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Nitzotzos Special Pesach Edition Newsletter

"I Am Like a Man of Seventy Years": Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, the Tikkun of Kayin, and the Meaning of Yetzias Mitzrayim at Night



Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah says in the Haggadah:

אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר, למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך. ימי חייך הימים. כל ימי חייך הלילות. וחכמים אומרים ימי חייך העולם הזה. כל ימי חייך להביא לימות המשיח.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: "Behold, I am like a man of seventy years old, yet I did not merit that the Exodus from Egypt be mentioned at night until Ben Zoma expounded it. As it is stated: 'So that you shall remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life.' 'The days of your life' refers to the days. 'All the days of your life' includes the nights. And the Sages say: 'The days of your life' refers to this world. 'All the days of your life' comes to include the days of Mashiach."

At first glance, this seems like a narrow halachic discussion. Ben Zoma derives from the words כל ימי חייך that Yetzias Mitzrayim must be mentioned not only by day, but also by night.

Yet, as we take a closer look, several questions begin to appear.

Why does Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah begin by saying, הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה? Why is that relevant here? Why does he say ולא זכיתי? Why frame this as something he did not "merit," rather than something he did not know? And what is the deeper meaning of saying Yetzias Mitzrayim specifically בלילות, at night?

In order to answer these questions we must journey back to the very beginning of time.

I. Adam HaRishon: The Root Sin Was Not Only Eating, But a Failure of Recognition

The Torah says regarding the Eitz HaDaas:

ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות

"But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." (Bereishis 2:17)

After the sin, the Torah expands the consequences:

ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתיך לאמר לא תאכל ממנו ארורה האדמה בעבורך בעצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חייך וקוץ ודרדר תצמיח לך ואכלת את עשב השדה בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם עד שובך אל האדמה כי ממנה לקחת כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב

"And to man He said: Because you listened to your wife, and you ate from the tree from which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed be the ground for your sake; with toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life... Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you... sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Bereishis 3:17–19)

Two questions immediately arise. First, why are these additional consequences introduced? If the sin was eating from the tree, why is there now a new reality of cursed ground, resistance, labor, and struggle? Second, why does the Torah stress כי שמעת לקול אשתך? The problem would seem to be that Adam ate. Why emphasize that he "listened to his wife"?

To understand this more deeply, we need to step back and look at how the world was originally designed to function.



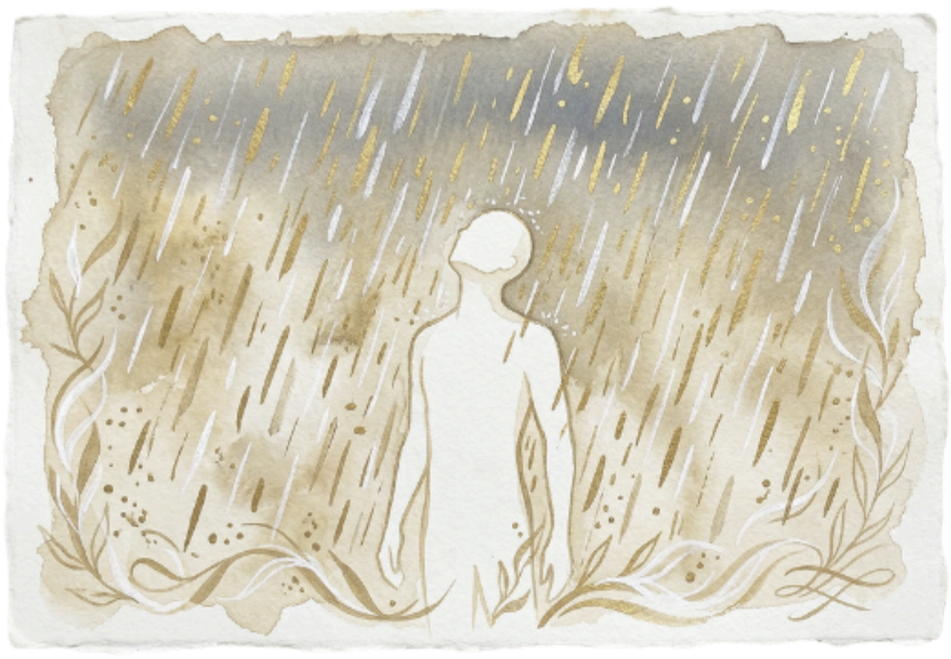
וכל שיח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ וכל עשב השדה טרם יצמח כי לא המטיר ה' אלקים על הארץ ואדם אין לעבוד את האדמה

"Now no tree of the field was yet on the earth, and no herb of the field had yet grown, because the Lord God had not brought rain upon the earth, and there was no man to work the soil." (Bereishis 2:5)

Chazal (Chullin 60b) explain that the grasses had already emerged, but they did not grow until Adam davened for them. Only after Adam recognized his need and turned to Hashem did the rain fall. From here Chazal say:

מלמד... שבא אדם הראשון וביקש עליהם רחמים וירדו גשמים וצמחו ללמדך שהקדוש ברוך הוא מתאוה לתפלתן של צדיקים

This teaches that Adam HaRishon prayed for them, rain fell, and they sprouted, to teach that the Holy One desires the prayers of the righteous.



With this in mind, we can now return to Adam's response after the sin and understand what truly went wrong.

Chazal (Avodah Zara 5a,b) calls Adam HaRishon ungrateful as Adam says to Hashem:

ויאמר האדם האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל

"And the man said: The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." (Bereishis 3:12)

Rashi explains:

אשר נתתה עמדי — לשון גנאי הוא שתולה הקלקלה במתנתו של מקום והוא עשאה לו לעזר

"The woman whom You gave to be with me" is an expression of disparagement, for he attributes the corruption to the gift of the Omnipresent, though He had made her for him as a help.

And so we see that when Adam ate from the Eitz HaDa'as there were, in truth, two failures. The first was that he ate despite Hashem's instructions not to. The second was that he lacked gratitude for the wife Hashem had given him.

Not only does Adam fail to take responsibility, he blames Chava. Deeper still, he blames Hashem for giving her to him. The gift itself becomes the object of resentment.

However, if we are being honest, is Chava not somewhat responsible for Adam HaRishon eating from the Eitz HaDa'as? Was Chava not created to be his help mate?

The Torah itself says:

ויאמר ה' אלקים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו

"It is not good for man to be alone; I shall make for him a helpmate opposite him." (Bereishis 2:18)

Why then does Chava lead Adam astray?

Chazal (Yevamos 63a) explains the deeper meaning behind the concept of עזר כנגדו:

זכה עוזרתו, לא זכה כנגדו

If he is worthy, she helps him. If he is not worthy, she stands against him.

The same person can be an עזר or a כנגדו depending on the man.

The Gemara (Sotah 2a) sharpens this even further:

אין מזווגין לו לאדם אשה אלא לפי מעשיו

A woman is matched to a man only according to his deeds.

Rashi explains that a modest wife is matched to a righteous man, and a corrupt wife to a wicked man. In other words, the wife becomes a mirror of the man's inner state.

