lamah Zeh Tishal Lishmi? His name is Yeshua! Your savior and Messiah, God with us!
Do you know Him? I pray it be so…

b'Shem Yeshua, haMelech v'haMashiach Shelanu! Amein.
("in the name of Yeshua, our King and the Messiah! Amein.")