That means Chava's behavior did not emerge in a vacuum. Adam's own inner lack shaped the form that the relationship took. Adam was not זוכה, and therefore Chava became כנגדו rather than עזר. But instead of taking responsibility for the state he helped create, he blamed her.

This is why the additional punishments are not arbitrary additions. They are the natural consequence of the sin itself. A world built on gratitude and recognition of Hashem is a world where blessing flows effortlessly. A world built on resentment and denial becomes a world of resistance:

ארורה האדמה בעבורך
בעצבון תאכלנה
בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם

The earth now becomes קשה. Life becomes friction. Bread, which once would have come through brachah, now comes through struggle.

But all is not lost. An antidote is built into creation. One who honors their wife is not subject to these additional punishments.

Chazal Bava Metzia 59a explain:

לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו, שאין ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו

A person must always be careful about honoring his wife, for blessing is found in a person's home only because of his wife.

Rava even tells the people of Mechoza:

אוקירו לנשייכו כי היכי דתתעתרו

Honor your wives so that you will become wealthy.

Wealth is not merely the result of effort. It is the result of brachah. And brachah enters a home through proper relationship to the wife. Adam failed precisely here. He did not recognize the gift, did not honor the source of blessing, and did not take responsibility. The tikkun begins when a man restores that channel.

II. Kayin and Hevel: Two Ways of Standing in the World

The next story in Bereishis is not separate from the first. It is the continuation of it.

"וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־ה' "

"She conceived and bore Cain, and she said: I have acquired a man with Hashem." (Bereishis 4:1)

וַתֹּסֶף לָלֶדֶת אֶת־אָחִיו אֶת־הָבֶל וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה

"And she continued to bear his brother Hevel; and Hevel was a shepherd of flocks, and Kayin was a worker of the ground." (Bereishis 4:2)

Rashi explains why Hevel is a shepherd:

רעה צאן — לפי שנתקללה האדמה פירש לו מעבודתה

Since the ground was cursed, he withdrew from working it.



The names and occupations reveal the contrast in their personalities. Kayin comes from קניתי, acquisition, taking hold. He is attached to ownership, mastery, establishing oneself within the world. Hevel means breath, vapor, something fleeting. He does not approach the world as something to seize, but as something transient.

That contrast shapes their korbanos.

וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַה'

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Hashem." (Bereishis 4:3)

וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא גַּם־הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמֵחֶלְבֵהֶן

"And Hevel also brought, from the firstborn of his flock and from their choicest." (Bereishis 4:4)

Rashi says of Kayin:

מפרי האדמה — מן הגרוע

From the inferior.

Kayin gives, but minimally. He brings an offering without surrender. He is still centered on himself, on his own acquisition, on his own world. This is Adam's failure continued: lack of recognition, lack of gratitude, inability to give the best back to Hashem.

Hevel, by contrast, brings מבכורות צאנו ומחלביהן. He gives the first and the best. His whole posture is one of acknowledgment.
Therefore:

וישע ה' אל הבל ואל מנחתו

Hashem turned to Hevel and to his offering.

But there is an interesting subtlety in the story.

והבל הביא גם הוא

"Hevel also brought."

Why "also"? Why doesn't Hevel bring his Korban first? One reason is that Hevel gave kavod to Kayin as the firstborn. Chazal (Kiddushin 30b) compare honoring parents to honoring Hashem:

השוה הכתוב כיבוד אב ואם לכבוד המקום

We are also taught (Kesubos 103a) that honoring an older sibling is an extension of honoring one's parents:

ו"ו יתירה — לרבות את אחיך הגדול

Hevel's deference to Kayin is is an act of recognition. He honors the older brother, and through that he honors the parents, and through that he honors Hashem.

There is another dimension as well. Chazal tell us that Adam HaRishon was a Kohen Gadol (Bamidbar Rabbah 4:8). The Arizal (Likutei Torah, Yechezkel) writes that Kayin, as the firstborn, was meant to inherit that role. This is another reason Hevel initially allows Kayin to go first. As Kohen it was appropriate for Kayin to bring the first Korban. Hevel recognizes the place Kayin was meant to occupy.

But Kayin cannot bear rejection.

When Hashem turns to Hevel and not to him, Hashem says to Kayin:

למה חרה לך ולמה נפלו פניך... הלא אם תיטיב שאת

"Why are you angry and why has your face fallen?... If you improve, you will be uplifted." (Bereishis 4:6–7)

The message is clear: the outcome is not fixed. Your future is still in your hands. The issue is not that Hashem has rejected you absolutely. The issue is whether you can transform yourself.

But Kayin does not take responsibility. He argues with Hevel. The Targum Yonasan (Bereishis 4:8) presents their conflict as theological. Kayin says:

לית דין ולית דיין

There is no judgment and there is no Judge.

Hevel responds:

אית דין ואית דיין
There is judgment and there is a Judge



This sharpens the meaning of Kayin's failure. He cannot tolerate a world in which he is not affirmed. He cannot bear being second. He cannot metabolize disappointment. So he concludes not: "I need to change," but "there is no Judge." He turns concealment into denial. Instead of taking responsibility, he kills Hevel.

How should Kayin have responded? Chazal explain (Shabbos 88b) that when a person feels insulted:

עלובין ואינן עולבין, שומעין חרפתן ואינן משיבין... עליהן הכתוב אומר: ואוהביו כצאת השמש בגבורתו

Those who are insulted and do not insult, who hear their shame and do not respond... regarding them the verse says: "And those who love Him are like the sun going forth in its might."

Kayin's great failure is precisely here. He is insulted, and he responds. He cannot absorb humiliation without violence.

III. Chava, Zuhama, and the Deeper Background of Kayin

How did the children of Adam and Chava become so corrupted?

Chazal explain (Shabbos 146a) say that when the Nachash came upon Chava, he implanted in her זוהמא, a type of spiritual contamination. (Although it is a machlokes when exactly Kayin and Hevel were born - before of after the cheit - the Arizal (Rosh Hashana, Drush 1) makes it clear that Kayin and Hevel were born after the Cheit) The Zohar (Bereishis 28b) teahces that from that contamination emerged Kayin, who then killed Hevel.

That does not remove Kayin's responsibility. But it does explain why this drama is linked back to the sin of Chava. The corruption of the Eitz HaDaas does not end with Adam and Chava. It continues into the next generation.

This is why Chava has a special role in the later tikkun. Since her encounter with the Nachash contributed to the spiritual condition that gave rise to Kayin's violence, the rectification of Kayin must also pass through the feminine side.

IV. Moshe as the Gilgul of Hevel

The tikkun begins through Hevel's return.

Chazal (Eruvin 18b) teach us that after the sin, Adam separated from Chava for 130 years. Only afterward was Sheis born:

ויחי אדם שלשים ומאת שנה ויולד בדמותו כצלמו ויקרא את שמו שת

"When Adam had lived 130 years, he begot a son in his likeness after his image, and he named him Seth." (Bereishis 5:3)

Tikkunei Zohar (102a, see also Rabbeinu Bechaya, Bereishis 4:25) teaches that Sheis is the gilgul of Hevel, and Moshe is the gilgul of both Sheis and Hevel. The very name Moshe is an acronym for Moshe, Shes, Hevel. The Arizal (Sha'ar HaPesukim, Shemos 3) notes that both Hevel and Moshe are shepherds. Hevel's role re-enters the world through Moshe.

But why did Hevel need to return? On the surface, Hevel appears innocent. He brings the proper korban, his offering is accepted, and he is murdered unjustly. But Chazal reveal that there was a subtle flaw —one that only becomes visible when we look closely at the nature of his korban.

At the burning bush, the Torah says:

ויסתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל האלקים

"And Moshe hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (Shemos 3:6)



Rabbeinu Bechaya (Shemos 3:6), explains that when Hevel brought his korban, he gazed at the Shechinah beyond what was proper, and this contributed to his death. Moshe, as Hevel's reincarnation, at the burning bush hides his face in restraint. He corrects the old failure.

The Arizal (Likutei Shas) further explains:

Chava's original sin began with sight:

ותרא האשה כי טוב העץ למאכל וכי תאוה הוא לעינים

"And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes..." (Bereishis 3:6)

Chava's failure was a misuse of vision—seeing and desiring without proper גבול. That failure reverberates into Hevel, who also misuses sight by gazing too deeply into the Divine revelation at the time of his korban.

Moshe completes the tikkun. By refusing to look—by holding himself back—he repairs both Chava's and Hevel's misuse of sight.

This is why Chazal say (Berachos 7a):

בשכר מהביט — זכה ותמונת ה' יביט

In the merit of not looking, Moshe later merited: "And the image of Hashem he shall behold" (Bamidbar 12:8).

This same pattern explains Moshe's insistence on boundaries at Har Sinai:

לא יוכל העם לעלות אל הר סיני... כי אתה העדתה בנו לאמר הגבל את ההר וקדשתו

"The people cannot ascend the mountain... for You warned us, saying: Set boundaries for the mountain and sanctify it." (Shemos 19:23)

The Arizal (Shaar HaPesukim, Yisro) writes that Moshe was extraordinarily careful to prevent Bnei Yisrael from ascending and gazing at the Shechinah, and that he himself was careful not to gaze. All of this was part of the tikkun for Hevel's earlier failure.

In fact, within this very pasuk, the Torah hints to Hevel. The words: העדתה בנו לאמר form the roshei teivos of הבל.

At Har Sinai, the moment of Matan Torah, of ultimate revelation, the tikkun of Hevel is unfolding. The place where boundaries are established, where sight is restrained, where one does not rush upward but instead stands back in awe—this is precisely where Hevel is repaired.

The Tikkunei Zohar (Tikun 69, 112b) goes further and identifies Hevel with Torah itself:

הבל = תורה שבכתב

This is not symbolic—it is precise:

ה (Heh) corresponds to the five books of the Torah
ב (Beis) is the first letter of the Torah: בראשית
ל (Lamed) is the final letter of the Torah: ישראל

Hevel, in his root, is Torah.

Now the picture becomes complete.



Hevel reached too quickly toward the Divine. He encountered revelation without גבול. Therefore, he must return—not only to be corrected, but to become the very vehicle through which Torah is given properly.

At this point, the story reaches its deepest confrontation.

The failure of Adam and Chava did not begin in isolation. It began with the Nachash—the force that introduced distortion into reality, a way of seeing the world in which independence replaces dependence on Hashem, and perception becomes detached from truth.

That voice does not disappear. It develops.

The Navi describes Pharaoh as:

התנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו
"The great serpent who crouches within his rivers." (Yechezel 29:3)

Pharaoh is not merely a political ruler. He is the embodiment of the Nachash.

He represents a world that denies Hashem outright, a world that asserts absolute autonomy, a world that declares:

לי יאורי ואני עשיתיני
"The Nile is mine, and I made myself."

This is the mature form of the Nachash's voice.
This is Kayin's worldview fully realized.

"I created myself."
"My strength, my power, my control define reality."

This is nothing less than the full expression of:

לית דין ולית דיין
There is no judgment and there is no Judge.

The Nachash introduces that voice.
Kayin lives it.
Pharaoh builds an empire upon it.

And now Moshe, as the gilgul of Hevel, must confront it directly.

This is why the struggle with Pharaoh is not only about freeing Bnei Yisrael. It is about dismantling the entire worldview of the Nachash.

Pharaoh gives that worldview its clearest expression:

מי ה' אשר אשמע בקולו
"Who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice?" (Shemos 5:2)

This is not a question. It is a declaration. There is no higher authority. There is no source beyond the self.

Moshe's role is to break that illusion.

Through the makkos, through the systematic unraveling of nature, through the splitting of the sea, the world that appeared self-sustaining is revealed to be entirely dependent on Hashem.

This is the undoing of the Nachash.

The Nachash taught: you can take, you can grasp, you can become like God.
Moshe reveals: everything is from Hashem, and true existence comes through surrender.

V. Korach: Kayin Returns Again

Just as Moshe is the return of Hevel, the Arizal (Shaar HaPesukim and Shaar HaLikutim, Korach) teaches that Korach is a gilgul of Kayin.

The parallels are striking.

The parallels between the stories of Kayin and Hevel and Korach and Moshe are not superficial, they are exact.

וישמע משה ויפול על פניו

"Moshe heard and fell on his face." (Bamidbar 16:4)

Kayin's face fell when his korban was not accepted. Moshe falls on his face in humility.
In Bereishis, the ground opened to receive Hevel's blood:

אשר פצתה את פיה לקחת את דמי אחיך

"Which opened its mouth to take your brother's blood." (Bereishis 4:11)
In Korach's story:

ופצתה האדמה את פיה ובלעה אותם

"The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them." (Bamidbar 16:30)

The earth that once absorbed Hevel's blood now swallows Kayin's later form.
And Chazal (Sanhedrin 110a) teach that from beneath the ground, Korach's assembly cries out:



משה ותורתו אמת והן בדאין

"Moses and his Torah are true, and they are liars."

Rashi on ויאמר קין אל הבל explains that Kayin entered into words of quarrel in order to find a pretext to kill Hevel. Korach does the same. He cloaks jealousy in ideology:

ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן ויאמרו אליהם רב לכם כי כל העדה כלם קדשים

"They assembled against Moshe and Aharon and said: You take too much upon yourselves, for the whole congregation is holy." (Bamidbar 16:3)

Just as Kayin's claim was not truly about theology but about wounded pride, Korach's claim is not truly about equality—it is about jealousy.

But now we can understand something deeper.

The root of this jealousy goes back even further—to the Nachash itself.

Rashi (Bereishis 3:1) teaches that the Nachash saw Adam and Chava together:



ראה אותם ערומים ועוסקים בתשמיש לעין כל ונתאוה לה

He saw them engaged in intimacy and desired her.

The Nachash is not only a voice of denial. It is a force of jealousy—of wanting what belongs to another, of not being able to accept one's place.

We have already explained that the Nachash introduced a זוהמא into Chava. That contamination does not disappear; it continues into Kayin. Kayin's jealousy, his inability to tolerate Hevel's acceptance, is not only psychological, it is rooted in that original distortion.

And now it appears again in Korach.

The Medrash (Tanchuma, Korach 1) explains that Korach's grievance centered on Elitzafan ben Uziel. Kehat had four sons: Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron, and Uziel. Korach, son of Yitzhar, felt that if Amram's family had already received greatness through Moshe and Aharon, then the next position should have gone to him, not to the descendant of the youngest brother.

This is structurally identical to Kayin's pain: the younger one being elevated.

But there is another layer.

Korach's jealousy is also about Kehunah.

Adam HaRishon functioned as the first Kohen. Kayin, as the firstborn, was meant to inherit that role. But when he killed Hevel, he forfeited it, and the Kehunah passed to the side of Hevel, through Sheis and ultimately through Aharon.

Now Korach, who is Kayin, finds himself once again outside of the Kehunah.

Moshe, as the gilgul of Hevel and Sheis, stands at the center of that lineage. Aharon becomes the Kohen Gadol.

Korach feels that loss.

His jealousy is not arbitrary. It is the resurfacing of an ancient displacement, the memory of a role that was lost.

This is why his reaction is so intense. It is not only about Elitzafan. It is about the Kehunah he once lost.

And yet, even here, the Torah shows us what the proper response should have been.

When Hashem tells Moshe that Aharon will join him, the Torah says:

"He is going out to meet you, and he will see you and rejoice in his heart." (Shemos 4:14)

Chazal say (Shabbos 139a):

בשכר "וראך ושמח בלבו" זכה לחשן המשפט על לבו

In the merit of "he will see you and rejoice in his heart," Aharon merited the Choshen on his heart.

Aharon sees his younger brother rise to greatness and he feels no jealousy. Only simchah.

That is how the תיקון of Kayin is meant to occur.

Korach faces the same moment and fails it.

Again, the response to injury becomes the test.

עלובין ואינן עולבין...

Those who are insulted and do not insult.

Had Korach absorbed the humiliation instead of responding with rebellion, he would have repaired Kayin. Instead, he reenacts him.

VI. The Role of the Wives: Chava, the Wife of Korach, and the Wife of On ben Peles

Not incidentally, this entire sugya keeps returning to women.

Adam fails by blaming Chava instead of taking responsibility. Because he fails, the one who should have been עזר becomes כנגדו.

What is the tikkun for Chava?

Chazal explains (Yerushalmi Shabbos 2:6)

אדם הראשון חלה טהורה לעולם היה. דכתיב וייצר ה' אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה. ותייא כיי דמר רבי יוסי בר קצרתה כיון שהאשה מקשקשת עיסתה במים היא מגבהת חלתה. וגרמה לו חוה מיתה. לפיכך מסרו מצות חלה לאשה.

Adam HaRishon was the pure "dough" of the world, as it is written, "And Hashem formed the man from the dust of the ground." When a woman mixes her dough with water, she separates challah. Since Chava caused death, the mitzvah of challah was given to the woman.



Chava takes from the dough of existence incorrectly. Her תיקון is to separate from the dough correctly.
The passuk itself alludes to this as Rav Shmuel Brazil points out:

וַתֵּרֶא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תַאֲוָה הוּא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכַל

And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to make one wise; so she took of its fruit, and she ate, and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Bereishis 3:6)

The word גם appears extra. The Gematria of גם is 43 which is an allusion to the shiur of challah is approximately forty three eggs. The Torah is hinting that the תיקון to this act is embedded within the act itself.

Even the form of the mitzvah reflects this. We braid our challos.

Chazal (Shabbos 95a) teach that Hashem braided Chava's hair before bringing her to Adam.
Hair represents דין. Braiding represents the ordering of דין.

The same כוח that created distortion now becomes the כלי for תיקון.

The notion that hair is associated with דין can also be seen in the life of Rabbi Akiva.

Chazal (Bechoros 58a) state:

בן עזאי אומר כל חכמי ישראל דומין עלי כקליפת השום חוץ מן הקרח הזה

Ben Azzai says: All the sages of Israel appear to me like the peel of garlic, except for this bald one, Rabbi Akiva.

What is the significance of the fact that Rabbi Akiva is bald?
Rabbi Akiva is also described as beginning from a place of דין. The Gemara (Pesachim 49b) records:

אמר רבי עקיבא כשהייתי עם הארץ הייתי אומר מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם ואנשכנו כחמור

Rabbi Akiva said: When I was an ignoramus, I would say, "If someone would give me a Torah scholar, I would bite him like a donkey."

And yet, this same Rabbi Akiva becomes the one who consistently sees the good in every situation.

In fact, when he does not see the positive, it is considered exceptional. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 110b) says:

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן שבקה רבי עקיבא לחסידותיה

Rabba bar bar Chana said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Rabbi Akiva abandoned his piety.

Rabbi Akiva embodies דין that has been refined. Usually, that דין reveals the good. Here, it expresses itself as strictness.

This dynamic is reflected as well in the story of his early life (Nedarim 50a):

In the winter, Rabbi Akiva and his wife slept in a storehouse of straw. Rabbi Akiva would remove strands of straw from her hair. He said to her: "If I had the means, I would place upon your head a Jerusalem of Gold."

אליהו הנביא came and appeared to them as a poor person. He knocked on the door and said: "Please give me a bit of straw, for my wife has given birth and I have nothing upon which to lay her."

Rabbi Akiva said to his wife: "See this man, who does not even have straw. We should be comforted that we at least have straw to sleep on.

There is something very precise happening here. Hair represents Din. The straw caught in her hair reflects a state in which דין is still mixed, still unrefined, still tangled in the residue of difficulty. Rav Akiva removes the straw, refining it, disentangling it.

And then he tells her: If I had the means, I would crown you with a זהב של ירושלים.

Refined hair becomes a crown. דין, when elevated and ordered, becomes כתר.

This is the same transformation we find by a Nazir, whose hair, once elevated, becomes קדוש and is described as a crown upon his head. (Bamidbar 6:7)



It is also not incidental that אליהו הנביא appears specifically in this moment. Eliyahu is the one who rectifies דין, who transforms harshness into revelation. The Tosfos Yom Tov (Eduyos 8:7) explains that the term תיקו means תשבי יתרץ קושיות ואיבעיות, that Eliyahu will resolve what is left unresolved.

And the Mishnah itself (Eduyos 8:7) teaches:

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר, לְהַשְׁווֹת הַמַּחֲלֹקֶת. וַחֲכָמִים אוֹמְרִים, לֹא לְרַחֵק וְלֹא לְקָרֵב, אֶלָּא לַעֲשׂוֹת שָׁלוֹם בָּעוֹלָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מלאכי ג) הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי שֹׁלֵחַ לָכֶם אֵת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא וְגוֹ' וְהֵשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בָּנִים וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל אֲבוֹתָם

Rabbi Shimon says: to equalize disputes. And the Sages say: not to distance and not to draw close, but to bring peace into the world, as it is stated, "Behold I send you Eliyahu the prophet... and he will return the hearts of fathers to children and children to their fathers."

Eliyahu is the one who resolves tension, who brings opposing sides into harmony, who transforms מחלוקת into שלום.

This is the deeper meaning of his presence here.

Rabbi Akiva's life begins with דין. But through refinement, that דין becomes the very כלי through which he reveals the good in everything.

This brings us directly to Korach. Korach comes from the shoresh of Kayin, which is דין. His very name reflects this. He is called Korach, the bald one (Arizal, Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 34).



Why did Moshe shave the Levi'im? It was a softening of דין. The removal of hair represents the removal of harshness. The Kohanim must embody חסד, and the Levi'im undergo a process that tempers their דין. Moshe shaving Korach is not an act of humiliation. It is an act of refinement.

But Korach is not זוכה. Because internally he is beset by jealousy, his wife brings out his worst instincts. Korach's wife tells him that Moshe is disgracing him, taking power, humiliating him through the shaving of his hair.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (109b, 110a) contrasts the wife of Korach with the wife of On ben Peles.

On's wife saves him. She tells him that either way he will remain a subordinate, so there is no reason to destroy himself. She exposes her hair and prevents the rebels from approaching, and in this way she rescues him.

Korach's wife fuels him. She takes the same symbolism and turns it into grievance.

The same pattern reappears.

When the person is aligned, the wife becomes עזר.
When the person is broken, the relationship becomes כנגדו.

On's wife becomes עזר because his inclination is to do Teshuva.
Korach's wife becomes כנגדו because he is governed by jealousy and wounded pride.

Hair itself becomes the symbol of this split.
Korach's wife uses this כוח to inflame.
On's wife uses this כוח to save.

The meaning of the symbol depends entirely on the state of the person receiving it.

But what drove Korach to believing that he would be victorious in his battle against Moshe?

The Medrash (Tanchuma, Korach 5) teaches:

וקרח שפיקח היה מה ראה לשטות זו אלא עינו הטעתו. ראה שלשלת גדולה עומדת הימנו שמואל ששקול כנגד משה ואהרן שנאמר משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקוראי שמו

Korach was wise. What did he see that led him to this folly. His eye misled him. He saw a great lineage emerging from him, Shmuel, who is equivalent to Moshe and Aharon.
And this is true.
Shmuel descends from Korach, as it says (Divrei Ha-Yamim I 6:18-23):

וְאֵלֶּה הָעֹמְדִים וּבְנֵיהֶם מִבְּנֵי הַקָּהָתִי הֵימָן הַמְשׁוֹרֵר בֶּן יוֹאֵל בֶּן שְׁמוּאֵל... בֶּן תַּחַת בֶּן אַסִּיר בֶּן אֶבְיָסָף בֶּן קֹרַח

So we must ask oursleves, beyond the fact that Shmuel is a descendant of Korach, what is the connection between them?

VII. Shmuel: The Tikkun of Kayin Begins

The Arizal (Likutei Torah Shmuel I, 1 and in Sefer HaLikutim Shmuel II, 15, Likutei Torah, Balak) teaches that Shmuel is a gilgul of Kayin, and Chana is a gilgul of Chava. We now have a much deeper understanding as to the inner nature of a barren Chana davening for a child. Chana is not simply davening for a child, she is Chava returning to continue an unfinished tikkun.

Just as Chava had Shes and Yocheved has Moshe after 130 years, Chava had Shmuel after 130 years of childlessness. (Yalkut Shimoni, Shmuel I, 1:80) Just as Yocheved gives birth to Moshe, who is from the side of Hevel, at 130, so too Chana gives birth to Shmuel, who is from the side of Kayin, at 130. Yocheved brings forth the tikkun of Hevel. Chana now seeks to bring forth the tikkun of Kayin.

This helps us explain why Chana's tefillah is framed around the three mitzvos associated with women. Three times Chana says אמתך as she pleads for a child (Shmuel I 1:11). Chazal (Berachos 31b) explain that she is invoking the three areas in which women are especially bound up: niddah, challah, and hadlakas ha'ner. Chana says to Hashem, in effect: You entrusted women with these three mitzvos. Have I failed in them?

Why are these three Mitzvos specifically given to women?

Chazal explain (Yerushalmi Shabbos 2:6) that these three mitzvos were given to women as a tikkun for Chava who brought death to Adam. Adam is called the blood of the world, the pure challah of the world, and the lamp of the world, and because Chava brought death into that reality, women were given these three mitzvos as a tikkun.

So Chana is doing much more than presenting herself as righteous. She is standing inside Chava's story and saying: I am here to repair that breach. I am ready to bring forth what Chava could not yet fully bring forth.

But there is still a barrier. If Chana is trying to rectify Kayin, why is she childless?

Chazal (Berachos 40a, Bereishis Rabbah 19:5) quote Rav Meir who says that the Eitz HaDaas was a grapevine. Wine thus becomes one of the symbols of that original sin.

We can now understand why when Eli sees Chana praying silently and assumes she is drunk:

ויחשבה עלי לשכרה (Shmuel I 1:12–13). Eli thinks Chana is still caught in the world of the vine, still trapped inside the residue of the first sin.

Chana answers (Shmuel I 1:15):
ויין ושכר לא שתיתי ואשפך את נפשי לפני ה׳
I have not drunk wine or strong drink. I have poured out my soul before Hashem.

That response is not only a denial. It is a declaration that she is not reenacting the cheit of the Eitz HaDaas. She is repairing it. Only after that does Eli respond with a brachah that Hashem grant her request (Shmuel I 1:17).

So the sequence matters. First Eli suspects that she remains within the old failure. Then Chana clarifies that she stands beyond it. Only then can the brachah come.



Eli's role is also not incidental. Eli is a Kohen. Kehunah belongs to the side of Hevel. After Kayin kills Hevel, the side of Kehunah is associated with Hevel. So when Eli blesses Chana, what is happening beneath the surface is that the side of Hevel is now empowering the rectification of Kayin.

That is why Eli's brachah is so weighty. It is not just a Tzaddik blessing a suffering woman. It is Hevel's side making possible the healing of Kayin's side.

We can now understand why Chazal explain (Berachos 31b) that when Chana davens for זרע אנשים she is asking for a child equal to Moshe and Aharon, based on the pasuk in Tehillim:
משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקוראי שמו

Why would Chana daven for a child the equivalent of Moshe and Ahron?

Because the goal is not merely that Kayin survive. The goal is that Kayin be rectified so deeply that he can stand equal in greatness to the side of Hevel. As we have explained, Moshe and Aharon represent the side of Hevel and Shmuel the side of Kayin. Chana is asking for nothing less than a healed Kayin who stands in full stature.

No wonder that Shmuel is also linked to hair. Chana vows: ומורה לא יעלה על ראשו (Shmuel I 1:11). According to Rav Nehorai (Nazir 9:5) Shmuel was a Nazir. This is deeply important in the larger sugya. If hair earlier represented din, here that same realm becomes elevated. Shmuel's hair is not a sign of wounded insecurity as it was in Korach. It is a sign of restraint and kedushah. The same realm that had become distorted in Korach and in the aftermath of Chava is now being repaired.

As mentioned earlier, Kayin says לית דין ולית דיין. There is no judgment and no Judge. In response, he became נע ונד, a wanderer.

Shmuel repairs both elements. Shmuel travels from place to place judging Israel year after year. He goes to Beis El, Gilgal, and Mitzpah, judging the people, and then returns to Ramah, where he has a home and builds a mizbeach. (Shmuel I 7:15–17,)

So Shmuel also wanders, but his wandering is no longer a curse. It is his mission. Kayin fled from judgment. Shmuel carries judgment with him. Kayin became homeless because he denied din. Shmuel moves through the land as a shofet, affirming din, and eventually returns home. Even the wandering itself is transformed.

Understanding that Shmuel is a gilgul of Kayin gives us an insight into a fascinating Maamar Chazal (Berachos 31b). The Gemara tells us that when Shmuel was only two years old he was liable to death because he ruled halachah in front of Eli. The issue arose when Shmuel correctly stated that shechitah of a korban is valid by a zar, and Eli responded that although he was correct, one who rules in front of his rebbe is liable for death.

On the surface, this is a classic case of המורה הלכה בפני רבו חייב מיתה.

But inwardly it means more. Eli may have feared that this child still carried traces of the old disorder. The Nachash had also "ruled" in front of Hashem, contradicting the Divine word and telling Chava that she would not die. Now Shmuel, from the side of Kayin, speaks authoritatively in front of Eli, and specifically about the realm of the Kohen. Eli fears that perhaps the old contamination is still there. Perhaps this is still the audacity of the Nachash, still the rebellion of Kayin.

That is why Eli says to Chana let him die and I will daven for you to have a greater son. Beneath the surface, that means: let the flawed child go, and may you instead receive a child from the safer side, from the side of Hevel.

But Chana refuses. She says: אל הנער הזה התפללתי, For this child I prayed.

Not for another child. For this child who must become the tikkun for Kayin.

Beautiful. This is exactly the place where the sugya needs to slow down and breathe a little so the reader can actually see what's happening.

Here is a clearer, more spelled-out version, still in your tone, still faithful to the Gemara, but unpacked so the reader can follow:

The tikkun continues at the end of Shmuel's life. Chazal (Taaniis 5b) tell us that Shmuel did not actually live to old age. He died at the age of fifty-two. When the pasuk describes him as "old," the Gemara explains that זקנה קפצה עליו, old age "jumped" upon him. He appeared old, but he was not.

Why did this happen? Shmuel anointed Shaul as king. Shmuel turns to Hashem and says: You have placed me alongside Moshe and Aharon, as the pasuk says: משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקוראי שמו. Just as Moshe and Aharon saw their עבודת ה' endure during their lifetimes, so too I want my work to endure. I anointed Shaul. Let his kingship stand.

But at the same time, the time for David's kingship has already arrived and אין מלכות נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא, one kingdom does not overlap another even by a hairsbreadth. That means there is no overlap. There is no transition period where both are active. One must end for the other to begin. If Shaul continues to live and reign, David cannot become king. At the same time Shaul can't die in Shmuel's lifetime. If Shmuel dies immediately, people will say: what did Shmuel do wrong that he died so young? But if neither dies, then David's kingship cannot begin.

So what does Hashem do? אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אקפיץ עליו זקנה, Hashem causes old age to "spring" upon Shmuel. Shmuel appears old, so that when he dies at fifty-two, it will not seem abrupt or suspicious. It will look like a natural end.

Now the depth of the tikkun becomes clear. Kayin could not bear Hevel's existence. Korach could not bear Aharon's elevation. Both experience another person's rise as their own erasure. And they respond with resistance, with conflict, with destruction.

Shmuel stands in the exact same structural position, and responds differently. Shmuel has every reason to hold on. He anointed Shaul. This is his life's work. He even davens that it should endure.

And yet, when the moment comes, he does not fight the transition to David. He does not attempt to block it. He does not collapse into jealousy. He does not reinterpret reality to preserve his own role. Instead, he allows himself to be moved aside. He is mevater. He makes space.

That is something neither Kayin nor Korach could do. Shmuel becomes the tikkun precisely here as the same dynamic that once produced jealousy and conflict now produces humility and alignment with רצון ה'.

The whole story now comes together.

Chana is Chava returning. She is remembered at 130, parallel to Yocheved. Yocheved gives birth to Moshe from the side of Hevel. Chana gives birth to Shmuel from the side of Kayin.

Shmuel's hair becomes consecrated rather than chaotic. His wandering becomes judgment rather than exile. His willingness to make way for Dovid HaMelech completes what Kayin and Korach never could.

Shmuel is therefore not simply a prophet born from prayer. He is the beginning of Kayin's healing.

VIII. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah: The Ripened Tikkun

Before we return to Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, we need a little background. There was an ongoing tension between Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshua.

Rabban Gamliel, as Nasi, carried the responsibility of preserving authority and uniformity within Klal Yisrael. Because of that, he was very strict, and at times, unyielding.

This expressed itself in two key disputes:

- The calendar dispute: When Rabbi Yehoshua disagreed with Rabban Gamliel's calculation of Rosh Chodesh, Rabban Gamliel ordered him to appear on what Rabbi Yehoshua held was Yom Kippur, carrying his staff and money. Rabbi Yehoshua complied, submitting to the authority of the Nasi.
- The Maariv dispute (Berachos 27b): After Rabbi Yehoshua ruled privately that Maariv is optional, Rabban Gamliel confronted him publicly and had him remain standing during the shiur, pressing him in front of the תלמידים.



This pattern created a growing discomfort. The issue was not the halacha. It was the severity and public pressure with which it was enforced.

At that point made a radical decision: They removed Rabban Gamliel from his position as Rosh Yeshiva. The Chachamim chose Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah because: הוא חכם, והוא עשיר, והוא עשירי לעזרא, He is wise, he is wealthy, and he is a tenth-generation descendant of Ezra HaKohen.

These three qualities are not random. They are the signs of a soul that has undergone its Tikkun.

The Chachamim approached Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah and asked him to become the new Nasi. He did not answer right away. Instead, he said, "Let me go consult with my household."

He went home and spoke with his wife.

She raised a real concern. "Perhaps they will remove you just as they removed Rabban Gamliel."

He answered her: "Let a person use a precious cup for one day, even if tomorrow it will break." If the opportunity is here, you take it, even if it may not last.

But she pushed back again. "You don't have white hair. You are too young for this role." At that time, he was only eighteen years old. A miracle occurred, and his hair turned white, giving him the appearance of age and dignity. That is why he later says, "I am like a man of seventy years," not that he was seventy, but that he carried that presence.

Only after this entire exchange, after listening, after weighing, after engaging with his wife, did he accept the position.

Now we can begin to understand the three qualities that led Rav Elazar Ben Azaryah to become Rosh Yeshiva.

Wealth

Rav Elazar ben Azaryah consults his wife before accepting leadership. He listens to her seriously. Earlier we saw that wealth flows through honoring one's wife, because that repairs Adam's failure of gratitude.

And indeed Chazal say that Rav Elazar ben Azaryah was extraordinarily wealthy (Sotah 49b), tithing twelve thousand calves each year (Shabbos 54b). This wealth is not just financial success. It reflects the restored channel of brachah that Adam ruptured.

After the sin, Adam is told בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם. Bread becomes the symbol of struggle, of having to chase one's sustenance.

The Gemara in Yevamos (16a) records that Rav Dosa ben Hurkanos said about Rav Elazar ben Azaryah: "נַעַר הָיִיתִי גַּם זָקַנְתִּי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צַדִּיק נֶעֱזָב וְזַרְעוֹ מְבַקֵּשׁ לָחֶם"

On a deeper level, "נער" and "זקן" reflect two stages. נער is before the tikkun while Zaken is afterwards. Before the repair, Adam's children live in a world of מבקש לחם, forced to chase their bread. After the repair, that reality begins to change.

The צדיק is Adam, who appeared abandoned through the curse of toil. But in Rav Elazar ben Azaryah, we encounter the stage of זקן, after the תיקון. He is not מבקש לחם. He is not chasing sustenance.

His wealth expresses this directly. The brachah flows to him. What once required struggle now comes with ease. The curse of bread begins to dissolve, and sustenance returns to being a natural flow of brachah.

Wisdom

Rav Elazar ben Azaryah possess great wisdom because he is the gilgul of Shmuel HaNavi! As we saw earlier, Shmuel died at fifty-two, though he was destined for seventy years. The eighteen unlived years passed to Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah. This is the inner meaning of הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה. He is eighteen, but he carries the seventy-year fullness of Shmuel within him. He is not "seventy." He is "like seventy." The wisdom of Shmuel is now present in him. In fact the Gemtria of Ben is 52, an allusion to the 52 years of Shmuel's life. Shana is an acronym for Nishmas Shmuel HaNavi!

Kehunah

As a descendant of Ezra, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah is a Kohen. But on the level of sod, this means more. Kayin once lost the kehunah because he murdered Hevel. Now, in rectified form, the soul that passed through Kayin, Korach, and Shmuel returns to the world as a Kohen. In Rav Elazar ben Azaryah, Kayin's Kehuna is restored.

This explains why Chazal (Sotah 9:15) say: משמת רבי אלעזר בן עזריה בטלו עטרות חכמה, שעטרת חכמים עשרם, When Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah died, the crowns of wisdom ceased, for "the crown of the wise is their wealth."

What is this crown of wisdom? Earlier we saw that the hair of a Nazir is called a crown (Bamidbar 6:7). Ibn Ezra writes on נזר אלקיו על ראשו that the true king is the one who is free from worldly lusts. Kayin originally embodied attachment to acquisition and control. Shmuel, as Nazir, began to rectify that. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah now bears the crown of wisdom because the soul that once lunged toward possession has become inwardly free.

It now also becomes clear why it is precisely Rav Elazar ben Azaryah who teaches (Yom 8:9): עבירות שבין אדם למקום יום הכיפורים מכפר. עבירות שבין אדם לחברו אין יום הכיפורים מכפר עד שירצה את חברו, For transgressions between man and God, Yom Kippur atones. For transgressions between man and his fellow, Yom Kippur does not atone until he appeases his fellow.



Who better to say this than the repaired Kayin?

Kayin represents the original wound between brothers. He is the archetype of injury to another person, of refusal to take responsibility, of turning pain outward as violence. Rav Elazar ben Azaryah, as the rectified form of that energy, teaches that one cannot bypass the human wound and seek direct absolution before Hashem. The broken relationship must be healed.

Fittingly, when Rav Elazar ben Azaryah becomes Rosh Yeshiva, he changes the structure of the Beis Medrash completely. Rabban Gamliel had insisted: כל תלמיד שאין תוכו כברו לא יכנס לבית המדרש, Any student whose inside is not like his outside should not enter the Beis Medrash.

Rav Elazar ben Azaryah removes the guard and opens the doors. Hundreds of benches are added. The world of Torah becomes broader, softer, more porous, more welcoming.

This too is the tikkun of Kayin.

Kayin could not bear imperfection. He could not bear rejection. He could not withstand being second. He responded to wounded pride with destruction. Rav Elazar ben Azaryah does the opposite. He creates room for imperfect students. He knows that the path to truth is not always clean at the beginning. He understands the journey from fracture to repair.

Even Rabban Gamliel himself remains in the Beis Midrash and does not withdraw. Under Rav Elazar ben Azaryah's leadership, even the one who had been removed is not cast out. That itself is a profound answer to Kayin. The soul that once responded to pain with exclusion and death now responds with widened space and living Torah.

Chazal describe that on that day, when Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah assumed leadership an unprecedented expansion took place. Some say four hundred benches were added, and others say seven hundred.

What is the significance of the numbers 400 and 700?

Four hundred corresponds to the Gematria of the letter ת. The ת is composed of a ד and a נ (Din) alluding to the structure of judgment itself. Kayin said לית דין ולית דיין, denying דין and its Judge. The number four hundred represents that realm of דין in its rectified state.

And alongside four hundred stands seven hundred.

Four hundred is the gematria of השופט, the judge, the world of דין in its full expression. Seven hundred is the gematria of תכפר, "it will atone." This is the tikkun of the unrectified Din of Kayin.

Read together, ארבע מאות and שבע מאות describe a single movement. From the unrectified state of Kayin to the beginning of תיקון through Shmuel the שופט, and its fuller expression in Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah.

This is also reflected in the structure of Torah itself on that day.



The Gemara says that there was no halacha תלויה, no unresolved ruling, that was not clarified. Everything was brought into clarity.

There were halachos that had been left hanging, questions that had been discussed but never fully resolved, disagreements that remained open without a clear psak. These were areas where Torah itself stood in a state of דין, where competing claims had not yet been brought into harmony.

On that day everything changed.

Every one of those unresolved matters was addressed. The Chachamim did not avoid the tension. They entered into it. They listened, weighed, and clarified until each sugya reached a conclusion. What had been uncertain became settled.

But on a deeper level, this was not only a clarification of halacha.

This was the תיקון of Kayin. Kayin represents unresolved דין. On that day in the Beis Midrash, with the rectification of Kayin דין was brought to resolution. Machlokes did not lead to separation. It led to clarity. The very place where differences could have remained suspended was transformed into a מקום of הכרעה, of psak, of integration.

What Kayin could not do, the Chachamim now did. This is why the Gemara emphasizes that on the day that Rav Elazar ben Azarah was made Rosh Yeshiva, nothing remained unresolved.

It is now clear why on that day they learned מסכת עדיות. The Rambam, in his פירוש המשניות, explains:

ורוב עניין זאת המסכתא הוא לזכור בה כל ההלכות שהעידו עליהם אנשים ברורים נאמנים, ושעדותם ראוי לסמוך עליה... **ועדויות הם הודעת הדברים שהעידו בם לפני השופטים בעיתים ידועים וקבלו אותם מהם**

"And the majority of the subject matter of this tractate is to record within it all the halachot that were testified to by clear and reliable individuals, whose testimony is worthy to be relied upon... **And 'Ediyos' are the reporting of matters about which testimony was given before judges at specific times, and they accepted them from them."**

Kayin once said לית דין ולית דיין. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah's day is a day of עדות, of accepted testimony before judges, of clarification, of settled truth. The soul that once denied judgment now lives in the world of witness, law, and accepted reality.

Furthermore, within עדיות, we find unresolved tensions being worked through: disputes between בית שמאי and בית הלל that had not yet been incorporated into the Mishnah, cases where בית שמאי is lenient and בית הלל is strict, and even instances where בית הלל retracts in favor of בית שמאי. On the day that Rav Elazar ben Azaryah became Rosh Yeshiva, on the day where Shmuel the shofet shows up in his fully rectified form and Din is sweetened, the leniency of Beis Shammai takes root in halacha.

This is also the role of Eliyahu. Corresponding to the 400 benches that were added on that day, the gematria of אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב is four hundred. As we explained above, the role of Eliyahu is to resolve all of our unanswered questions and to bring shalom to the world. Unsurprisingly, it is precisely in מסכת עדיות that we find these concepts.

Four hundred benches can also correspond to the four hundred years that Klal Yisrael was destined to be enslaved in Mitzrayim and seven hundred benches corresponds to the conflict between Moshe (345) and Pharaoh (355). This is in line with the notion that Moshe represents Hevel where Pharaoh represents the Nachash HaKadmoni. On the day that Rav Elazar ben Azaryah became Rosh Yeshiva and the tikkun of Kayin was completed, the redemption from Mitzrayim took on new forms of completion.

As we said above, the gematria of אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב is four hundred and the Gemtria of רוח אלקים is another 300 making a total of 700. The Zohat (Tikkunei Zohar 71b) explains that רוח אלקים is a reference to Mashiach. We can therefore explain that Rav Elazar ben Azaryah added 400 benches to invite Eliyahu HaNavi to herald the coming of Mashiach (700 benches) on that day.

From here on in Chazal tell us that whenever the phrase אותו היום, on that day, is used it is a reference to the day Rav Elazar ben Azaryah was appointed as Rosh Yeshiva.

The Navi says (Zechariah 14:9): וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה ה' אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד, On that day, Hashem will be one and His Name will be one.

It emerges that the day Rav Elazar ben Azaryah assumed leadership was not just a historical transition, but a revelation of what that future "day" looks like: a world in which all fragmentation is resolved, all disputes clarified, and all voices harmonized within a single truth. In that sense, "on that day"—the day when Hashem will be One and His Name One—was already tasted in the בית מדרש of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, where Torah became unified and clear; and from then on, every אותו היום carries the echo of that moment, a glimpse of the ultimate day when that unity will be complete and eternal.

XI. "I Did Not Merit": Not Lack of Knowledge, But Lack of Refinement

After a very long journey, we are now ready to answer our initial questions about the statement of Rav Elazar ben Azaryah brought down in the Haggadah.

According to the Rambam's version of the Haggadah, the paragraph of הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה is a continuation of the story of the Seder in Bnei Brak. Rav Elazar ben Azaryah says these words to the Sages when their students come and tell them that the time for Krias Shema of Shacharis has arrived.

According to the Rambam, the timing is breathtaking.

The very night on which one tells the story of leaving Mitzrayim is the night on which Rav Elazar ben Azaryah, as it were, becomes Shmuel. The miracle of "like seventy" belongs to the night of the Seder. On that very night, he says that he had not yet been זוכה to say Yetzias Mitzrayim at night until Ben Zoma expounded it.

Rav Elazar ben Azaryah says until now: לא זכיתי. This does not simply mean: I never heard the derashah before. It means: I had not yet become the kind of person who could receive this truth.

The word זכיתי can be heard not only as "I merited," but as "I became refined," "I became transparent," "I became clear enough."

Before this tikkun, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah could speak of Yetzias Mitzrayim by day. Anyone can speak of redemption when the light is already visible, when Hashem's hand is manifest, when the sea splits, when the miracles are obvious.

But בלילות means something deeper. Night is not just a time. Night is a consciousness. Night is concealment. Night is rejection. Night is humiliation. Night is confusion. Night is the place where a person can no longer see clearly and must decide whether the darkness means abandonment or hidden presence.

That is exactly the inner world of Kayin.

Kayin is the person who cannot accept gift.
He cannot accept that brachah comes through surrender.
He cannot tolerate rejection.
He cannot absorb humiliation.
He cannot say יש דין ויש דיין.
He responds to concealment with denial, control, jealousy, violence, and machlokes.



Until that soul is repaired, one can only speak of redemption in the day. But once that soul is repaired, one can say something far greater: that geulah is present even in the night.

Then יציאת מצרים בלילות means:

Hashem is present not only in revealed kindness, but in hiddenness.
Not only in acceptance, but in rejection.
Not only in harmony, but in inner chaos.
Not only in the "day" of Hevel, but in the "night" of Kayin.

That means that on the night dedicated to discovering redemption inside history, inside suffering, inside exile, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah reaches the point where he can say that redemption exists even inside darkness.
This is why Ben Zoma's derashah can finally be received by Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah. Only now, in his fully rectified form, could this truth finally be lived.

We can now state the full idea clearly.

Adam failed in hakaras hatov.
Kayin extended that failure into jealousy and murder.
Korach extended it into machlokes and rebellion.
Shmuel began the tikkun by becoming the wandering Shofet who finally finds a home and yielding his time in the world for Dovid HaMelech.
Rav Elazar ben Azaryah became the ripened form of that tikkun: wealth through honoring his wife, wisdom through Shmuel, kehunah through repaired Kayin, humility without insecurity, and the ability to open Torah to imperfect people.

Kayin could not bear being second.
Rav Elazar ben Azaryah accepts leadership only after Rabban Gamliel is deposed.

Kayin responded to pain with destruction.
Rav Elazar ben Azaryah widens the Beis Midrash for those who could not previously enter.

Kayin saw rejection and concluded there is no Judge.
Rav Elazar ben Azaryah paskens all outstanding shailos and teahces Eduyos, testimony and accepted truth before judges.

Kayin lived turned darkness into rebellion.
Rav Elazar ben Azaryah discovers the hidden geulah in the darkness.

That is the meaning of his words.

הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה — I now carry the fuller soul-history necessary for this perception.

חַג כָּשֵׁר וְשָׂמֵחַ!

ולא זכיתי — I was not yet sufficiently refined.

שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות — that one can speak of redemption not only when the light is obvious, but even in darkness itself.

A repaired Kayin can recognize redemption within concealment.

And that may be the deepest meaning of the Haggadah's teaching: the true completion of Yetzias Mitzrayim is not only leaving Egypt by day, but learning to find Hashem even in the night.

